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HORATIO N JOY

WORKS

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART

COMPLETE

ABBOTSFORD

IN 10 VOLS.

PHILADELPHIA

E. L. CAREY AND A. HART.
1847.

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THE

COMPLETE WORKS

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT;

WITH

HORATIO N JOY

A BIOGRAPHY,

AND HIS LAST

ADDITIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOL. V.

PHILADELPHIA:
CAREY & HART.
1847.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT, Bart.

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PREFACE.

In obedience to the instructions of Sir Walter Scott's last will, I had made some progress in a narrative of his personal history, before there was discovered, in an old cabinet at Abbotsford, an autobiographical fragment, composed by him in 1808, shortly after the publication of his Marmion.

This fortunate accident rendered it necessary that I should altogether remodel the work which I had commenced. The first chapter of the following Memoirs consists of the Ashestiel fragment, which gives a clear outline of his early life down to the period of his call to the bar—July, 1792. All the notes appended to this chapter are also by himself. They are in a hand writing very different from the text, and seem, from various circumstances, to have been added in 1826.

It appeared to me, however, that the author's modesty had prevented him from telling the story of his youth with that fulness of detail which would now satisfy the public. I have therefore recast my own collections as to the period in question, and presented the substance of them, in five succeeding chapters, as *illustrations* of his too brief autobiography. This procedure has been attended with many obvious disadvantages; but I greatly preferred it to printing the precious fragment in an appendix.

I foresee that some readers may be apt to accuse me of trenching upon delicacy in certain details of the sixth and seventh chapters in this volume. Though the circumstances there treated of had no trivial influence on Sir Walter Scott's history and character, I should have been inclined, for many reasons, to omit them; but the choice was, in fact, not left to me,—for they had been mentioned, and misrepresented, in various preceding sketches of the Life which I had undertaken to illustrate. Such being the case, I considered it as my duty to tell the story truly and intelligibly: but I trust I have avoided any unnecessary disclosures; and, after all, there was nothing to disclose that could have attached any sort of blame to any of the parties concerned.

For the copious materials which the friends of Sir Walter have placed at my disposal, I feel just gratitude. Several of them are named in the course of the present volume; but I must take this opportunity of expressing my sense of the deep obligations under which I have been laid by the frank communications, in particular, of William Clerk, Esq., of Eldin,—John Irving, Esq., W. S.,—Sir Adam Ferguson,—James Skene, Esq., of Rubislaw,—Patrick Murray, Esq., of Simprim,—J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., of Rokeby,—William Wordsworth, Esq.,—Robert Southey, Esq., Poet Laureate,—Samuel Rogers, Esq.,—William Stewart Rose, Esq.,—Sir Alexander Wood,—the Right Hon. the Lord Chief Commissioner Adam,—the Right Hon. Sir William Rae, Bart.,—the late Right Hon. Sir William Knighton, Bart.,—the Right Hon. J. W. Croker,—Lord Jeffrey,—Sir Henry Halford, Bart., G. C. H.,—the late Major-General Sir John Malcolm, G. C. B.,—Sir Francis Chantrey, R. A.,—Sir David Wilkie, R. A.,—Thomas Thomson, Esq., P. C. S.,—Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq.,—William Scott, of Raeburn, Esq.,—John Scott, of Gala, Esq.,—Alexander Pringle, of Whytbank, Esq., M. P.,—John Swinton, of Inverleith-place, Esq.,—John Richardson, Esq., of Fludyer Street,—John Murray, Esq., of Albemarle Street,—Robert Bruce, Esq., Sheriff of Argyle,—Robert Ferguson, Esq., M. D.,—G. P. R. James, Esq.,—William Laidlaw, Esq.,—Robert Cadell, Esq.,—John Elliot Shortreed, Esq.,—Allan Cunningham, Esq.,—Claud Russell, Esq.,—James Clarkson, Esq., of Melrose,—the late James Ballantyne, Esq.,—Joseph Train, Esq.,—Adolphus Ross, Esq., M. D.,—William Allan, Esq., R. A.,—Charles Dumergue, Esq.,—Stephen Nicholson Barber, Esq.,—James Slade, Esq.,—Mrs. Joanna Baillie,—Mrs. George Ellis,—Mrs. Thomas Scott,—Mrs. Charles Carpenter,—Miss Russell of Ashestiel,—Mrs. Sarah Nicholson,—Mrs. Duncan, Mertoun-Manse,—the Right Hon. the Lady Polwarth,—and her sons, Henry, Master of Polwarth, the Hon. and Rev. William, and the Hon. Francis Scott.

I beg leave to acknowledge with equal thankfulness the courtesy of the Rev. Dr. Harwood, Thomas White, Esq., Mrs. Thomson, and the Rev. Richard Garnett, all of Lichfield, and the Rev. Thomas Henry White, of Glasgow, in forwarding to me Sir Walter Scott's early letters to Miss Seward: that of the Lord Seaford, in intrusting me with those addressed to his late cousin, George Ellis, Esq.: and the kind readiness with which whatever papers in their possession could be serviceable to my undertaking were supplied by the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, and the Lord Montagu;—the Countess-Duchess of Sutherland, and the Lord Francis Egerton;—the Lord Viscount Sidmouth,—the Lord Bishop of Llandaff,—the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart.,—the Lady Louisa Stuart—the Hon. Mrs. Warrender, and the Hon. Catharine Arden,—Lady Davy,—Miss Edgeworth—Mrs. Maclean Clephane, of Torloisk,—Mrs. Hughes, of Uffington,—Mrs. Charles Richardson,—Mrs. Bartley;—Sir George Mackenzie of Coul, Bart.,—the late Sir Francis Freeling, Bart.,—Captain Sir Hugh Pigott, R. N.,—the late Sir William Gell,—Sir Cuthbert Sharp,—the Very Rev. Principal Baird,—the Rev. William Steven, of Rotterdam,—the late Rev. James Mitchell, of Wooler,—Robert William Hay, Esq., lately Under Secretary of State for the Colonial Department,—John Borthwick, of Crookstone, Esq.,—John Cay, Esq., Sheriff of Linlithgow,—Captain Basil Hall, R. N.,—Thomas Crofton Croker, Esq.,—Henry Cheney, Esq.,—Alexander Young, Esq., of Harburn,—A. J. Valpy, Esq.,—James Maidment, Esq., Advocate,—the late Donald Gregory, Esq.,—Robert Johnston, Esq., of Edinburgh,—J. J. Masquerier, Esq., of Brighton,—Owen Rees, Esq., of Paternoster Row,—William Miller, Esq., formerly of Albemarle Street,—David Laing, Esq., of Edinburgh,—and John Smith the Youngest, Esq., of Glasgow.

J. G. LOCKHART.

London, *Dec.* 20, 1836.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

CHAPTER I.

MEMOIR OF THE EARLY LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

Ashestiel, April 26th, 1808.

The present age has discovered a desire, or rather a rage, for literary anecdote and private history, that may be well permitted to alarm one who has engaged in a certain degree the attention of the public. That I have had more than my own share of popularity, my contemporaries will be as ready to admit, as I am to confess that its measure has exceeded, not only my hopes, but my merits, and even wishes. I may be therefore permitted, without an extraordinary degree of vanity, to take the precaution of recording a few leading circumstances (they do not merit the name of events) of a very quiet and uniform life—that, should my literary reputation survive my temporal existence, the public may know from good authority all that they are entitled to know of an individual who has contributed to their amusement.

From the lives of some poets, a most important moral lesson may doubtless be derived, and few sermons can be read with so much profit as the Memoirs of Burns, of Chatterton, or of Savage. Were I conscious of any thing peculiar in my own moral character which could render such development necessary or useful, I would as readily consent to it as I would bequeath my body to dissection, if the operation could tend to point out the nature and the means of curing any peculiar malady. But as my habits of thinking and acting, as well as my rank in society, were fixed long before I had attained, or even pretended to, any poetical reputation,* and as it produced, when acquired, no remarkable change upon either, it is hardly to be expected that much information can be derived from minutely investigating frailties, follies, or vices, not very different in number or degree from those of other men in my situation. As I have not been blessed with the talents of Burns or Chatterton, I have been happily exempted from the influence of their violent passions, exasperated by the struggle of feelings which rose up against the unjust decrees of fortune. Yet, although I cannot tell of difficulties vanquished, and distance of rank annihilated by the strength of genius, those who shall hereafter read this little Memoir may find in it some hints to be improved, for the regulation of their own minds, or the training those of others.

Every Scottishman has a pedigree. It is a national prerogative as unalienable as his pride and his poverty. My birth was neither distinguished nor sordid. According to the prejudices of my country, it was esteemed *gentle*, as I was connected, though remotely, with ancient families both by my father's and mother's side. My father's grandfather was Walter Scott, well known in Teviotdale by the surname of *Beardie*. He was the second son of Walter Scott, first Laird of Raeburn, who was the third son of Sir William Scott, and the grandson of Walter Scott, commonly called in tradition *Auld Watt*, of Harden. I am therefore lineally descended from that ancient chieftain, whose name I have made to ring in many a ditty, and from his fair dame, the Flower of Yarrow—no bad genealogy for a Border minstrel. *Beardie*, my great-grandfather aforesaid, derived his cognomen from a venerable beard, which he wore unblemished by razor or scissors, in token of his regret for the banished dynasty of Stuart. It would have been well that his zeal had stopped there. But he took arms, and intrigued in their cause, until he lost all he had in the world, and, as I have heard, run a narrow risk of being hanged, had it not been for the interference of Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth. Beardie's elder brother, William Scott of Raeburn, my great-granduncle, was killed about the age of twenty-one, in a duel with Pringle of Crichton, grandfather of the present Mark Pringle of Clifton. They fought with swords, as was the fashion of the time, in a field near Selkirk, called from the catastrophe the *Raeburn Meadow-spot*. Pringle fled from Scotland to Spain, and was long a captive and slave in Barbary. *Beardie* became, of course, *Tutor of Raeburn*, as the old Scottish phrase called him, that is, guardian to his infant nephew, father of the present Walter Scott of Raeburn. He also managed the estates of Makerstoun, being nearly related to that family by his mother, Barbara Mac Dougal. I suppose he had some allowance for his care in either case, and subsisted upon that and the fortune which he had by his wife, a Miss Campbell of Silvercraigs, in the west, through which connexion my father used to *call cousin*, as they say, with the Campbells of Blythswood. Beardie was a man of some learning, and a friend of Dr. Pitcairn, to whom his politics probably made him acceptable. They had a Tory or Jacobite club in Edinburgh, in which the conversation is said to have been maintained in Latin. Old Beardie died in a house, still standing, at the northeast entrance to the Churchyard of Kelso, about . . . .

He left three sons. The eldest, Walter, had a family, of which any that now remain have been long settled in America;—the male heirs are long since extinct. The third was William, father of James Scott, well known in India as one of the original settlers of Prince of Wales's island;—he had, besides, a numerous family both of sons and daughters, and died at Lasswade, in Mid-Lothian, about . . . .

The second, Robert Scott, was my grandfather. He was originally bred to the sea; but, being shipwrecked near Dundee in his trial voyage, he took such a sincere dislike to that element, that he could not be persuaded to a second attempt. This occasioned a quarrel between him and his father, who left him to shift for himself. Robert was one of those active spirits to whom this was no misfortune. He turned Whig upon the spot, and fairly abjured his father's politics, and his learned poverty.

* I do not mean to say, that my success in literature has not led me to mix familiarly in society much above my birth and original pretensions, since I have been readily received in the first circles in Britain. But there is a certain intuitive knowledge of the world to which most well-educated Scotchmen are early trained, that prevents them from being much dazzled by this species of elevation. A man who to good nature adds the general rudiments of good breeding, provided he rest contented with a simple and unaffected manner of behaving and expressing himself, will never be ridiculous in the best society, and so far as his talents and information permit, may be an agreeable part of the company. I have therefore never felt much elevated, nor did I experience any violent change in situation, by the passport which my poetical character afforded me into higher company than my birth warranted.—[1826.]

His chief and relative, Mr. Scott of Harden, gave him a lease of the farm of Sandy-Knowe, comprehending the rocks in the centre of which Smailholm or Sandy-Knowe Tower is situated. He took for his shepherd an old man, called Hogg, who willingly lent him, out of respect to his family, his whole savings, about £30, to stock the new farm. With this sum, which it seems was at the time sufficient for the purpose, the master and servant set off to purchase a stock of sheep at Whitsun-Tryste, a fair held on a hill near Wooler in Northumberland. The old shepherd went carefully from drove to drove, till he found a *hirsel* likely to answer their purpose, and then returned to tell his master to come up and conclude the bargain. But what was his surprise to see him galloping a mettled hunter about the race-course, and to find he had expended the whole stock in this extraordinary purchase!—Moses's bargain of green spectacles did not strike more dismay into the Vicar of Wakefield's family, than my grandfather's rashness into the poor old shepherd. The thing, however, was irretrievable, and they returned without the sheep. In the course of a few days, however, my grandfather, who was one of the best horsemen of his time, attended John Scott of Harden's hounds on this same horse, and displayed him to such advantage, that he sold him for double the original price. The farm was now stocked in earnest; and the rest of my grandfather's career was that of successful industry. He was one of the first who were active in the cattle trade, afterwards carried to such extent between the Highlands of Scotland and the leading counties in England, and by his droving transactions acquired a considerable sum of money. He was a man of middle stature, extremely active, quick, keen, and fiery in his temper, stubbornly honest, and so distinguished for his skill in country matters, that he was the general referee in all points of dispute which occurred in the neighbourhood. His birth being admitted as *gentle*, gave him access to the best society in the county, and his dexterity in country sports, particularly hunting, made him an acceptable companion in the field as well as at the table.*

Robert Scott of Sandy-Knowe, married, in 1728, Barbara Haliburton, daughter of Thomas Haliburton of Newmains, an ancient and respectable family in Berwickshire. Among other patrimonial possessions, they enjoyed the part of Dryburgh, now the property of the Earl of Buchan, comprehending the ruins of the Abbey. My granduncle, Robert Haliburton, having no male heirs, this estate, as well as the representation of the family, would have devolved upon my father, and indeed Old Newmains had settled it upon him; but this was prevented by the misfortunes of my granduncle, a weak, silly man, who engaged in trade, for which he had neither stock nor talents, and became bankrupt. The ancient patrimony was sold for a trifle, (about £3000,) and my father, who might have purchased it with ease, was dissuaded by my grandfather, who at that time believed a more advantageous purchase might have been made of some lands which Raeburn thought of selling. And thus we have nothing left of Dryburgh, although my father's maternal inheritance, but the right of stretching our bones where mine may, perhaps, be laid ere any eye but my own glances over these pages.

Walter Scott, my father, was born in 1729, and educated to the profession of a Writer to the Signet. He was the eldest of a large family, several of whom I shall have occasion to mention with a tribute of sincere gratitude. My father was a singular instance of a man rising to eminence in a profession for which nature had in some degree unfitted him. He had indeed a turn for labour, and a pleasure in analyzing the abstruse feudal doctrines connected with conveyancing, which would probably have rendered him unrivalled in the line of a special pleader, had there been such a profession in Scotland; but in the actual business of the profession which he embraced, in that sharp and intuitive perception which is necessary in driving bargains for himself and others, in availing himself of the wants, necessities, caprices, and follies of some, and guarding against the knavery and malice of others, uncle Toby himself could not have conducted himself with more simplicity than my father. Most attorneys have been suspected, more or less justly, of making their own fortune at the expense of their clients—my father's fate was to vindicate his calling from the stain in one instance, for in many cases his clients contrived to ease him of considerable sums. Many worshipful and be-knighted names occur to my memory, who did him the honour to run in his debt to the amount of thousands, and to pay him with a lawsuit, or a commission of bankruptcy, as the case happened. But they are gone to a different accounting, and it would be ungenerous to visit their disgrace upon their descendants. My father was wont also to give openings, to those who were pleased to take them, to pick a quarrel with him. He had a zeal for his clients which was almost ludicrous: far from coldly discharging the duties of his employment towards them, he thought for them, felt for their honour as for his own, and rather risked disobliging them than neglecting any thing to which he conceived their duty bound them. If there was an old mother or aunt to be maintained, he was, I am afraid, too apt to administer to their necessities from what the young heir had destined exclusively to his pleasures. This ready discharge of obligations, which the Civilians tell us are only natural and not legal, did not, I fear, recommend him to his employers. Yet his practice was, at one period of his life, very extensive. He understood his business theoretically, and was early introduced to it by a partnership with George Chalmers, Writer to the Signet, under whom he had served his apprenticeship.

His person and face were uncommonly handsome, with an expression of sweetness of temper, which was not fallacious; his manners were rather formal, but full of genuine kindness, especially when exercising the duties of hospitality. His general habits were not only temperate, but severely abstemious; but upon a festival occasion, there were few whom a moderate glass of wine exhilarated to such a lively degree. His religion, in which he was devoutly sincere, was Calvanism of the strictest kind, and his favourite study related to church history. I suspect the good old man was often engaged with Knox and Spottiswoode's folios, when, immured in his solitary room, he was supposed to be immersed in professional researches. In his political principles he was a steady friend to freedom, with a bias, however, to the monarchical part of our constitution, which he considered as peculiarly exposed to danger during the later years of his life. He had much of ancient Scottish prejudice respecting the forms of marriages, funerals, christenings, and so forth, and was always vexed at any neglect of etiquette upon such occasions. As his education had not been upon an enlarged plan, it could not be expected that he should be an enlightened scholar, but he had not passed through a busy life without observation; and his remarks upon times and manners often exhibited strong traits of practical though untaught philosophy. Let me conclude this sketch, which I am unconscious of having overcharged, with a few lines written by the late Mrs. Cockburn* upon the subject. They made one among a set of poetical characters which were given as toasts among a few friends, and we must hold them to contain a striking likeness, since the original was recognised so soon as they were read aloud.

"To a thing that's uncommon—
A youth of discretion,

* The present Lord Haddington, and other gentlemen conversant with the south country, remember my grandfather well. He was a fine alert figure, and wore a jockey cap over his gray hair.—[1826.]

* Mrs. Cockburn (born Miss Rutherford of Fairnalie) was the authoress of the beautiful song—

"I have seen the smiling
Of fortune beguiling."—[1826.]

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"When fought valiantly the battle,
Despising flatation;
To the friend in affliction,
The heart of affection,
Who may hear the last trump
Without dread of detection."

In [April, 1758] my father married Anne Rutherford, eldest daughter of Dr. John Rutherford, professor of medicine in the University of Edinburgh. He was one of those pupils of Boerhaave to whom the school of medicine in our northern metropolis owes its rise, and a man distinguished for professional talent, for lively wit, and for literary acquirements. Dr. Rutherford was twice married. His first wife, of whom my mother is the sole surviving child, was a daughter of Sir John Swinton of Swinton, a family which produced many distinguished warriors during the middle ages, and which, for antiquity and honourable alliances, may rank with any in Britain. My grandfather's second wife was Miss Mackay, by whom he had a second family, of whom are now (1808) alive, Dr. Daniel Rutherford, professor of botany in the University of Edinburgh, and Misses Janet and Christian Rutherford, amiable and accomplished women.

My father and mother had a very numerous family, no fewer, I believe, than twelve children, of whom many were highly promising, though only five survived very early youth. My eldest brother (that is, the eldest whom I remember to have seen) was Robert Scott, so called after my uncle, of whom I shall have much to say hereafter. He was bred in the King's service, under Admiral, then Captain William Dickson, and was in most of Rodney's battles. His temper was bold and haughty, and to me was often checkered with what I felt to be capricious tyranny. In other respects I loved him much, for he had a strong turn for literature, read poetry with taste and judgment, and composed verses himself, which had gained him great applause among his messmates. Witness the following elegy upon the supposed loss of the vessel, composed the night before Rodney's celebrated battle of April the 12th, 1782. It alludes to the various amusements of his mess.

"No more the geese shall cackle on the poop,
No more the bagpipe through the orlop sound,
No more the midshipmen, a jovial group,
Shall toast the girls, and push the bottle round.
In death's dark road at anchor fast they stay,
Till Heaven's loud signal shall in thunder roar,
Then starting up, all hands shall quick obey,
Shoot home the topsail, and with speed unmoor."

Robert sung agreeably—(a virtue which was never seen in me)—understood the mechanical arts, and when in good humour, could regale us with many a tale of bold adventure and narrow escapes. When in bad humour, however, he gave us a practical taste of what was then man-of-war's discipline, and kicked and cuffed without mercy. I have often thought how he might have distinguished himself, had he continued in the navy until the present times, so glorious for nautical exploit. But the peace of Paris cut off all hopes of promotion for those who had not great interest; and some disgust which his proud spirit had taken at harsh usage from a superior officer, combined to throw poor Robert into the East India Company's service, for which his habits were ill adapted. He made two voyages to the East, and died a victim to the climate in . . . .

John Scott, my second brother, is about three years older than me. He addicted himself to the military service, and is now brevet-major in the 73d regiment.*

I had an only sister, Anne Scott, who seemed to be from her cradle the butt for mischance to shoot arrows at. Her childhood was marked by perilous escapes from the most extraordinary accidents. Among others, I remember an iron-railed door leading into the area in the centre of George's Square, being closed by the wind, while her fingers were betwixt the hasp and staple. Her hand was thus locked in, and must have been smashed to pieces, had not the bones of her fingers been remarkably slight and thin. As it was, the hand was cruelly mangled. On another occasion, she was nearly drowned in a pond, or old quarry-hole, in what was then called Brown's Park, on the south side of the square. But the most unfortunate accident, and which, though it happened while she was only six years old, proved the remote cause of her death, was her cap accidentally taking fire. The child was alone in the room, and before assistance could be obtained, her head was dreadfully scorched. After a lingering and dangerous illness, she recovered, but never to enjoy perfect health. The slightest cold occasioned swellings in her face, and other indications of a delicate constitution. At length, in [1801], poor Anne was taken ill, and died after a very short interval. Her temper, like that of her brothers, was peculiar, and in her, perhaps, it showed more odd, from the habits of indulgence which her nervous illnesses had formed. But she was at heart an affectionate and kind girl, neither void of talent nor of feeling, though living in an ideal world which she had framed to herself by the force of imagination. Anne was my junior by about a year.

A year lower in the list was my brother Thomas Scott, who is still alive.*

Last, and most unfortunate of our family, was my youngest brother Daniel. With the same aversion to labour, or rather, I should say, the same determined indolence that marked us all, he had neither the vivacity of intellect, which supplies the want of diligence, nor the pride which renders the most detested labour better than dependence or contempt. His career was as unfortunate as might be augured from such an unhappy combination, and after various unsuccessful attempts to establish himself in life, he died on his return from the West Indies, in [July, 1806.]

Having premised so much of my family, I return to my own story. I was born, as I believe, on the 15th August, 1771, in a house belonging to my father, at the head of the College Wynd. It was pulled down, with others, to make room for the northern front of the new College. I was an uncommonly healthy child, but had nearly died in consequence of my first nurse being ill of a consumption, a circumstance which she chose to conceal, though to do so was murder to both herself and me. She went privately to consult Dr. Black, the celebrated professor of chemistry, who put my father on his guard. The woman was dismissed, and I was consigned to a healthy peasant, who is still alive to boast of her *laddie* being what she calls *a grand gentleman*.† I showed every sign of health and strength until I was about eighteen months old. One night, I have been often told, I showed great reluctance to be caught and put to bed, and after being chased about the room, was apprehended, and consigned to my dormitory with some difficulty. It was the last time I was to show such personal agility. In the morning, I was discovered to be affected with the fever, which often accompanies the cutting of large teeth. It held me three days. On the fourth, when they went to bathe me as usual, they discovered that I had lost the power of my right leg. My grandfather, an excellent anatomist as well as physician, the late worthy Alexander Wood, and many others of the most respectable of the faculty, were consulted. There appeared to be no dislocation or sprain; blisters and other topical

* He was this year made major of the second battalion, by the kind intercession of Mr. Canning at the War Office—1809.—He retired from the army, and kept house with my mother. His health was totally broken, and he died, yet a young man, on 8th May, 1816.—[1826.]

* Poor Tom, a man of infinite humour and excellent parts, pursued for some time my father's profession; but he was unfortunate, from engaging in speculations respecting farms and matters out of the line of his proper business. He afterwards became paymaster of the 70th regiment, and died in Canada. Tom married Elizabeth, a daughter of the family of M'Culloch of Ardwell, an ancient Galwegian stock, by whom he left a son, Walter Scott, now second lieutenant of engineers in the East India Company's service, Bombay, and three daughters—Jessie, married to Lieutenant-Colonel Huxley; 2, Anne; 3, Eliza—the two last still unmarried.—[1826.]

† She died in 1810.—[1826.]

remedies were applied in vain. When the efforts of regular physicians had been exhausted, without the slightest success, my anxious parents, during the course of many years, eagerly grasped at every prospect of cure which was held out by the promise of empirics, or of ancient ladies or gentlemen, who conceived themselves entitled to recommend various remedies, some of which were of a nature sufficiently singular. But the advice of my grandfather, Dr. Rutherford, that I should be sent to reside in the country, to give the chance of natural exertion, excited by free air and liberty, was first resorted to, and before I have the recollection of the slightest event, I was, agreeably to this friendly counsel, an inmate in the farm-house of Sandy-Knowe.

An odd incident is worth recording. It seems my mother had sent a maid to take charge of me, that I might be no inconvenience in the family. But the damsel sent on that important mission had left her heart behind her, in the keeping of some wild fellow, it is likely, who had done and said more to her than he was like to make good. She became extremely desirous to return to Edinburgh, and as my mother made a point of her remaining where she was, she contracted a sort of hatred at poor me, as the cause of her being detained at Sandy-Knowe. This rose, I suppose, to a sort of delirious affection, for she confessed to old Alison Wilson, the housekeeper, that she had carried me up to the Craigs, meaning, under a strong temptation of the devil, to cut my throat with her scissors, and bury me in the moss. Alison instantly took possession of my person, and took care that her confidant should not be subject to any farther temptation, so far as I was concerned. She was dismissed, of course, and, I have heard, became afterwards a lunatic.

It is here, at Sandy-Knowe, in the residence of my paternal grandfather, already mentioned, that I have the first consciousness of existence; and I recollect distinctly that my situation and appearance were a little whimsical. Among the odd remedies recurred to, to aid my lameness, some one had recommended, that so often as a sheep was killed for the use of the family, I should be stripped, and swathed up in the skin warm as it was flayed from the carcass of the animal. In this Tartar-like habiliment, I well remember lying upon the floor of the little parlour in the farm-house, while my grandfather, a venerable old man with white hair, used every excitement to make me try to crawl. I also distinctly remember the late Sir George MacDougal of Makerstoun, father of the present Sir Henry Hay MacDougal, joining in this kindly attempt. He was, God knows how,* a relation of ours, and I still recollect him in his old fashioned military habit, (he had been colonel of the Grays,) with a small cocked hat, deeply laced, an embroidered scarlet waistcoat, and a light coloured coat, with milk-white locks, tied in a military fashion, kneeling on the ground before me, and dragging his watch along the carpet, to induce me to follow it. The benevolent old soldier, and the infant wrapped in his sheepskin, would have afforded an odd group to uninterested spectators. This must have happened about my third year, for Sir George MacDougal and my grandfather both died shortly after that period.

My grandmother continued for some years to take charge of the farm, assisted by my father's second brother, Mr. Thomas Scott, who resided at Crailing, as factor, or land-steward, for Mr. Scott of Danesfield, then proprietor of that estate.† This was during the heat of the American war, and I remember being as anxious on my uncle's weekly visits (for we heard news at no other time) to hear of the defeat of Washington, as if I had had some deep and personal cause of antipathy to him. I know not how this was combined with a very strong prejudice in favour of the Stuart family, which I had originally imbibed from the songs and tales of the Jacobites. This latter political propensity was deeply confirmed by the stories told in my hearing, of the cruelties exercised in the executions at Carlisle, and in the Highlands, after the battle of Culloden. One or two of our own distant relations had fallen on that occasion, and I remember detesting the name of Cumberland with more than infant hatred. Mr. Curle, farmer at Yetbyre, husband of one of my aunts, had been present at their execution; and it was probably from him that I first heard these tragic tales, which made so great an impression on me. The local information, which, I conceive, had some share in forming my future taste and pursuits, I derived from the old songs and tales which then formed the amusement of a retired country family. My grandmother, in whose youth the old Border depredations were matter of recent tradition, used to tell me many a tale of Watt of Harden, Wight Willie of Aikwood, Jamie Telfer of the fair Dodhead, and other heroes—merrymen, all of the persuasion and calling of Robin Hood and Little John. A more recent hero, but not of less note, was the celebrated *Diel of Littledean*, whom she well remembered, as he had married her mother's sister. Of this extraordinary person I learned many a story, grave and gay, comic and warlike. Two or three old books, which lay in the window seat, were explored for my amusement in the tedious winter days. Automathes and Ramsay's Teatable Miscellany were my favourites, although, at a later period, an odd volume of Josephus's Wars of the Jews divided my partiality.

My kind and affectionate aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whose memory will ever be dear to me, used to read these works to me with admirable patience, until I could repeat long passages by heart. The ballad of Hardyknute I was early master of, to the great annoyance of almost our only visiter, the worthy clergyman of the parish, Dr. Duncan, who had not patience to have a sober chat interrupted by my shouting forth this ditty. Methinks I now see his tall, thin, emaciated figure, his legs cased in clasped gambadoes, and his face of a length that would have rivalled the Knight of La Mancha's, and hear him exclaiming, "One may as well speak in the mouth of a cannon as where that child is." With this little acidity, which was natural to him, he was a most excellent and benevolent man, a gentleman in every feeling, and altogether different from those of his order who cringe at the tables of the gentry, or domineer and riot at those of the yeomanry. In his youth he had been chaplain in the family of Lord Marchmont—had seen Pope—and could talk familiarly of many characters who had survived the Augustan age of Queen Anne. Though valetudinary, he lived to be nearly ninety, and to welcome to Scotland his son, Colonel William Duncan, who, with the highest character for military and civil merit, had made a considerable fortune in India. In [1795], a few days before his death, I paid him a visit, to inquire after his health. I found him emaciated to the last degree, wrapped in a tartan nightgown, and employed with all the activity of health and youth in correcting a history of the Revolution, which he intended should be given to the public when he was no more. He read me several passages with a voice naturally strong, and which the feelings of an author then raised above the depression of age and declining health. I begged him to spare this fatigue, which could not but injure his health. His answer was remarkable. "I know," he said, "that I cannot survive a fortnight—and what signifies an exertion that can at worst only accelerate my death a few days?" I marvelled at the composure of this reply, for his appearance sufficiently vouched the truth of his prophesy, and rode

* He was a second cousin of my grandfather's. Isobel MacDougal, wife of Walter, the first Laird of Raeburn, and mother of Walter Scott, called Beardie, was grandaunt, I take it, to the late Sir George MacDougal. There was always great friendship between us and the Makerstoun family. It singularly happened that at the burial of the late Sir Henry MacDougal, my cousin, William Scott younger of Raeburn, and I myself, were the nearest blood-relations present, although our connexion was of so old a date, and ranked as pall-bearers accordingly.—[1826.]

† My uncle afterwards resided at Elliston, and then took from Mr. Cornelius Elliot the estate of Woollee. Finally, he retired to Monklaw, in the neighbourhood of Jedburgh, where he died, 1823, at the advanced age of ninety years, and in full possession of his faculties. It was a fine thing to hear him talk over the change of the country which he had witnessed.—[1826.]

house to my uncle's, (then my abode,) musing what there could be in the spirit of authorship that could inspire its votaries with the courage of martyrs. He died within less than the period he assigned—with which event I close my digression.

I was in my fourth year, when my father was advised that the Bath waters might be of some advantage to my lameness. My affectionate aunt, although such a journey promised, to a person of her retired habits, any thing but pleasure or amusement, undertook as readily to accompany me to the wells of Bladud, as if she had expected all the delight that ever the prospect of a watering-place held out to its most impatient visitants. My health was by this time a good deal confirmed by the country air, and the influence of that imperceptible and unfatiguing exercise to which the good sense of my grandfather had subjected me; for when the day was fine I was usually carried out and laid down beside the old shepherd, among the crags or rocks round which he fed his sheep. The impatience of a child soon inclined me to struggle with my infirmity, and I began by degrees to stand, to walk, and to run. Although the limb affected was much shrunk and contracted, my general health, which was of more importance, was much strengthened by being frequently in the open air, and, in a word, I, who in a city had probably been condemned to hopeless and helpless decrepitude, was now a healthy, high-spirited, and, my lameness apart, a sturdy child—*non sine diis animosus infans.*

We went to London by sea, and it may gratify the curiosity of minute biographers to learn that our voyage was performed in the Duchess of Buccleuch, Captain Beatson, master. At London we made a short stay, and saw some of the common shows exhibited to strangers. When, twenty-five years afterwards, I visited the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey, I was astonished to find how accurate my recollection of these celebrated places of visitation proved to be, and I have ever since trusted more implicitly to my juvenile reminiscences. At Bath, where I lived about a year, I went through all the usual discipline of the pump-room and baths, but I believe without the least advantage to my lameness. During my residence at Bath, I acquired the rudiments of reading at a day-school, kept by an old dame, near our lodgings, and I had never a more regular teacher, although I think I did not attend her a quarter of a year. An occasional lesson from my aunt supplied the rest. Afterwards, when grown a big boy, I had a few lessons from Mr. Stalker of Edinburgh, and finally from the Rev. Mr. Clure. But I never acquired a just pronunciation, nor could I read with much propriety.

In other respects, my residence at Bath is marked by very pleasing recollections. The venerable John Home, author of Douglas, was then at the watering-place, and paid much attention to my aunt and to me. His wife, who has survived him, was then an invalid, and used to take the air in her carriage on the Downs, when I was often invited to accompany her. But the most delightful recollections of Bath are dated after the arrival of my uncle, Captain Robert Scott, who introduced me to all the little amusements which suited my age, and, above all, to the theatre. The play was As You Like It; and the witchery of the whole scene is alive in my mind at this moment. I made, I believe, noise more than enough, and remember being so much scandalized at the quarrel between Orlando and his brother, in the first scene, that I screamed out, "A'n't they brothers?"—A few weeks' residence at home convinced me, who had till then been an only child in the house of my grandfather, that a quarrel between brothers was a very natural event.

The other circumstances I recollect of my residence in Bath are but trifling, yet I never recall them without a feeling of pleasure. The beauties of the parade, (which of them I know not,) with the river Avon winding around it, and the lowing of the cattle from the opposite hills, are warm in my recollection, and are only rivalled by the splendours of a toy-shop somewhere near the Orange Grove. I had acquired, I know not by what means, a kind of superstitious terror for statuary of all kinds. No ancient Iconoclast, or modern Calvinist, could have looked on the outside of the abbey church (if I mistake not, the principal church at Bath is so called) with more horror than the image of Jacob's Ladder, with all its angels, presented to my infant eye. My uncle effectually combated my terrors, and formally introduced me to a statue of Neptune, which perhaps still keeps guard at the side of the Avon, where a pleasure boat crosses to Spring Gardens.

After being a year at Bath, I returned first to Edinburgh, and afterwards, for a season, to Sandy-Knowe;—and thus the time whiled away till about my eighth year, when it was thought that sea-bathing might be of service to my lameness.

For this purpose, still under my aunt's protection, I remained some weeks at Prestonpans, a circumstance not worth mentioning, excepting to record my juvenile intimacy with an old military veteran, Dalgetty by name, who had pitched his tent in that little village, after all his campaigns subsisting upon an ensign's half-pay, though called by courtesy a captain. As this old gentleman, who had been in all the German wars, found very few to listen to his tales of military feats, he formed a sort of alliance with me, and I used invariably to attend him for the pleasure of hearing those communications. Sometimes our conversation turned on the American war, which was then raging. It was about the time of Burgoyne's unfortunate expedition, to which my captain and I augured different conclusions. Somebody had showed me a map of North America, and, struck with the rugged appearance of the country, and the quantity of lakes, I expressed some doubts on the subject of the general's arriving safely at the end of his journey, which were very indignantly refuted by the captain. The news of the Saratoga disaster, while it gave me a little triumph, rather shook my intimacy with the veteran.*

* Besides this veteran, I found another ally at Prestonpans, in the person of George Constable, an old friend of my father's, educated to the law, but retired upon his independent property, and generally residing near Dundee. He had many of those peculiarities of temper which long afterwards I tried to develop in the character of Jonathan Oldbuck. It is very odd, that though I am unconscious of any thing in which I strictly copied the *manners* of my old friend, the resemblance was nevertheless detected by George Chalmers, Esq., solicitor, London, an old friend, both of my father and Mr. Constable, and who affirmed to my late friend, Lord Kinedder, that I must needs be the author of the Antiquary, since he recognised the portrait of George Constable. But my friend George was not so decided an enemy to womankind as his representative Monkbarns. On the contrary, I rather suspect that he had a *tendresse* for my Aunt Jenny, who even then was a most beautiful woman, though somewhat advanced in life. To the close of her life, she had the finest eyes and teeth I ever saw, and though she could be sufficiently sharp when she had a mind, her general behaviour was genteel and ladylike. However this might be, I derived a great deal of curious information from George Constable, both at this early period, and afterwards. He was constantly plaudering about my aunt, and of course very kind to me. He was the first person who told me about Falstaff and Hotspur, and other characters in Shakspeare. What idea I annexed to them I know not, but I must have annexed some, for I remember quite well being interested on the subject. Indeed, I rather suspect that children derive impulses of a powerful and important kind in hearing things which they cannot entirely comprehend; and, therefore, that to write *down* to children's understanding is a mistake; set them on the scent, and let them puzzle it out. To return to George Constable, I know him well at a much later period. He used always to dine at my father's house of a Sunday, and was authorized to turn the conversation out of the austere and Calvinistic tone, which it usually maintained on that day, upon subjects of history, or auld langsyne. He remembered the forty-five, and told many excellent stories, all with a strong dash of a peculiar caustic humour.

George's sworn ally as a brother antiquary was John Davidson, then Keeper of the Signet; and I remember his flattering and compelling me to go to dine there. A writer's apprentice with the Keeper of the Signet, whose least officer kept us in order!—It was an awful event. Thither, however, I went with some secret expectation of a scantling of good claret. Mr. D. had a son whose taste inclined him to the army, to which his father, who had designed him for the bar, gave a most unwilling consent. He was at this time a young officer, and he and I, leaving the two seniors to proceed in their chat as they pleased, never once opened our mouths either to them or each other. The Pragmatic Sanction happened unfortunately to become the theme of their conversation, when Constable said in jest, "Now, John, I'll wad you a plack that neither of these two lads ever heard of the Pragmatic Sanction."—"Not heard of the Pragmatic Sanction!" said John Davidson; "I would like to see that!" and with a

From Prestonpans I was transported back to my father's house in George's Square, which continued to be my most established place of residence, until my marriage in 1797. I felt the change from being a single indulged brat, to becoming a member of a large family, very severely; for under the gentle government of my kind grandmother, who was meekness itself, and of my aunt, who, though of a higher temper, was exceedingly attached to me, I had acquired a degree of license which could not be permitted in a large family; I had sense enough, however, to bend my temper to my new circumstances; but such was the agony which I internally experienced, that I have guarded against nothing more in the education of my own family, than against their acquiring habits of self-willed caprice and domination. I found much consolation during this period of mortification in the partiality of my mother. She joined, to a light and happy temper of mind, a strong turn to study poetry and works of imagination. She was sincerely devout, but her religion was, as became her sex, of a cast less austere than my father's. Still, the discipline of the Presbyterian Sabbath was severely strict, and I think injudiciously so. Although Banyan's Pilgrim, Gesner's Death of Abel, Rowe's Letters, and one or two other books, which, for that reason, I still have a favour for, were admitted to relieve the gloom of one dull sermon succeeding to another—there was far too much tedium annexed to the duties of the day; and, in the end, it did none of us any good.

My week-day tasks were more agreeable. My lameness and my solitary habits had made me a tolerable reader, and my hours of leisure were usually spent in reading aloud to my mother Pope's translation of Homer, which, excepting a few traditionary ballads, and the songs in Allan Ramsay's Evergreen, was the first poetry which I perused. My mother had a good natural taste, and great feeling: she used to make me pause upon those passages which expressed generous and worthy sentiments, and if she could not divert me from those which were descriptive of battle and tumult, she contrived at least to divide my attention between them. My own enthusiasm, however, was chiefly awakened by the wonderful and the terrible—the common taste of children, but in which I have remained a child even unto this day. I got by heart, not as a task, but almost without intending it, the passages with which I was most pleased, and used to recite them aloud, both when alone and to others—more willingly, however, in my hours of solitude, for I had observed some auditors smile, and I dreaded ridicule at that time of life more than I have ever done since.

In [1779] I was sent to the second class of the Grammar School, or High School of Edinburgh, then taught by Mr. Luke Fraser, a good Latin scholar, and a very worthy man. Though I had received, with my brothers, in private, lessons of Latin from Mr. James French, now a minister of the Kirk of Scotland, I was, nevertheless, rather behind the class in which I was placed both in years and in progress. This was a real disadvantage, and one to which a boy of lively temper and talents ought to be as little exposed as one who might be less expected to make up his lee-way, as it is called. The situation has the unfortunate effect of reconciling a boy of the former character (which, in a posthumous work, I may claim for my own) to holding a subordinate station among his class-fellows—to which he would otherwise affix disgrace. There is, also, from the constitution of the High School, a certain danger not sufficiently attended to. The boys take precedence in their *places*, as they are called, according to their merit, and it requires a long while, in general, before even a clever boy, if he falls behind the class, or is put into one for which he is not quite ready, can force his way to the situation which his abilities really entitle him to hold. But, in the meanwhile, he is necessarily led to be the associate and companion of those inferior spirits with whom he is placed; for the system of precedence, though it does not limit the general intercourse among the boys, has, nevertheless, the effect of throwing them into clubs and coteries, according to the vicinity of the seats they hold. A boy of good talents, therefore, placed, even for a time, among his inferiors, especially if they be also his elders, learns to participate in their pursuits and objects of ambition, which are usually very distinct from the acquisition of learning; and it will be well if he does not also imitate them in that indifference which is contented with bustling over a lesson, so as to avoid punishment, without affecting superiority, or aiming at reward. It was probably owing to this circumstance that, although at a more advanced period of life I have enjoyed considerable facility in acquiring languages, I did not make any great figure at the High School—or, at least, any exertions which I made were desultory, and little to be depended on.

Our class contained some very excellent scholars. The first *Dux* was James Buchan, who retained his honoured place almost without a day's interval, all the while we were at the High School. He was afterwards at the head of the medical staff in Egypt, and in exposing himself to the plague infection, by attending the hospitals there, displayed the same well-regulated and gentle, yet determined perseverance, which placed him most worthily at the head of his school-fellows, while many lads of livelier parts and dispositions held an inferior station. The next best scholars (*sed longo intervallo*) were my friend David Douglas, the heir and *élève* of the celebrated Adam Smith, and James Hope, now a Writer to the Signet, both since well known and distinguished in their departments of the law. As for myself, I glanced like a meteor from one end of the class to the other, and commonly disgusted my kind master as much by negligence and frivolity, as I occasionally pleased him by flashes of intellect and talent. Among my companions, my good nature, and a flow of ready imagination, rendered me very popular. Boys are uncommonly just in their feelings, and at least equally generous. My lameness, and the efforts which I made to supply that disadvantage, by making up in address what I wanted in activity, engaged the latter principle in my favour; and in the winter play hours, when hard exercise was impossible, my tales used to assemble an admiring audience round Luckie Brown's fireside, and happy was he that could sit next the inexhaustible narrator. I was, also, though often negligent of my own task, always ready to assist my friends, and hence I had a little party of staunch partisans and adherents, stout of hand and heart, though somewhat dull of head, the very tools for raising a hero to eminence. So, on the whole, I made a brighter figure in the *yards* than in the *class*.*

My father did not trust our education solely to our High School lessons. We had a tutor at home, a young man of an excellent disposition, and a laborious student. He was bred to the Kirk, but unfortunately took such a very strong turn to fanaticism, that he afterwards resigned an excellent living in a seaport town, merely because he could not persuade the mariners of the guilt of setting sail of a Sabbath,—in which, by the by, he was less likely to be successful, as, *cæteris paribus*, sailors, from an opinion that it is a fortunate omen, always choose to weigh anchor on that day. The calibre of this young man's understanding may be judged of by this anecdote; but in other respects, he was a faithful and active instructor; and from him chiefly I

* I read, not long since, in that authentic record called the *Percy Anecdotes*, that I had been educated at Musselburgh school, where I had been distinguished as an absolute dunce, only Dr. Blair, seeing farther into the millstone, had pronounced there was fire in it. I never was at Musselburgh school in my life, and though I have met Dr. Blair at my father's and elsewhere, I never had the good fortune to attract his notice, to my knowledge. Lastly, I was never a dunce, nor thought to be so, but an incorrigible idle imp, who was always longing to do something else than what was enjoined him.—[1808.]

voice of thunder, he asked his son the fatal question. As young D. modestly allowed he knew nothing about it, his father drove him from the table in a rage, and I absconded during the confusion; nor could Constable ever bring me back again to his friend Davidson's.—[1826.]

learned writing and arithmetic. I repeated to him my French lessons, and studied with him my themes in the classics, but not classically. I also acquired, by disputing with him, for this he readily permitted, some knowledge of school-divinity and church-history, and a great acquaintance, in particular, with the old books describing the early history of the Church of Scotland, the wars and sufferings of the Covenanters, and so forth. I, with a head on fire for chivalry, was a Cavalier; my friend was a Roundhead; I was a Tory, and he was a Whig. I hated Presbyterians, and admired Montrose with his victorious Highlanders; he liked the Presbyterian Ulysses, the dark and politic Argyle; so that we never wanted subjects of dispute, but our disputes were always amicable. In all these tenets, there was no real conviction on my part, arising out of acquaintance with the views or principles of either party; nor had my antagonist address enough to turn the debate on such topics. I took up my politics at that period as King Charles II. did his religion, from an idea that the Cavalier creed was the more gentlemanlike persuasion of the two.

After having been three years under Mr. Fraser, our class was, in the usual routine of the school, turned over to Dr. Adam, the Rector. It was from this respectable man that I first learned the value of the knowledge I had hitherto considered only as a burdensome task. It was the fashion to remain two years at his class, where we read Cæsar, and Livy, and Sallust, in prose; Virgil, Horace, and Terence, in verse. I had by this time mastered, in some degree, the difficulties of the language, and began to be sensible of its beauties. This was really gathering grapes from thistles; nor shall I soon forget the swelling of my little pride when the Rector pronounced, that though many of my schoolfellows understood the Latin better, *Gualterus Scott* was behind few in following and enjoying the author's meaning. Thus encouraged, I distinguished myself by some attempts at poetical versions from Horace and Virgil. Dr. Adam used to invite his scholars to such essays, but never made them tasks. I gained some distinction upon these occasions, and the Rector in future took much notice of me, and his judicious mixture of censure and praise went far to counterbalance my habits of indolence and inattention. I saw I was expected to do well, and I was piqued in honour to vindicate my master's favourable opinion. I climbed, therefore, to the first form; and though I never made a first-rate Latinist, my schoolfellows, and what was of more consequence, I myself, considered that I had a character for learning to maintain. Dr. Adam, to whom I owed so much, never failed to remind me of my obligations when I had made some figure in the literary world. He was, indeed, deeply imbued with that fortunate vanity which alone could induce a man, who has arms to pare and burn a muir, to submit to the yet more toilsome task of cultivating youth. As Catholics confide in the imputed righteousness of their saints, so did the good old doctor plume himself upon the success of his scholars in life, all of which he never failed (and often justly) to claim as the creation, or at least the fruits, of his early instructions. He remembered the fate of every boy at his school during the fifty years he had superintended it, and always traced their success or misfortunes entirely to their attention or negligence when under his care. His "noisy mansion," which to others would have been a melancholy bedlam, was the pride of his heart; and the only fatigues he felt, amidst din and tumult, and the necessity of reading themes, hearing lessons, and maintaining some degree of order at the same time, were relieved by comparing himself to Cæsar, who could dictate to three secretaries at once;—so ready is vanity to lighten the labours of duty.

It is a pity that a man so learned, so admirably adapted for his station, so useful, so simple, so easily contented, should have had other subjects of mortification. But the magistrates of Edinburgh, not knowing the treasure they possessed in Dr. Adam, encouraged a savage fellow, called Nicol, one of the undermasters, in insulting his person and authority. This man was an excellent classical scholar, and an admirable convivial humourist; (which latter quality recommended him to the friendship of Burns;) but worthless, drunken, and inhumanly cruel to the boys under his charge. He carried his feud against the Rector within an inch of assassination, for he waylaid and knocked him down in the dark. The favour which this worthless rival obtained in the town-council led to other consequences, which for some time clouded poor Adam's happiness and fair fame. When the French Revolution broke out, and parties ran high in approving or condemning it, the doctor incautiously joined the former. This was very natural, for as all his ideas of existing governments were derived from his experience of the town-council of Edinburgh, it must be admitted they scarce brooked comparison with the free states of Rome and Greece, from which he borrowed his opinions concerning republics. His want of caution in speaking on the political topics of the day, lost him the respect of the boys, most of whom were accustomed to hear very different opinions on those matters in the bosom of their families. This, however, (which was long after my time,) passed away with other heats of the period, and the doctor continued his labours till about a year since, when he was struck with palsy while teaching his class. He survived a few days, but becoming delirious before his dissolution, conceived he was still in school, and after some expressions of applause or censure, he said, "But it grows dark—the boys may dismiss"—and instantly expired.

From Dr. Adam's class I should, according to the usual routine, have proceeded immediately to college. But, fortunately, I was not yet to lose, by a total dismission from constraint, the acquaintance with the Latin which I had acquired. My health had become rather delicate from rapid growth, and my father was easily persuaded to allow me to spend half a year at Kelso with my kind aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whose inmate I again became. It was hardly worth mentioning that I had frequently visited her during our short vacations.

At this time she resided in a small house, situated very pleasantly in a large garden, to the eastward of the churchyard of Kelso, which extended down to the Tweed. It was then my father's property, from whom it was afterwards purchased by my uncle. My grandmother was now dead, and my aunt's only companion, besides an old maid-servant, was my cousin, Miss Barbara Scott, now Mrs. Meik. My time was here left entirely to my own disposal, excepting for about four hours in the day, when I was expected to attend the grammar-school of the village. The teacher at that time was Mr. Lancelot Whale, an excellent classical scholar, a humourist, and a worthy man. He had a supreme antipathy to the puns which his very uncommon name frequently gave rise to; insomuch, that he made his son spell the word *Wale*, which only occasioned the young man being nicknamed *the Prince of Wales* by the military mess to which he belonged. As for Whale, senior, the least allusion to Jonah, or the terming him an odd fish, or any similar quibble, was sure to put him beside himself. In point of knowledge and taste, he was far too good for the situation he held, which only required that he should give his scholars a rough foundation in the Latin language. My time with him, though short, was spent greatly to my advantage and his gratification. He was glad to escape to Persius and Tacitus from the eternal Rudiments and Cornelius Nepos; and as perusing these authors with one who began to understand them was to him a labour of love, I made considerable progress under his instructions. I suspect, indeed, that some of the time dedicated to me was withdrawn from the instruction of his more regular scholars: but I was as grateful as I could. I acted as usher, and heard the inferior classes, and I spouted the speech of Galgacus at the public examination, which did not make the less impression

on the audience, that few of them probably understood one word of it.

In the mean while my acquaintance with English literature was gradually extending itself. In the intervals of my school hours I had always perused with avidity such books of history or poetry, or voyages and travels, as chance presented to me—not forgetting the usual, or rather ten times the usual, quantity of fairy tales, eastern stories, romances, &c. These studies were totally unregulated and undirected. My tutor thought it almost a sin to open a profane play or poem; and my mother, besides that she might be in some degree trammelled by the religious scruples which he suggested, had no longer the opportunity to hear me read poetry as formerly. I found, however, in her dressing-room (where I slept at one time) some odd volumes of Shakspeare, nor can I easily forget the rapture with which I sate up in my shirt reading them by the light of a fire in her apartment, until the bustle of the family rising from supper warned me it was time to creep back to my bed, where I was supposed to have been safely deposited since nine o'clock. Chance, however, threw in my way a poetical preceptor. This was no other than the excellent and benevolent Dr. Blacklock, well-known at that time as a literary character. I know not how I attracted his attention, and that of some of the young men who boarded in his family; but so it was, that I became a frequent and favoured guest. The kind old man opened to me the stores of his library, and through his recommendation I became intimate with Ossian and Spenser. I was delighted with both, yet I think chiefly with the latter poet. The tawdry repetitions of the Ossianic phraseology disgusted me rather sooner than might have been expected from my age. But Spenser I could have read forever. Too young to trouble myself about the allegory, I considered all the knights and ladies, and dragons and giants, in their outward and exoteric sense, and God only knows how delighted I was to find myself in such society. As I had always a wonderful facility in retaining in my memory whatever verses pleased me, the quantity of Spenser's stanzas which I could repeat was really marvellous. But this memory of mine was a very fickle ally, and has through my whole life acted merely upon its own capricious motion, and might have enabled me to adopt old Beattie of Meikledale's answer, when complimented by a certain reverend divine on the strength of the same faculty:—"No, sir," answered the old Borderer, "I have no command of my memory. It only retains what hits my fancy, and probably, sir, if you were to preach to me for two hours, I would not be able when you finished to remember a word you had been saying." My memory was precisely of the same kind: it seldom failed to preserve most tenaciously a favourite passage of poetry, a playhouse ditty, or, above all, a Border-raid ballad; but names, dates, and the other technicalities of history, escaped me in a most melancholy degree. The philosophy of history, a much more important subject, was also a sealed book at this period of my life; but I gradually assembled much of what was striking and picturesque in historical narrative; and when in riper years, I attended more to the deduction of general principles, I was furnished with a powerful host of examples in illustration of them. I was, in short, like an ignorant gamester, who kept up a good hand until he knew how to play it.

I left the High School, therefore, with a great quantity of general information, ill arranged, indeed, and collected without system, yet deeply impressed upon my mind; readily assorted by my power of connexion and memory, and gilded, if I may be permitted to say so, by a vivid and active imagination. If my studies were not under any direction at Edinburgh, in the country, it may be will imagined, they were less so. A respectable subscription library, a circulating library of ancient standing, and some private book-shelves, were open to my random perusal, and I waded into the stream like a blind man into a ford, without the power of searching my way, unless by groping for it. My appetite for books was as ample and indiscriminating as it was indefatigable, and I since have had too frequently reason to repent that few ever read so much, and to so little purpose.

Among the valuable acquisitions I made about this time, was an acquaintance with Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered, through the flat medium of Mr. Hoole's translation. But above all, I then first became acquainted with Bishop Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry. As I had been from infancy devoted to legendary lore of this nature, and only reluctantly withdrew my attention, from the scarcity of materials and the rudeness of those which I possessed, it may be imagined, but cannot be described, with what delight I saw pieces of the same kind which had amused my childhood, and still continued in secret the Delilahs of my imagination, considered as the subject of sober research, grave commentary, and apt illustration, by an editor who showed his poetical genius was capable of emulating the best qualities of what his pious labour preserved. I remember well the spot where I read these volumes for the first time. It was beneath a huge platanus-tree, in the ruins of what had been intended for an old-fashioned arbour in the *garden* I have mentioned. The summer day sped onward so fast, that notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and was still found entranced in my intellectual banquet. To read and to remember was in this instance the same thing, and henceforth I overwhelmed my schoolfellows, and all who would hearken to me, with tragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, I could scrape a few shillings together, which were not common occurrences with me, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes, nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm. About this period also, I became acquainted with the works of Richardson, and those of Mackenzie—(whom in later years I became entitled to call my friend)—with Fielding, Smollet, and some others of our best novelists.

To this period also I can trace distinctly the awaking of that delightful feeling for the beauties of natural objects which has never since deserted me. The neighbourhood of Kelso, the most beautiful, if not the most romantic village in Scotland, is eminently calculated to awaken these ideas. It presents objects not only grand in themselves, but venerable from their association. The meeting of two superb rivers, the Tweed and the Teviot, both renowned in song—the ruins of an ancient Abbey—the more distant vestiges of Roxburgh Castle—the modern mansion of Fleurs, which is so situated as to combine the ideas of ancient baronial grandeur with those of modern taste—are in themselves objects of the first class; yet are so mixed, united, and melted among a thousand other beauties of a less prominent description, that they harmonize into one general picture, and please rather by unison than by concord. I believe I have written unintelligibly upon this subject, but it is fitter for the pencil than the pen. The romantic feelings which I have described as predominating in my mind, naturally rested upon and associated themselves with these grand features of the landscape around me; and the historical incidents, or traditional legends, connected with many of them, gave to my admiration a sort of intense impression of reverence, which at times made my heart feel too big for its bosom. From this time the love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or remains of our fathers' piety or splendour, became with me an insatiable passion, which, if circumstances had permitted, I would willingly have gratified by travelling over half the globe.

I was recalled to Edinburgh about the time when the College meets, and put at once to the Humanity class, under Mr. Hill, and the first Greek class, taught by Mr. Dalzell. The former held the reins

of discipline very loosely, and though beloved by his students, for he was a good-natured man as well as a good scholar, he had not the art of exciting our attention as well as liking. This was a dangerous character with whom to trust one who relished labour as little as I did, and amid the riot of his class, I speedily lost much of what I had learned under Adam and Whale. At the Greek class, I might have made a better figure, for Professor Dalzell maintained a great deal of authority, and was not only himself an admirable scholar, but was always deeply interested in the progress of his students. But here lay the villany. Almost all my companions who had left the High School at the same time with myself, had acquired a smattering of Greek before they came to College. I, alas! had none; and finding myself far inferior to all my fellow-students, I could hit upon no better mode of vindicating my equality, than by professing my contempt for the language, and my resolution not to learn it. A youth who died early, himself an excellent Greek scholar, saw my negligence and folly with pain, instead of contempt. He came to call on me in George's Square, and pointed out in the strongest terms the silliness of the conduct I had adopted, told me I was distinguished by the name of the *Greek Blockhead*, and exhorted me to redeem my reputation while it was called to-day. My stubborn pride received this advice with sulky civility; the birth of my Mentor (whose name was Archibald, the son of an inn-keeper) did not, as I thought in my folly, authorize him to intrude upon me his advice. The other was not sharp-sighted, or his consciousness of a generous intention overcame his resentment. He offered me his daily and nightly assistance, and pledged himself to bring me forward with the foremost of my class. I felt some twinges of conscience, but they were unable to prevail over my pride and self-conceit. The poor lad left me more in sorrow than in anger, nor did we ever meet again. All hopes of my progress in the Greek were now over; insomuch that when we were required to write essays on the authors we had studied, I had the audacity to produce a composition, in which I weighed Homer against Ariosto, and pronounced him wanting in the balance. I supported this heresy by a profusion of bad reading and flimsy argument. The wrath of the Professor was extreme, while at the same time he could not suppress his surprise at the quantity of out-of-the-way knowledge which I displayed. He pronounced upon me the severe sentence—that dunce I was, and dunce was to remain—which, however, my excellent and learned friend lived to revoke over a bottle of Burgundy, at our literary club at Fortune's, of which he was a distinguished member.

Meanwhile, as if to eradicate my slightest tincture of Greek, I fell ill during the middle of Mr. Dalzell's second class, and migrated a second time to Kelso—where I again continued a long time, reading what and how I pleased, and of course reading nothing but what afforded me immediate entertainment. The only thing which saved my mind from utter dissipation, was that turn for historical pursuit, which never abandoned me even at the idlest period. I had forsworn the Latin classics for no reason I know of, unless because they were akin to the Greek, but the occasional perusal of Buchanan's history, that of Mathew Paris, and other monkish chronicles, kept up a kind of familiarity with the language even in its rudest state. But I forgot the very letters of the Greek alphabet; a loss never to be repaired, considering what that language is, and who they were who employed it in their compositions.

About this period—or soon afterwards—my father judged it proper I should study mathematics, a study upon which I entered with all the ardour of novelty. My tutor was an aged person, Dr. MacFait, who had in his time been distinguished as a teacher of this science. Age, however, and some domestic inconveniences, had diminished his pupils, and lessened his authority amongst the few who remained. I think that had I been more fortunately placed for instruction, or had I had the spur of emulation, I might have made some progress in this science, of which under the circumstances I have mentioned I only acquired a very superficial smattering.

In other studies I was rather more fortunate; I made some progress in Ethics under Professor John Bruce, and was selected as one of his students whose progress he approved, to read an essay before Principal Robertson. I was farther instructed in Moral Philosophy at the class of Mr. Dugald Stewart, whose striking and impressive eloquence riveted the attention even of the most volatile student. To sum up my academical studies, I attended the class of History, then taught by the present Lord Woodhouselee, and, as far as I remember, no others, excepting those of the civil and municipal law. So that if my learning be flimsy and inaccurate, the reader must have some compassion even for an idle workman, who had so narrow a foundation to build upon. If, however, it should ever fall to the lot of youth to peruse these pages—let such a reader remember, that it is with the deepest regret that I recollect in my manhood the opportunities of learning which I neglected in my youth; that through every part of my literary career I have felt pinched and hampered by my own ignorance; and that I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire, if by doing so I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation of learning and science.

I imagine my father's reason for sending me to so few classes in the College, was a desire that I should apply myself particularly to my legal studies. He had not determined whether I should fill the situation of an Advocate or a Writer; but judiciously considering the technical knowledge of the latter to be useful at least, if not essential, to a barrister, he resolved I should serve the ordinary apprenticeship of five years to his own profession. I accordingly entered into indentures with my father about 1785–6, and entered upon the dry and barren wilderness of forms and conveyances.

I cannot reproach myself with being entirely an idle apprentice—far less, as the reader might reasonably have expected,

> "A clerk foredoom'd my father's soul to cross."

The drudgery, indeed, of the office I disliked, and the confinement I altogether detested; but I loved my father, and I felt the rational pride and pleasure of rendering myself useful to him. I was ambitious also; and among my companions in labour, the only way to gratify ambition was to labour hard and well. Other circumstances reconciled me in some measure to the confinement. The allowance for copy-money furnished a little fund for the *menus plaisirs* of the circulating library and the Theatre; and this was no trifling incentive to labour. When actually at the oar, no man could pull it harder than I, and I remember writing upwards of 120 folio pages with no interval either for food or rest. Again, the hours of attendance on the office were lightened by the power of choosing my own books, and reading them in my own way, which often consisted in beginning at the middle or the end of a volume. A deceased friend, who was a fellow apprentice with me, used often to express his surprise that, after such a hop-step-and-jump perusal, I knew as much of the book as he had been able to acquire from reading it in the usual manner. My desk usually contained a store of most miscellaneous volumes, especially works of fiction of every kind, which were my supreme delight. I might except novels, unless those of the better and higher class, for though I read many of them, yet it was with more selection than might have been expected. The whole Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy tribe I abhorred, and it required the art of Burney, or the feeling of Mackenzie, to fix my attention upon a domestic tale. But all that was adventurous and romantic I devoured without much

discrimination, and I really believe I have read as much nonsense of this class as any man now living. Every thing which touched on knight-errantry was particularly acceptable to me, and I soon attempted to imitate what I so greatly admired. My efforts, however, were in the manner of the tale-teller, not of the bard.

My greatest intimate, from the days of my schooltide, was Mr. John Irving, now a Writer to the Signet. We lived near each other, and by joint agreement were wont, each of us, to compose a romance for the other's amusement. These legends, in which the martial and the miraculous always predominated, we rehearsed to each other during our walks, which were usually directed to the most solitary spots about Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags. We naturally sought seclusion, for we were conscious no small degree of ridicule would have attended our amusement, if the nature of it had become known. Whole holidays were spent in this singular pastime, which continued for two or three years, and had, I believe, no small effect in directing the turn of my imagination to the chivalrous and romantic in poetry and prose.

Mean while, the translations of Mr. Hoole having made me acquainted with Tasso and Ariosto, I learned from his notes on the latter, that the Italian language contained a fund of romantic lore. A part of my earnings was dedicated to an Italian class which I attended twice a-week, and rapidly acquired some proficiency. I had previously renewed and extended my knowledge of the French language, from the same principle of romantic research. Tressan's romances, the Bibliothèque Bleue, and Bibliothèque de Romans, were already familiar to me, and I now acquired similar intimacy with the works of Dante, Boiardo, Pulci, and other eminent Italian authors. I fastened also, like a tiger, upon every collection of old songs or romances which chance threw in my way, or which my scrutiny was able to discover on the dusty shelves of John Sibbald's circulating library in the Parliament Square. This collection, now dismantled and dispersed, contained at that time many rare and curious works, seldom found in such a collection. Mr. Sibbald himself, a man of rough manners, but of some taste and judgment, cultivated music and poetry, and in his shop I had a distant view of some literary characters, besides the privilege of ransacking the stores of old French and Italian books, which were in little demand among the bulk of his subscribers. Here I saw the unfortunate Andrew Macdonald, author of Vimonda: and here, too, I saw at a distance the boast of Scotland, Robert Burns. Of the latter I shall presently have occasion to speak more fully.

I am inadvertently led to confound dates while I talk of this remote period, for, as I have no notes, it is impossible for me to remember with accuracy the progress of studies, if they deserve the name, so irregular and miscellaneous. But about the second year of my apprenticeship, my health, which, from rapid growth and other causes, had been hitherto rather uncertain and delicate, was affected by the breaking of a blood-vessel. The regimen I had to undergo on this occasion was far from agreeable. It was Spring, and the weather raw and cold, yet I was confined to bed with a single blanket, and bled and blistered till I scarcely had a pulse left. I had all the appetite of a growing boy, but was prohibited any sustenance beyond what was absolutely necessary for the support of nature, and that in vegetables alone. Above all, with a considerable disposition to talk, I was not permitted to open my lips, without one or two old ladies who watched my couch being ready at once to souse upon me, "imposing silence with a stilly sound." My only refuge was reading and playing at chess. To the romances and poetry, which I chiefly delighted in, I had always added the study of history, especially as connected with military events. I was encouraged in this latter study by a tolerable acquaintance with geography, and by the opportunities I had enjoyed while with Mr. MacFait to learn the meaning of the more ordinary terms of fortification. While, therefore, I lay in this dreary and silent solitude, I fell upon the resource of illustrating the battles I read of by the childish expedient of arranging shells, and seeds, and pebbles, so as to represent encountering armies. Diminutive crossbows were contrived to mimic artillery, and with the assistance of a friendly carpenter, I contrived to model a fortress, which, like that of Uncle Toby, represented whatever place happened to be uppermost in my imagination. I fought my way thus through Vertot's Knights of Malta—a book which, as it hovered between history and romance, was exceedingly dear to me; and Orme's interesting and beautiful History of Indostan, whose copious plans, aided by the clear and luminous explanations of the author, rendered my imitative amusement peculiarly easy. Other moments of these weary weeks were spent in looking at the Meadow Walks, by assistance of a combination of mirrors so arranged that, while lying in bed, I could see the troops march out to exercise, or any other incident which occurred on that promenade.

After one or two relapses, my constitution recovered the injury it had sustained, though for several months afterwards I was restricted to a severe vegetable diet. And I must say, in passing, that though I gained health under this necessary restriction, yet it was far from being agreeable to me, and I was affected whilst under its influence with a nervousness which I never felt before or since. A disposition to start upon slight alarms—a want of decision in feeling and acting, which has not usually been my failing—an acute sensibility to trifling inconveniences—and an unnecessary apprehension of contingent misfortunes, rise to my memory as connected with my vegetable diet, although they may very possibly have been entirely the result of the disorder and not of the cure. Be this as it may, with this illness I bade farewell both to disease and medicine, for since that time, till the hour I am now writing, I have enjoyed a state of the most robust health, having only had to complain of occasional headaches or stomachic affections, when I have been long without taking exercise, or have lived too convivially—the latter having been occasionally, though not habitually, the error of my youth, as the former has been of my advanced life.

My frame gradually became hardened with my constitution, and being both tall and muscular, I was rather disfigured than disabled by my lameness. This personal disadvantage did not prevent me from taking much exercise on horseback, and making long journeys on foot, in the course of which I often walked from twenty to thirty miles a-day. A distinct instance occurs to me. I remember walking with poor James Ramsay, my fellow apprentice, now no more, and two other friends, to breakfast at Prestonpans. We spent the forenoon in visiting the ruins at Seton, and the field of battle at Preston—dined at Prestonpans on *tiled haddocks*, very sumptuously—drank half a bottle of port each, and returned in the evening. This could not be less than thirty miles, nor do I remember being at all fatigued upon the occasion.

These excursions on foot or horseback, formed by far my most favourite amusement. I have all my life delighted in travelling, though I have never enjoyed that pleasure upon a large scale. It was a propensity which I sometimes indulged so unduly, as to alarm and vex my parents. Wood, water, wilderness itself, had an inexpressible charm for me, and I had a dreamy way of going much further than I intended, so that unconsciously my return was protracted, and my parents had sometimes serious cause of uneasiness. For example, I once set out with Mr. George Abercromby,* (the son of the immortal General,) Mr. William Clerk, and some others, to fish in the lake above Howgate, and the stream which descends from it into the Esk. We breakfasted at Howgate, and fished the whole day;

* Now Lord Abercromby.—[1834.]

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while we were on our return next morning, I was easily seduced by William Clerk, then a great intimate, to visit Pennycuik House, the seat of his family. Here he and John Irving, and I for their sake, were overwhelmed with kindness by the late Sir John Clerk and his lady, the present Dowager Lady Clerk. The pleasure of looking at fine pictures, the beauty of the place, and the flattering hospitality of the owners, drowned all recollection of home for a day or two. Meanwhile our companions, who had walked on without being aware of our digression, returned to Edinburgh without us, and excited no small alarm in my father's household. At length, however, they became accustomed to my escapades. My father used to protest to me on such occasions, that he thought I was born to be a strolling pedlar, and though the prediction was intended to mortify my conceit, I am not sure that I altogether disliked it. I was now familiar with Shakspeare, and thought of Autolycus's song—

> "Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,
> And merrily hent the stile-a:
> A merry heart goes all the day,
> Your sad tires in a mile-a."

My principal object in these excursions was the pleasure of seeing romantic scenery, or what afforded me at least equal pleasure, the places which had been distinguished by remarkable historical events. The delight with which I regarded the former of course had general approbation, but I often found it difficult to procure sympathy with the interest I felt in the latter. Yet to me, the wandering over the field of Bannockburn was the source of more exquisite pleasure than gazing upon the celebrated landscape from the battlements of Stirling castle. I do not by any means infer that I was dead to the feeling of picturesque scenery; on the contrary, few delighted more in its general effect. But I was unable with the eye of a painter to dissect the various parts of the scene, to comprehend how the one bore upon the other, to estimate the effect which various features of the view had in producing its leading and general effect. I have never, indeed, been capable of doing this with precision or nicety, though my latter studies have led me to amend and arrange my original ideas upon the subject. Even the humble ambition, which I long cherished, of making sketches of those places which interested me, from a defect of eye or of hand, was totally ineffectual. After long study and many efforts, I was unable to apply the elements of perspective or of shade to the scene before me, and was obliged to relinquish in despair an art which I was most anxious to practise. But show me an old castle or a field of battle, and I was at home at once, filled it with its combatants in their proper costume, and overwhelmed my hearers by the enthusiasm of my description. In crossing Magus Moor, near St. Andrews, the spirit moved me to give a picture of the assassination of the Archbishop of St. Andrews, to some fellow-travellers with whom I was accidentally associated, and one of them, though well acquainted with the story, protested my narrative had frightened away his night's sleep. I mention this to show the distinction between a sense of the picturesque in action and in scenery. If I have since been able in poetry to trace with some success the principles of the latter, it has always been with reference to its general and leading features, or under some alliance with moral feeling; and even this proficiency has cost me study. Meanwhile I endeavoured to make amends for my ignorance of drawing, by adopting a sort of technical memory respecting the scenes I visited. Wherever I went, I cut a piece of a branch from a tree—these constituted what I called my log-book; and I intended to have a set of chess-men out of them, each having reference to the place where it was cut—as the kings from Falkland and Holy-Rood; the queens from Queen Mary's yew-tree at Crookston; the bishops from abbeys or episcopal palaces; the knights from baronial residences; the rooks from royal fortresses; and the pawns generally from places worthy of historical note. But this whimsical design I never carried into execution.

With music it was even worse than with painting. My mother was anxious we should at least learn Psalmody; but the incurable defects of my voice and ear soon drove my teacher to despair.* It is by long practice that I have acquired the power of selecting or distinguishing melodies; and although now few things delight or affect me more than a simple tune sung with feeling, yet I am sensible that even this pitch of musical taste has only been gained by attention and habit, and, as it were, by my feeling of the words being associated with the tune. I have, therefore, been usually unsuccessful in composing words to a tune, although my friend, Dr. Clarke, and other musical composers, have sometimes been able to make a happy union between their music and my poetry.

In other points, however, I began to make some amends for the irregularity of my education. It is well known that in Edinburgh one great spur to emulation among youthful students, is in those associations called *literary societies*, formed not only for the purpose of debate, but of composition. These undoubtedly have some disadvantages, where a bold, petulant, and disputatious temper, happens to be combined with considerable information and talent. Still, however, in order to such a person being actually spoiled by his mixing in such debates, his talents must be of a very rare nature, or his effrontery must be proof to every species of assault; for there is generally, in a well-selected society of this nature, talent sufficient to meet the forwardest, and satire enough to penetrate the most undaunted. I am particularly obliged to this sort of club for introducing me, about my seventeenth year, into the society which at one time I had entirely dropped; for, from the time of my illness at college, I had had little or no intercourse with any of my class-companions, one or two only excepted. Now, however, about 1788, I began to feel and take my ground in society. A ready wit, a good deal of enthusiasm, and a perception that soon ripened into tact and observation of character, rendered me an acceptable companion to many young men whose acquisitions in philosophy and science were infinitely superior to any thing I could boast.

In the business of these societies—for I was a member of more than one successively—I cannot boast of having made any great figure. I never was a good speaker, unless upon some subject which strongly animated my feelings; and, as I was totally unaccustomed to composition, as well as to the art of generalizing my ideas upon any subject, my literary essays were but very poor work. I never attempted them unless when compelled to do so by the regulations of the society, and then I was like the Lord of Castle Rackrent, who was obliged to cut down a tree to get a few faggots to boil the kettle; for the quantity of ponderous and miscellaneous knowledge, which I really possessed on many subjects, was not easily condensed, or brought to bear upon the object I wished particularly to become master of. Yet there occurred opportunities when this odd lumber of my brain, especially that which was connected with the recondite parts of history, did me, as Hamlet says, "yeoman's service." My memory of events was like one of the

* The late Alexander Campbell, a warm-hearted man, and an enthusiast in Scottish music, which he sang most beautifully, had this ungrateful task imposed on him. He was a man of many accomplishments, but dashed with a *bizarrerie* of temper which made them useless to their proprietor. He wrote several books—as a Tour in Scotland, &c.—and he made an advantageous marriage, but fell nevertheless into distressed circumstances, which I had the pleasure of relieving, if I could not remove. His sense of gratitude was very strong, and showed itself oddly in one respect. He would never allow that I had a bad ear; but contended, that if I did not understand music, it was because I did not choose to learn it. But when he attended us in George's Square, our neighbour, Lady Cumming, sent to beg the boys might not be all flogged precisely at the same hour, as, though she had no doubt the punishment was deserved, the noise of the concord was really dreadful. Robert was the only one of our family who could sing, though my father was musical, and a performer on the violoncello at the *gentlemen's concerts*. [1826.]

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large, old-fashioned stone-cannons of the Turks—very difficult to load well and discharge, but making a powerful effect when by good chance any object did come within range of its shot. Such fortunate opportunities of exploding with effect maintained my literary character among my companions, with whom I soon met with great indulgence and regard. The persons with whom I chiefly lived at this period of my youth, were William Clerk, already mentioned; James Edmonstoune, of Newton; George Abercromby; Adam Ferguson, son of the celebrated Professor Ferguson, and who combined the lightest and most airy temper with the best and kindest disposition; John Irving, already mentioned; the Honourable Thomas Douglas, now Earl of Selkirk; David Boyle,*—and two or three others, who sometimes plunged deeply into politics and metaphysics, and not unfrequently "doffed the world aside, and bid it pass."

Looking back on these times, I cannot applaud in all respects the way in which our days were spent. There was too much idleness, and sometimes too much conviviality: but our hearts were warm, our minds honourably bent on knowledge and literary distinction; and if I, certainly the least informed of the party, may be permitted to bear witness, we were not without the fair and creditable means of attaining the distinction to which we aspired. In this society I was naturally led to correct my former useless course of reading; for—feeling myself greatly inferior to my companions in metaphysical philosophy, and other branches of regular study—I laboured, not without some success, to acquire at least such a portion of knowledge as might enable me to maintain my rank in conversation. In this I succeeded pretty well; but unfortunately then, as often since through my life, I incurred the deserved ridicule of my friends, from the superficial nature of my acquisitions, which being, in the mercantile phrase, *got up* for society, very often proved flimsy in the texture; and thus the gifts of an uncommonly retentive memory, and acute powers of perception, were sometimes detrimental to their possessor, by encouraging him to a presumptuous reliance upon them.

Amidst these studies, and in this society, the time of my apprenticeship elapsed; and in 1790, or thereabouts, it became necessary that I should seriously consider to which department of the law I was to attach myself. My father behaved with the most parental kindness. He offered, if I preferred his own profession, immediately to take me into partnership with him, which, though his business was much diminished, still afforded me an immediate prospect of a handsome independence. But he did not disguise his wish that I should relinquish this situation to my younger brother, and embrace the more ambitious profession of the bar. I had little hesitation in making my choice—for I was never very fond of money; and in no other particular do the professions admit of a comparison. Besides, I knew and felt the inconveniences attached to that of a writer; and I thought (like a young man) many of them were "ingenio haud subeunda meo." The appearance of personal dependence which that profession requires was disagreeable to me; the sort of connexion between the client and the attorney seemed to render the latter more subservient than was quite agreeable to my nature; and, besides, I had seen many sad examples while overlooking my father's business, that the utmost exertions, and the best meant services, do not secure the *man of business*, as he is called, from great loss, and most ungracious treatment on the part of his employers. The bar, though I was conscious of my deficiencies as a public speaker, was the line of ambition and liberty; it was that also for which most of my contemporary friends were destined. And, lastly, although I would willingly have relieved my father of the labours of his business, yet I saw plainly we could not have agreed on some particulars, if we had attempted to conduct it together, and that I should disappoint his expectations if I did not turn to the bar. So to that object my studies were directed with great ardour and perseverance during the years 1789, 1790, 1791, 1792.

In the usual course of study, the Roman or civil law was the first object of my attention—the second, the Municipal Law of Scotland. In the course of reading on both subjects, I had the advantage of studying in conjunction with my friend William Clerk, a man of the most acute intellects and powerful apprehension, and who, should he ever shake loose the fetters of indolence by which he has been hitherto trammelled, cannot fail to be distinguished in the highest degree. We attended the regular classes of both laws in the University of Edinburgh. The civil law chair, now worthily filled by Mr. Alexander Irving, might at that time be considered as in *abeyance*, since the person by whom it was occupied had never been fit for the situation, and was then almost in a state of dotage. But the Scotch law lectures were those of Mr. David Hume, who still continues to occupy that situation with as much honour to himself as advantage to his country. I copied over his lectures twice with my own hand, from notes taken in the class, and when I have had occasion to consult them, I can never sufficiently admire the penetration and clearness of conception which were necessary to the arrangement of the fabric of law, formed originally under the strictest influence of feudal principles, and innovated, altered, and broken in upon by the change of times, of habits, and of manners, until it resembles some ancient castle, partly entire, partly ruinous, partly dilapidated, patched and altered during the succession of ages by a thousand additions and combinations, yet still exhibiting, with the marks of its antiquity, symptoms of the skill and wisdom of its founders, and capable of being analyzed and made the subject of a methodical plan, by an architect who can understand the various styles of the different ages in which it was subjected to alteration. Such an architect has Mr. Hume been to the law of Scotland, neither wandering into fanciful and abstruse disquisitions, which are the more proper subject of the antiquary, nor satisfied with presenting to his pupils a dry and undigested detail of the laws in their present state, but combining the past state of our legal enactments with the present, and tracing clearly and judiciously the changes which took place, and the causes which led to them.

Under these auspices, I commenced my legal studies. A little parlour was assigned me in my father's house, which was spacious and convenient, and I took the exclusive possession of my new realms with all the feelings of novelty and liberty. Let me do justice to the only years of my life in which I applied to learning with stern, steady, and undeviating industry. The rule of my friend Clerk and myself was, that we should mutually qualify ourselves for undergoing an examination upon certain points of law every morning in the week, Sundays excepted. This was at first to have taken place alternately at each other's houses, but we soon discovered that my friend's resolution was inadequate to severing him from his couch at the early hour fixed for this exercitation. Accordingly, I agreed to go every morning to his house, which, being at the extremity of Prince's Street, New Town, was a walk of two miles. With great punctuality, however, I beat him up to his task every morning before seven o'clock, and in the course of two summers, we went, by way of question and answer, through the whole of Heineccius's Analysis of the Institutes and Pandects, as well as through the smaller copy of Erskine's Institutes of the Law of Scotland. This course of study enabled us to pass with credit the usual trials, which, by the regulations of the Faculty of Advocates, must be undergone by every candidate for admission into their body. My friend William Clerk and I passed these ordeals on the same days—namely, the civil law trial on the [30th June, 1791], and the Scots

* Now Lord Justice-Clerk. [1838.]

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law trial on the [6th July, 1792]. On the [11th July, 1792], we both assumed the gown, with all its duties and honours.

My progress in life during these two or three years had been gradually enlarging my acquaintance, and facilitating my entrance into good company. My father and mother, already advanced in life, saw little society at home, excepting that of near relations, or upon particular occasions, so that I was left to form connexions in a great measure for myself. It is not difficult for a youth with a real desire to please and be pleased, to make his way into good society in Edinburgh—or indeed any where—and my family connexions, if they did not greatly further, had nothing to embarrass my progress. I was a gentleman, and so welcome any where, if so be I could behave myself, as Tony Lumpkin says, "in a concatenation accordingly."

* * * * *

CHAPTER II.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FRAGMENT—EDINBURGH—SANDY-KNOWE—BATH—PRESTONPANS—1771-1778.

Sir Walter Scott opens his brief account of his ancestry with a playful allusion to a trait of national character, which has, time out of mind, furnished merriment to the neighbours of the Scotch: but the zeal of pedigree was deeply rooted in himself, and he would have been the last to treat it with serious disparagement. It has often been exhibited under circumstances sufficiently grotesque; but it has lent strength to many a good impulse, sustained hope and self-respect under many a difficulty and distress, armed heart and nerve to many a bold and resolute struggle for independence; and prompted also many a generous act of assistance, which under its influence alone could have been accepted without any feeling of degradation.

He speaks modestly of his own descent; for, while none of his predecessors had ever sunk below the situation and character of a gentleman, he had but to go three or four generations back, and thence, as far as they could be followed, either on the paternal or maternal side, they were to be found moving in the highest ranks of our baronage. When he fitted up in his later years the beautiful hall of Abbotsford, he was careful to have the armorial bearings of his forefathers blazoned in due order on the compartments of its roof; and there are few in Scotland, under the titled nobility, who could trace their blood to so many stocks of historical distinction.

In the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, and Notes to the Lay of the Last Minstrel, the reader will find sundry notices of the "Bauld Rutherfords that were sae stout," and the Swintons of Swinton in Berwickshire, the two nearest houses on the maternal side. An illustrious old warrior of the latter family, Sir John Swinton, extolled by Froissart, is the hero of the dramatic sketch, "Halidon Hill;" and it is not to be omitted, that through the Swintons Sir Walter Scott could trace himself to William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, the poet and dramatist.* His respect for the worthy barons of Newmains and Dryburgh, of whom, in right of his father's mother, he was the representative, and in whose venerable sepulchre his remains now rest, was testified by his "Memorials of the Haliburtons," a small volume printed (for private circulation only) in the year 1820. His own male ancestors of the family of Harden, whose lineage is traced by Douglas in his Baronage of Scotland back to the middle of the fourteenth century, when they branched off from the great blood of Buccleuch, have been so largely celebrated in his various writings, that I might perhaps content myself with a general reference to those pages, their only imperishable monument. The antique splendour of the ducal house itself has been dignified to all Europe by the pen of its remote descendant; but it may be doubted whether his genius could have been adequately developed, had he not attracted, at an early and critical period, the kindly recognition and support of the Buccleuchs.

The race had been celebrated, however, long before his day, by a minstrel of its own: nor did he conceal his belief that he owed much to the influence exerted over his juvenile mind by the rude but enthusiastic clan-poetry of old *Satchells*, who describes himself *on his title-page* as

> "Captain Walter Scot, an old Souldier and no Scholler,
> And one that can write nane,
> But just the Letters of his Name."

His "True History of several honourable Families of the Right Honourable Name of Scot, in the Shires of Roxburgh and Selkirk, and others adjecent, gathered out of Ancient Chronicles, Histories, and Traditions of our Fathers," includes, among other things, a string of complimentary rhymes addressed to the first Laird of Raeburn; and the copy which had belonged to that gentleman, was in all likelihood about the first book of verses that fell into the poet's hand.* How continually its wild and uncouth doggrel was on his lips to his latest day, all his familiars can testify; and the passages which he quoted with the greatest zest, were those commemorative of two ancient worthies, both of whom had to contend against physical misfortune similar to his own. The former of these, according to Satchells, was the immediate founder of the branch originally designed of Simton, afterward of Harden.

> "It is four hundred winters past in order
> Since that Buccleuch was Warden in the Border;
> A son he had at that same tide,
> Which was so lame could neither run nor ride.
> John, this lame son, if my author speaks true,
> He sent him to St. Mungo's in Glasgu,
> Where he remained a scholar's time,
> Then married a wife according to his mind. . . .
> And betwixt them twa was procreat
> Headshaw, Askirk, Sunroa, and Glack."

But if the scholarship of *John the Lamiter* furnished his descendant with many a mirthful allusion, a far greater favourite was the memory of *William the Boltfoot*, who followed him in the sixth generation.

* His family well remember the delight which he expressed on receiving, in 1818, a copy of this first edition, a small dark quarto of 1688, from his friend Constable. He was breakfasting when the present was delivered, and said, "This is indeed the resurrection of an old ally—I mind *spelling* these lines." He read aloud the jingling epistle to his own great-great-grandfather, which, like the rest, concludes with a broad hint that, as the author had neither lands nor flocks—" no estate left except his designation"—the more fortunate kinsman who enjoyed, like Jason of old, a fair share of *fleeces*, might do worse than bestow on him some of King James's *broad pieces*. On rising from table, Sir Walter immediately wrote as follows on the blank leaf opposite to poor Satchells' honest title-page—

> "I, Walter Scott of Abbotsford, a poor scholar, no soldier, but a soldier's lover,
> In the style of my namesake and kinsman do hereby discover, [over:
> That I have written the twenty-four letters twenty-four million times
> And to every true-born Scott I do wish as many golden pieces,
> As ever were hairs in Jason's and Medea's golden fleeces."

The rarity of the original edition of Satchells is such, that the copy now at Abbotsford was the only one Mr. Constable had ever seen—and no wonder, for the author's *envoy* is in these words:—

> "Begone, my book, stretch forth thy wings and fly
> Amongst the nobles and gentility;
> Thou'rt not to sell to scavengers and clowns,
> But given to worthy persons of renown.
> The number's few I've printed, in regard
> My charges have been great, and I hope reward;
> I cawsd not print many above twelve score,
> And the printers are engaged that they shall print no more."

* On Sir Walter's copy of "Recreations with the Muses, by William, Earl of Stirling, 1637," there is the following MS. note:—"Sir William Alexander, sixth Baron of Menstrie, and first Earl of Stirling, the friend of Drummond of Hawthornden and Ben Jonson, died in 1640. His eldest son, William, Viscount Canada, died before his father, leaving one son and three daughters by his wife, Lady Margaret Douglas, eldest daughter of William, first Marquis of Douglas. Margaret, the second of these daughters, married Sir Robert Sinclair of Longformacus in the Merse, to whom she bore two daughters, Anne and Jean. Jean Sinclair, the younger daughter, married Sir John Swinton of Swinton; and Jean Swinton, her eldest daughter, was the grandmother of the proprietor of this volume."

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"The Laird and Lady of Harden
Betwixt then procreat was a son
Called William Boltfoot of Harden"—

The emphasis with which this next line was quoted I can never forget—

"*He did survive to be* A MAN."

He was, in fact, one of the "prowest knights" of the whole genealogy—a fearless horseman and expert spearman, renowned and dreaded; and I suppose I have heard Sir Walter repeat a dozen times, as he was dashing into the Tweed or Ettrick, "rolling red from brae to brae," a stanza from what he called an old ballad, though it was most likely one of his own early imitations.

"To tak the foord he aye was first,
Unless the English loons were near;
Plunge vassal than, plunge horse and man,
Auld Boltfoot rides into the rear."

"From childhood's earliest hour," says the poet in one of his last Journals, "I have rebelled against external circumstances." How largely the traditional famousness of the stalwart *Boltfoot* may have helped to develope this element of his character, I do not pretend to say; but I cannot avoid regretting that Lord Byron had not discovered such another "Deformed Transformed" among his own chivalrous progenitors.

So long as Sir Walter retained his vigorous habits, he used to make an autumnal excursion, with whatever friend happened to be his guest at the time, to the tower of Harden, the *incunabula* of his race. A more picturesque scene for the fastness of a lineage of Border marauders could not be conceived; and so much did he delight in it, remote and inaccessible as its situation is, that, in the earlier part of his life, he had nearly availed himself of his kinsman's permission to fit up the dilapidated *peel* for his summer residence. Harden (the ravine of hares) is a deep, dark, and narrow glen, along which a little mountain brook flows to join the river Borthwick, itself a tributary of the Teviot. The castle is perched on the brink of the precipitous bank, and from the ruinous windows you look down into the crows' nests on the summits of the old mouldering elms, that have their roots on the margin of the stream far below.—

"Where Borthe hoarse, that loads the meads with sand,
Rolls her red tide to Teviot's western strand,
Through slaty hills, whose sides are shagged with thorn,
Where springs in scattered tufts the dark-green corn,
Towers wood-girt Harden far above the vale,
And clouds of ravens o'er the turrets sail.
A hardy race who never shrunk from war,
The Scott, to rival realms a mighty bar,
Here fixed his mountain home,—a wide domain,
And rich the soil, had purple heath been grain;
But what the niggard ground of wealth denied,
From fields more bless'd his fearless arm supplied."*

It was to this wild retreat that the Harden of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, the Auld Wat of a hundred Border ditties, brought home, in 1567, his beautiful bride, Mary Scott, "the Flower of Yarrow," whose grace and gentleness have lived in song along with the stern virtues of her lord. She is said to have chiefly owed her celebrity to the gratitude of an English captive, a beautiful child, whom she rescued from the tender mercies of Wat's moss-troopers, on their return from a foray into Cumberland. The youth grew up under her protection, and is believed to have been the composer both of the words and the music of many of the best old songs of the Border. As Leyden says,

"His are the strains whose wandering echoes thrill
The shepherd lingering on the twilight hill,
When evening brings the merry folding hours,
And sun-eyed daisies close their winking flowers.
He lived o'er Yarrow's Flower to shed the tear,
To strew the holly leaves o'er Harden's bier;
But none was found above the minstrel's tomb,
Emblem of peace, to bid the daisy bloom.
He, nameless as the race from which he sprung,
Saved other names, and left his own unsung."

We are told, that when the last bullock which Auld Wat had provided from the English pastures was consumed, the Flower of Yarrow placed on her table a dish containing a pair of clean spurs; a hint to the company that they must bestir themselves for their next dinner. Sir Walter adds, in a note to the Minstrelsy, "Upon one occasion when the village herd was driving out the cattle to pasture, the old laird heard him call loudly to drive out Harden's cow. 'Harden's *cow!*' echoed the affronted chief; 'Is it come to that pass? by my faith they shall soon say Harden's *kye* (cows).' Accordingly, he sounded his bugle, set out with his followers, and next day returned with *a bow of kye, and a bassen'd* (brindled) *bull*. On his return with this gallant prey, he passed a very large haystack. It occurred to the provident laird that this would be extremely convenient to fodder his new stock of cattle; but as no means of transporting it were obvious, he was fain to take leave of it with the apostrophe, now become proverbial, *By my saul, had ye but four feet ye should not stand lang there.* In short, as Froissart says of a similar class of feudal robbers, nothing came amiss to them that was not *too heavy or too hot*."

Another striking chapter in the genealogical history belongs to the marriage of Auld Wat's son and heir, afterwards Sir William Scott of Harden, distinguished by the early favour of James VI., and severely fined for his loyalty under the usurpation of Cromwell. The period of this gentleman's youth was a very wild one in that district. The Border clans still made war on each other occasionally, much in the fashion of their forefathers; and the young and handsome heir of Harden, engaging in a foray upon the lands of Sir Gideon Murray of Elibank, treasurer-depute of Scotland, was overpowered by that baron's retainers, and carried in shackles to his castle, now a heap of ruins, on the banks of the Tweed. Elibank's "doomtree" extended its broad arms close to the gates of his fortress, and the indignant laird was on the point of desiring his prisoner to say a last prayer, when his more considerate dame interposed milder counsels, suggesting that the culprit was born to a good estate, and that they had three unmarried daughters. Young Harden, not, it is said, without hesitation, agreed to save his life by taking the plainest of the three off their hands, and the contract of marriage, executed instantly on the parchment of a drum, is still in the charter-chest of his noble representative.

Walter Scott, the third son of this couple, was the first Laird of Raeburn, already alluded to as one of the patrons of Satchells. He married Isabel Macdougal, daughter of Macdougal of Makerstoun—a family of great antiquity and distinction in Roxburghshire, of whose blood, through various alliances, the poet had a large share in his veins. Raeburn, though the son and brother of two steady cavaliers, and married into a family of the same political creed, became a Whig, and at last a Quaker; and the reader will find, in one of the notes to The Heart of Mid-Lothian, a singular account of the persecution to which this backsliding exposed him at the hands of both his own and his wife's relations. He was incarcerated (A. D. 1665) first at Edinburgh and then at Jedburgh, by order of the Privy Council—his children were forcibly taken from him, and a heavy sum was levied on his estate yearly, for the purposes of their education beyond the reach of his perilous influence. "It appears," says Sir Walter, in a MS. memorandum now before me, "that the Laird of Makerstoun, his brother-in-law, joined with Raeburn's own elder brother, Harden, in this singular persecution, as it will now be termed by Christians of all persuasions. It was observed by the people that the male line of the second Sir William of Harden became extinct in 1710, and that the representation of Makerstoun

* Leyden, the author of these beautiful lines, has borrowed, as the Lay of the Last Minstrel did also, from one of Satchells' primitive couplets—

"If heather-tops had been corn of the best,
Then Bacclough mill had gotten a noble grist."

soon passed into the female line. They assigned as a cause, that when the wife of Raeburn found herself deprived of her husband, and refused permission even to see her children, she pronounced a malediction on her husband's brother, as well as on her own, and prayed that a male of their body might not inherit their property."

The MS. adds, "of the first Raeburn's two sons, it may be observed, that thanks to the discipline of the Privy Council, they were both good scholars." Of these sons, Walter, the second, was the poet's great-grandfather, the enthusiastic Jacobite of the autobiographical fragment,—who is introduced,

"With amber beard and flaxen hair,
And reverend apostolic air,"

in the epistle prefixed to the sixth canto of Marmion. A good portrait of Bearded Wat, painted for his friend Pitcairn, was presented by the doctor's grandson, the Earl of Kellie, to the father of Sir Walter. It is now at Abbotsford; and shows a considerable resemblance to the poet. Some verses addressed to the original by his kinsman, Walter Scott of Harden, are given in one of the notes to Marmion. The old gentleman himself is said to have written verses occasionally, both English and Latin; but I never heard more than the burden of a drinking-song—

"Barba crescat, barba crescat,
Donec carduus revirescat."

Scantily as the worthy Jacobite seems to have been provided with this world's goods, he married the daughter of a gentleman of good condition, "through whom," says the MS. Memorandum already quoted, "his descendants have inherited a connexion with some honourable branches of the *Shioch nan Diarmid*, or Clan of Campbell." To this connexion Sir Walter owed, as we shall see hereafter, many of those early opportunities for studying the manners of the Highlanders, to which the world are indebted for Waverley, Rob Roy, and the Lady of the Lake.

Robert Scott, the son of Beardie, formed also an honourable alliance. His father-in-law, Thomas Haliburton,* the last but one of the "good lairds of Newmains," entered his marriage as follows in the domestic record, which Sir Walter's pious respect induced him to have printed nearly a century afterwards:—"My second daughter Barbara is married to Robert Scott, son to Walter Scott, uncle to Raeburn, upon this sixteen day of July, 1728, at my house of Dryburgh, by Mr. James Innes, minister of Mertoun, their mothers being cousings; may the blessing of the Lord rest upon them, and make them comforts to each other and to all their relations;" to which the editor of the Memorials adds this note, "May God grant that the prayers of the excellent persons who have passed away may avail for the benefit of those who succeed them!—*Abbotsford*, Nov., 1824."

I need scarcely remind the reader of the exquisite description of the poet's grandfather, in the Introduction to the third Canto of Marmion—

——"the thatched mansion's gray-hair'd sire,
Wise without learning, plain and good,
And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood;
Whose eye, in age quick, clear, and keen,
Showed what in youth its glance had been;
Whose doom discording neighbours sought,
Content with equity unbought."

In the preface to Guy Mannering, we have an anecdote of Robert Scott in his earlier days: "My grandfather, while riding over Charterhouse Moor, then a very extensive common, fell suddenly among a large band of gipsies, who were carousing in a hollow surrounded by bushes. They instantly seized on his bridle with shouts of welcome, exclaiming that they had often dined at his expense, and he must now stay and share their cheer. My ancestor was a little alarmed, for he had more money about his person that he cared to risk in such society. However, being naturally a bold lively spirited man, he entered into the humour of the thing, and sat down to the feast, which consisted of all the varieties of game, poultry, pigs, and so forth, that could be collected by a wide and indiscriminate system of plunder. The dinner was a very merry one, but my relative got a hint from some of the older gipsies, just when 'the mirth and fun grew fast and furious,' and mounting his horse accordingly, he took a French leave of his entertainers." His grandson might have reported more than one scene of the like sort in which he was himself engaged, while hunting the same district, not in quest of foxes or of cattle sales, like the goodman of Sandyknowe, but of ballads for the Minstrelsy. Gipsy stories, as we are told in the same preface, were frequently in the mouth of the old man when his face "brightened at the evening fire," n the days of the poet's childhood. And he adds, that "as Dr. Johnson had a shadowy recollection of Queen Anne as a stately lady in black, adorned with diamonds," so his own memory was haunted with "a solemn remembrance of a woman of more than female height, dressed in a long red cloak, who once made her appearance beneath the thatched roof of Sandy-Knowe, commenced acquaintance by giving him an apple, and whom he looked on, nevertheless, with as much awe as the future doctor, High Church and Tory as he was doomed to be, could look upon the Queen." This was Madge Gordon, granddaughter of Jean Gordon, the prototype of Meg Merrilees.

Of Robert of Sandy-Knowe also there is a very tolerable portrait at Abbotsford, and the likeness of the poet to his grandfather must have forcibly struck every one who has seen it. Indeed, but for its wanting some inches in elevation of forehead, (a considerable want, it must be allowed,) the picture might be mistaken for one of Sir Walter Scott. The keen shrewd expression of the eye, and the remarkable length and compression of the upper lip, bring him exactly before me as he appeared when entering with all the zeal of a professional agriculturist into the merits of a pit of marle discovered at Abbotsford. Had the old man been represented with his cap on his head, the resemblance to one particular phasis of the most changeful of countenances would have been perfect.

Robert Scott had a numerous progeny, and Sir Walter has intimated his intention of recording several of them "with a sincere tribute of gratitude" in the contemplated prosecution of his autobiography. Two of the younger sons were bred to the naval service of the East India Company; one of whom died early and unmarried; the other was the excellent Captain Robert Scott, of whose kindness to his nephew some particulars are given in the Ashestiel Fragment, and more will occur hereafter. Another son, Thomas, followed the profession of his father with ability, and retired in old age upon a handsome independence, acquired by his industrious exertions. He was twice married, first to his near relation, a daughter of Raeburn; and secondly, to Miss Rutherford of Know-South, the estate of which respectable family is now possessed by his son, Charles Scott, an amiable and high-spirited gentleman, who was always a special favourite with his eminent kinsman. The death of Thomas Scott is thus recorded in one of the MS. notes on his nephew's own copy of the Haliburton Memorials:—

* "From the genealogical deduction in the Memorials, it appears that the Haliburtons of Newmains were descended from and represented the ancient and once powerful family of Haliburton of Mertoun, which became extinct in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The first of this latter family possessed the lands and barony of Mertoun by a charter granted by Archibald, Earl of Douglas and Lord of Galloway, (one of those tremendous lords whose coronets counterpoised the Scottish crown,) to Henry de Haliburton, whom he designates as his standard-bearer, on account of his service to the earl in England. On this account the Haliburtons of Mertoun and those of Newmains, in addition to the arms borne by the Haliburtons of Dirleton (the ancient chiefs of that once great and powerful but now almost extinguished name)—*viz. or*, on a bend *azure*, three mascles of the first—gave the distinctive bearing of a buckle of the second in the sinister canton. These arms still appear on various old tombs in the abbeys of Melrose and Dryburgh, as well as on their house at Dryburgh, which was built in 1572."—*MS. Memorandum*, 1820. Sir Walter was served heir to these Haliburtons soon after the date of this Memorandum, and thenceforth quartered the arms above described with those of his paternal family.

"The said Thomas Scott died at Monklaw, near Jedburgh, at two of the clock, 27th January, 1823, in the 90th year of his life, and fully possessed of all his faculties. He read till nearly the year before his death; and being a great musician on the Scotch pipes, had, when on his deathbed, a favourite tune played over to him by his son James, that he might be sure he left him in full possession of it. After hearing it, he hummed it over himself, and corrected it in several of the notes. The air was that called *Sour Plumbs in Galashiels*. When barks and other tonics were given him during his last illness, he privately spat them into his handkerchief, saying, as he had lived all his life without taking doctor's drugs, he wished to die without doing so."

I visited this old man two years before his death, in company with Sir Walter, and thought him about the most venerable figure I had ever set my eyes on—tall and erect, with long flowing tresses of the most silvery whiteness, and stockings rolled up over his knees, after the fashion of three generations back. He sat reading his Bible without spectacles, and did not, for a moment, perceive that any one had entered his room, but on recognising his nephew he rose, with cordial alacrity, kissing him on both cheeks, and exclaiming, "God bless thee, Walter, my man, thou hast risen to be great, but thou wast always good." His remarks were lively and sagacious, and delivered with a touch of that humour which seems to have been shared by most of the family. He had the air and manner of an ancient gentleman, and must in his day have been eminently handsome. I saw more than once, about the same period, this respectable man's sister, who had married her cousin Walter, Laird of Raeburn—thus adding a new link to the closeness of the family connexion. She also must have been, in her youth, remarkable for personal attractions; as it was, she dwells on my memory as the perfect picture of an old Scotch lady, with a great deal of simple dignity in her bearing, but with the softest eye, and the sweetest voice, and a charm of meekness and gentleness about every look and expression; all which contrasted strikingly enough with the stern dry aspect and manners of her husband, a right descendant of the moss-troopers of Harden, who never seemed at his ease but on horseback, and continued to be the boldest fox-hunter of the district, even to the verge of eighty. The poet's aunt spoke her native language pure and undiluted, but without the slightest tincture of that vulgarity which now seems almost unavoidable in the oral use of a dialect so long banished from courts, and which has not been avoided by any modern writer who has ventured to introduce it, with the exception of Scott, and I may add, speaking generally, of Burns. Lady Raeburn, as she was universally styled, may be numbered with those friends of early days whom her nephew has alluded to in one of his prefaces, as preserving what we may fancy to have been the old Scotch of Holyrood.

The particulars which I have been setting down, may help English readers to form some notion of the structure of society in those southern districts of Scotland. When Satchells wrote, he boasted that Buccleuch could summon to his banner one hundred lairds, all of his own name, with ten thousand more—landless men, but still of the same blood. The younger sons of these various lairds were, through many successive generations, portioned off with fragments of the inheritance, until such subdivision could be carried no farther, and then the cadet, of necessity, either adopted the profession of arms, in some foreign service very frequently, or became a cultivator on the estate of his own elder brother, of the chieftain of his branch, or of the great chief and patriarchal protector of the whole clan. Until the commerce of England, and above all, the military and civil services of the English colonies were thrown open to the enterprise of the Scotch, this system of things continued entire. It still remained in force to a considerable extent at the time when the Goodman of Sandy-Knowe was establishing his children in the world—and I am happy to say, that it is far from being abolished even at the present day. It was a system which bound together the various classes of the rural population in bonds of mutual love and confidence; the original community of lineage was equally remembered on all sides; the landlord could count for more than his rent on the tenant, who regarded him rather as a father, or an elder brother, than as one who owed his superiority to mere wealth; and the farmer who, on fit occasions, partook on equal terms of the cheap and the hospitality of his landlord, went back with content and satisfaction to the daily labours of a vocation which he found no one disposed to consider as derogating from his gentle blood. Such delusions, if delusions they were, held the natural arrogance of riches in check, taught the poor man to believe that in virtuous poverty he had nothing to blush for, and spread over the whole being of the community the gracious spirit of a primitive humanity.

Walter Scott, the eldest son of Robert of Sandy-Knowe, appears to have been the first of the family that ever adopted a town life, or any thing claiming to be classed among the learned professions. His branch of the law, however, could not in those days be advantageously prosecuted without extensive connexions in the country; his own were too respectable not to be of much service to him in his calling, and they were cultivated accordingly. His professional visits to Roxburghshire and Ettrick Forest were, in his vigorous life, very frequent; and though he was never supposed to have any tincture either of romance or poetry in his composition, he retained to the last a warm affection for his native district, with a certain reluctant flavour of the old feelings and prejudices of the Borderer. I have little to add to Sir Walter's short and respectful notice of his father, except that I have heard it confirmed by the testimony of many less partial observers. According to every account, he was a most just, honourable, and conscientious man; only too high of spirit for some parts of his business. "He passed from the cradle to the grave," says a surviving relation, "without making an enemy, or losing a friend. He was a most affectionate parent, and if he discouraged, rather than otherwise, his son's early devotion to the pursuits which led him to the height of literary eminence, it was only because he did not understand what such things meant, and considered it his duty to keep his young man to that path in which good sense and industry might, humanly speaking, be thought sure of success."

Sir Walter's mother was short of stature, and by no means comely, at least after the days of her early youth. She had received, as became the daughter of an eminently learned physician, the best sort of education then bestowed on young gentlewomen in Scotland. The poet, speaking of Mrs. Euphemia Sinclair, the mistress of the school at which his mother was reared, to the ingenious local antiquary, Mr. Robert Chambers, said, that "she must have been possessed of uncommon talents for education, as all her young ladies were, in after life, fond of reading, wrote and spelled admirably, were well acquainted with history and the belles lettres, without neglecting the more homely duties of the needle and accompt book; and perfectly well-bred in society." Mr. Chambers adds, "Sir W. further communicated that his mother, and many others of Mrs. Sinclair's pupils, were sent afterwards *to be finished off* by the Honourable Mrs. Ogilvie, a lady who trained her young friends to a style of manners which would now be considered intolerably stiff. Such was the effect of this early training upon the mind of Mrs. Scott, that even when she approached her eightieth year, she took as much care to avoid touching her chair with her back, as if she had still been under the stern eye of Mrs. Ogilvie."*

* See Chambers's Traditions of Edinburgh, vol. ii. pp. 127-131. The functions here ascribed to Mrs. Ogilvie may appear to modern readers little consistent with her rank. Such things, however, were not uncommon in those days in poor old Scotland. Ladies with whom I have conversed in my youth, well remembered an

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The physiognomy of the poet bore, if their portraits may be trusted, no resemblance to either of his parents.

Mr. Scott was nearly thirty years of age when he married, and six children, born to him between 1759 and 1766, all perished in infancy.* A suspicion that the close situation of the College Wynd had been unfavourable to the health of his family, was the motive that induced him to remove to the house which he ever afterwards occupied in George's Square. This removal took place shortly after the poet's birth; and the children born subsequently were, in general, healthy. Of a family of twelve, of whom six lived to maturity, not one now survives; nor have any of them left descendants, except Sir Walter himself, and his next and dearest brother, Thomas Scott.

He says that his consciousness of existence dated from Sandy-Knowe; and how deep and indelible was the impression which its romantic localities had left on his imagination, I need not remind the readers of Marmion and the Eve of St. John. On the summit of the Crags which overhang the farmhouse, stands the ruined tower of Smailholme, the scene of that fine ballad; and the view from thence takes in a wide expanse of the district in which, as has been truly said, every field has its battle, and every rivulet its song:—

> "The lady looked in mournful mood,
> Looked over hill and vale,
> O'er Mertoun's wood, and Tweed's fair flood,
> And all down Teviotdale."

Mertoun, the principal seat of the Harden family, with its noble groves; nearly in front of it, across the Tweed, Leasudden, the comparatively small but still venerable and stately abode of the Lairds of Raeburn; and the hoary Abbey of Dryburgh, surrounded with yew-trees as ancient as itself, seem to lie almost below the feet of the spectator. Opposite him rises the purple peaks of Eildon, the traditional scene of Thomas the Rymer's interview with the Queen of Faerie; behind are the blasted peel which the seer of Erceldoun himself inhabited, "the Broom of the Cowdenknowes," the pastoral valley of the Leader, and the bleak wilderness of Lammermoor. To the eastward, the desolate grandeur of Hume Castle breaks the horizon, as the eye travels towards the range of the Cheviot. A few miles westward, Melrose, "like some tall rock with lichens gray," appears clasped amidst the windings of the Tweed; and the distance presents the serrated mountains of the Gala, the Ettrick, and the Yarrow, all famous in song. Such were the objects that had painted the earliest images on the eye of the last and greatest of the Border Minstrels.

As his memory reached to an earlier period of childhood than that of almost any other person, so assuredly no poet has given to the world a picture of the dawning feelings of life and genius, at once so simple, so beautiful, and so complete, as that of his epistle to William Erskine, the chief literary confidant and counsellor of his prime of manhood.

> "Whether an impulse that has birth
> Soon as the infant wakes on earth,
> One with our feelings and our powers,
> And rather part of us than ours;
> Or whether fitlier term'd the sway
> Of habit, formed in early day,
> Howe'er derived, its force confest,
> Rules with despotic sway the breast,
> And drags us on by viewless chain,
> While taste and reason plead in vain. . . .
>
> Thus, while I ape the measure wild
> Of tales that charm'd me yet a child,
> Rude though they be, still with the chime
> Return the thoughts of early time,
> And feelings rous'd in life's first day,
> Glow in the line and prompt the lay.
> Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,
> Which charm'd my fancy's wakening hour.
> It was a barren scene and wild
> Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
> But ever and anon between
> Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
> And well the lonely infant knew
> Recesses where the wall flower grew,
> And honey-suckle loved to crawl
> Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.
> I deem'd such nooks the sweetest shade
> The sun in all its round surveyed;
> And still I thought that shattered tower
> The mightiest work of human power,
> And marvelled as the aged hind,
> With some strange tale bewitch'd my mind,
> Of forayers who, with headlong force,
> Down from that strength had spurr'd their horse,
> Their southern rapine to renew,
> Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
> And home returning, fill'd the hall
> With revel, wassel-rout, and brawl.
> Methought that still with trump and clang
> The gateway's broken arches rang;
> Methought grim features, seam'd with scars,
> Glared thro' the windows' rusty bars,
> And ever, by the winter hearth,
> Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
> Of lovers' slights, of ladies' charms,
> Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms—
> Of patriot battles won of old
> By Wallace Wight and Bruce the Bold—
> Of later fields of feud and fight,
> When, pouring from their Highland height,
> The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,
> Had swept the scarlet ranks away.
> While stretched at length upon the floor,
> Again I fought each combat o'er,
> Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
> The mimic ranks of war displayed,
> And onward still the Scottish Lion bore,
> And still the scattered Southron fled before."

There are still living in that neighbourhood two old women, who were in the domestic service of Sandy-Knowe, when the lame child was brought thither in the third year of his age. One of them, Tibby Hunter, remembers his coming well; and that "he was a sweet-tempered bairn, a darling with all about the house." The young ewemilkers delighted, she says, to carry him about on their backs among the crags; and he was "very gleg (quick) at the uptake, and soon kenned every sheep and lamb by headmark as well as any of them." His great pleasure, however, was in the society of the "aged hind," recorded in the epistle to Erskine. "Auld Sandy Ormistoun," called, from the most dignified part of his function, "the Cow-bailie," had the chief superintendence of the flocks that browsed upon "the velvet tufts of loveliest green." If the child saw him in the morning, he could not be satisfied unless the old man would set him astride on his shoulder, and take him to keep him company as he lay watching his charge.

> "Here was poetic impulse given
> By the green hill and clear, blue heaven."

The Cow-bailie blew a particular note on his whistle, which signified to the maid-servants in the house below when the little boy wished to be carried home again. He told his friend, Mr. Skene of Rubislaw, when spending a summer day in his old age among these well-remembered crags, that he delighted to roll about on the grass all day long in the midst of the flock, and that "the sort of fellowship he thus formed with the sheep and lambs, had impressed his mind with a degree of affectionate feeling towards them which had lasted throughout life." There is a story of his having been forgotten one day among the knolls when a thunder-storm came on; and his aunt, suddenly recollecting his situation, and running out to bring him home, is said to have found him lying on his back, clapping his

Honourable Mrs. Maitland, who practised the obstetric art in the Cowgate.

* In Sir Walter Scott's desk, after his death, there was found a little packet containing six locks of hair, with this inscription, in the handwriting of his mother:—

> "1. Anne Scott, born March 10, 1759.
> 2. Robert Scott, born August 22, 1760.
> 3. John Scott, born November 29, 1761.
> 4. Robert Scott, born June 7, 1763.
> 5. Jean Scott, born March 27, 1765.
> 6. Walter Scott, born August 15, 1766.
>
> All these are dead, and none of my present family was born till some time afterwards."

hands at the lightning, and crying out, "Bonny, bonny!" at every flash.

I find the following marginal note on his copy of Allan Ramsay's Tea-Table Miscellany (edition 1724;) "This book belonged to my grandfather, Robert Scott, and out of it I was taught Hardiknute by heart before I could read the ballad myself. It was the first poem I ever learnt—the last I shall ever forget." According to Tibby Hunter, he was not particularly fond of his book, embracing every pretext for joining his friend the Cow-bailie out of doors; but "Miss Jenny was a grand hand at keeping him to the bit, and by degrees he came to read brawly."* An early acquaintance of a higher class, Mrs. Duncan, the wife of the present excellent minister of Mertoun, informs me, that though she was younger than Sir Walter, she has a dim remembrance of the interior of Sandy-Knowe:—"Old Mrs. Scott sitting, with her spinning-wheel, at one side of the fire, in a *clean clean* parlour; the grandfather, a good deal failed, in his elbow-chair opposite; and the little boy lying on a carpet, at the old man's feet, listening to the Bible, or whatever good book Miss Jenny was reading to them."

Robert Scott died before his grandson was four years of age; and I heard him mention when he was an old man, that he distinctly remembered the writing and sealing of the funeral letters, and all the ceremonial of the melancholy procession as it left Sandy-Knowe. I shall conclude my notices of the residence at Sandy-Knowe with observing, that in Sir Walter's account of the friendly clergyman who so often sat at his grandfather's fireside, we cannot fail to trace many features of the secluded divine in the novel of Saint Ronan's Well.

I have nothing to add to what he has told us of that excursion to England, which interrupted his residence at Sandy-Knowe for about a twelvemonth, except that I had often been astonished, long before I read his autobiographic fragment, with the minute recollection he seemed to possess of all the striking features of the city of Bath, which he had never seen again since he quitted it before he was six years of age. He has himself alluded, in his Memoir, to the lively recollection he retained of his first visit to the theatre, to which his uncle Robert carried him to witness a representation of As You Like It. In his Reviewal of the Life of John Kemble, written in 1826, he has recorded that impression more fully, and in terms so striking, that I must copy them in this place:—

"There are few things which those gifted with any degree of imagination recollect with a sense of more anxious and mysterious delight, than the first dramatic representation which they have witnessed. The unusual form of the house, filled with such groups of crowded spectators, themselves forming an extraordinary spectacle to the eye which has never witnessed it before; yet all intent upon that wide and mystic curtain, whose dusky undulations permit us now and then to discern the momentary glitter of some gaudy form, or the spangles of some sandaled foot, which trips lightly within: Then the light, brilliant as that of day; then the music, which, in itself a treat sufficient in every other situation, our inexperience mistakes for the very play we came to witness; then the slow rise of the shadowy curtain, disclosing, as if by actual magic, a new land, with woods, and mountains, and lakes, lighted, it seems to us, by another sun, and inhabited by a race of beings different from ourselves, whose language is poetry,—whose dress, demeanour, and sentiments, seem something supernatural,—and whose whole actions and discourse are calculated not for the ordinary tone of every-day life, but to excite the stronger and more powerful faculties—to melt with sorrow, overpower with terror, astonish with the marvellous, or convulse with irresistible laughter:—all these wonders stamp indelible impressions on the memory. Those mixed feelings also, which perplex us between a sense that the scene is but a plaything, and an interest which ever and anon surprises us into a transient belief that that which so strongly affects us cannot be fictitious; those mixed and puzzling feelings, also, are exciting in the highest degree. Then there are the bursts of applause, like distant thunder, and the permission afforded to clap our little hands, and add our own scream of delight to a sound so commanding. All this, and much, much more, is fresh in our memory, although, when we felt these sensations, we looked on the stage which Garrick had not yet left. It is now a long while since; yet we have not passed many hours of such unmixed delight, and we still remember the sinking lights, the dispersing crowd, with the vain longings which we felt that the music would again sound, the magic curtain once more arise, and the enchanting dream recommence; and the astonishment with which we looked upon the apathy of the elder part of our company, who, having the means, did not spend every evening in the theatre."*

Probably it was this performance that first tempted him to open the page of Shakspeare. Before he returned to Sandy-Knowe, assuredly, notwithstanding the modest language of his autobiography, the progress which had been made in his intellectual education was extraordinary; and it is impossible to doubt that his hitherto almost sole tutoress, Miss Jenny Scott, must have been a woman of tastes and acquirements very far above what could have been often found among Scotch ladies, of any but the highest class at least, in that day. In the winter of 1777, she and her charge spent some few weeks—not happy weeks, the "Memoir" hints them to have been—in George's Square, Edinburgh; and it so happened, that during this little interval, Mr. and Mrs. Scott received in their domestic circle a guest capable of appreciating, and, fortunately for us, of recording in a very striking manner, the remarkable development of young Walter's faculties. Mrs. Cockburn, mentioned by him in his Memoir as the authoress of the modern "Flowers of the Forest," born a Rutherford, of Fairnalie, in Selkirkshire, was distantly related to the poet's mother, with whom she had through life been in habits of intimate friendship. This accomplished woman was staying at Ravelstone, in the vicinity of Edinburgh, a seat of the Keiths of Dunnotar, nearly related to Mrs. Scott, and to herself. With some of that family she spent an evening in George's Square. She chanced to be writing next day to Dr. Douglas, the well-known and much respected minister of her native parish, Galashiels; and her letter, of which the doctor's son has kindly given me a copy, contains the following passage:—

"Edinburgh, Saturday night, 15th of the gloomy month when the people of England hang and drown themselves.

* * * * "I last night supped in Mr. Walter Scott's. He has the most extraordinary genius of a boy I ever saw. He was reading a poem to his mother when I went in. I made him read on; it was the description of a shipwreck. His passion rose with the storm. He lifted his eyes and hands. 'There's the mast gone,' says he; 'crash it goes! —they will all perish!' After his agitation, he turns to me. 'That is too melancholy,' says he; 'I had better read you something more amusing.' I preferred a little chat, and asked his opinion of Milton and other books he was reading, which he gave me wonderfully. One of his observations was, 'How strange it is that Adam, just new come into the world, should know every thing—that must be the poet's fancy,' says he. But when he was told he was created perfect by God, he instantly yielded. When taken to bed last night, he told his aunt he liked that lady. 'What lady?' says she. 'Why'

† This old woman still possess "the *banes*" (bones)—that is to say, the boards—of a Psalm-book, which Master Walter gave her at Sandy-knowe. "He chose it," she says, "of a very large print, that I might be able to read it when I was *very auld—forty year auld*; but the bairns pulled the leaves out langsyne."

* Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xi. p. 184.

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Mrs. Cockburn; for I think she is a virtuoso, like myself.' 'Dear Walter,' says aunt Jenny, 'what is a virtuoso?' 'Don't ye know? Why, it's one who wishes and will know every thing.'*—Now, sir, you will think this a very silly story. Pray what age do you suppose this boy to be? Name it now, before I tell you. Why, twelve or fourteen. No such thing; he is not quite six years old.† He has a lame leg, for which he was a year at Bath, and has acquired the perfect English accent, which he has not lost since he came, and he reads like a Garrick. You will allow this an uncommon exotic."

Some particulars in Mrs. Cockburn's account appear considerably at variance with what Sir Walter has told us respecting his own boyish proficiency—especially in the article of pronunciation. On that last head, however, Mrs. Cockburn was not, probably, a very accurate judge: all that can be said is, that if at this early period he had acquired any thing which could be justly described as an English accent, he soon lost, and never again recovered, what he had thus gained from his short residence at Bath. In after life his pronunciation of words, considered separately, was seldom much different from that of a well-educated Englishman of his time; but he used many words in a sense which belonged to Scotland not to England, and the tone and accent remained broadly Scotch, though, unless in the *burr*, which no doubt smacked of the country bordering on Northumberland, there was no *provincial* peculiarity about his utterance. He had strong powers of mimicry—could talk with a peasant quite in his own style, and frequently in general society introduced rustic *patois*, northern, southern, or midland, with great truth and effect; but these things were inlaid dramatically, or playfully, upon his narrative. His exquisite taste in this matter was not less remarkable in his conversation than in the prose of his Scotch novels.

Another lady, nearly connected with the Keiths of Ravelstone, has a lively recollection of young Walter, when paying a visit much about the same period to his kind relation,‡ the mistress of that picturesque old mansion, which furnished him in after days with many of the features of his Tully-Veolan, and whose venerable gardens, with their massive hedges of yew and holly, he always considered as the ideal of the art. The lady, whose letter I have now before me, says she distinctly remembers the sickly boy sitting at the gate of the house with his attendant, when a poor mendicant approached, old and wobegone, to claim the charity which none asked for in vain at Ravelstone. When the man was retiring, the servant remarked to Walter that he ought to be thankful to Providence for having placed him above the want and misery he had been contemplating. "The child looked up with a half wistful, half incredulous expression,"—and said, *Homer was a beggar!* How do you know that? said the other—Why, don't you remember, answered the little virtuoso,—that

> "Seven *Roman* cities strove for Homer dead,
> Through which the living Homer begged his bread!"

The lady smiled at the "*Roman* cities,"—but already

> "Each blank in faithless memory void,
> The poet's glowing thought supplied."

It was in this same year, 1777, that he spent some time at Preatonpans; made his first acquaintance with George Constable, the original of his Monkbarns; explored the field where Colonel Gardiner received his death-wound, under the learned guidance of Dalgetty; and marked the spot "where the grass grew long and green, distinguishing it from the rest of the field,"* above the grave of poor Balmawhapple.

His uncle Thomas, whom I have described as I saw him in extreme old age at Monklaw, had the management of the farm affairs at Sandy-Knowe, when Walter returned thither from Prestonpans; he was a kindhearted man, and very fond of the child. Appearing on his return somewhat strengthened, his uncle promoted him from the Cowbailie's shoulder to a dwarf of the Shetland race, not so large as many a Newfoundland dog. This creature walked freely into the house, and was regularly fed from the boy's hand. He soon learned to sit her well, and often alarmed aunt Jenny, by cantering over the rough places about the tower. In the evening of his life, when he had a grandchild afflicted with an infirmity akin to his own, he provided him with a little mare of the same breed, and gave her the name of *Marion*, in memory of this early favourite.

CHAPTER III.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY CONTINUED—HIGH SCHOOL OF EDINBURGH—RESIDENCE AT KELSO—1778-1783.

The report of Walter's progress in horsemanship probably reminded his father that it was time he should be learning other things beyond the department either of aunt Jenny or uncle Thomas, and after a few months he was recalled to Edinburgh. But extraordinary as was the progress he had by this time made in that self-education, which alone is of primary consequence to spirits of his order, he was found too deficient in lesser matters to be at once entered in the High School. Probably his mother dreaded, and deferred as long as she could, the day when he should be exposed to the rude collision of a crowd of boys. At all events, he was placed first in a little private school kept by one Leechman in Bristo-port; and then, that experiment not answering expectation, under the domestic tutorage of Mr. James French, afterwards minister of East Kilbride in Lanarkshire. This respectable man grounded him in the Latin grammar, and considered him fit to join Luke Fraser's second class in October, 1779.

His own account of his progress at this excellent seminary is, on the whole, very similar to what I have received from some of his surviving schoolfellows. His quick apprehension and powerful memory enabled him, at little cost of labour, to perform the usual routine of tasks, in such a manner as to keep him generally "in a decent place," (so he once expressed it to Mr. Skene,) "about the middle of the class; with which," he continued, "I was the better contented, that it chanced to be near the fire."† Mr. Fraser was, I believe, more zealous in enforcing attention to the technicalities of grammar, than to excite curiosity about historical facts, or imagination to strain after the flights of a poet. There is no evidence that Scott, though he speaks of him as his "kind master," in remembrance probably of sympathy for his physical infirmities, ever attracted his special notice with reference to scholarship; but Adam, the rector, into whose class he passed in October, 1782, was, as his situation demanded, a teacher of a more liberal cast, and though never, even under his guidance, did Walter fix and concentrate his ambition so as to maintain an eminent place, still the vivacity of his talents was observed, and the readiness of his memory in particular was so often displayed, that (as Mr. Irving, his chosen friend of that day, informs

* It may amuse my reader to recall, by the side of Scott's early definition of "a Virtuoso," the lines in which Akenside has painted that character—lines which might have been written for a description of the Author of Waverley:—

> "He knew the various modes of ancient times,
> Their arts and fashions of each various guise;
> Their weddings, funerals, punishments of crimes;
> Their strength, their learning etc, and rarities.
> Of old habiliment, each sort and size,
> Male, female, high and low, to him were known;
> Each gladiator's dress, and stage-disguise,
> With learned clerkly phrase he could have shown."

† He was, in fact, six years and three months old before this letter was written.

‡ Mrs. Keith of Ravelstone was born a Swinton of Swinton, and sister to Sir Walter's maternal grandmother.

* Waverley, vol. ii. p. 175.

† According to Mr. Irving's recollection, Scott's place, after the first winter, was usually between the 7th and the 15th from the top of the class. He adds, "Dr. James Buchan was always the *dux*; David Douglas (Lord Reston) *second*; and the present Lord Melville *third*."

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me,) the doctor "would constantly refer to him for dates, the particulars of battles, and other remarkable events alluded to in Horace, or whatever author the boys were reading, and used to call him the historian of the class." No one who has read, as few have not, Dr. Adam's interesting work on Roman Antiquities, will doubt the author's capacity for stimulating such a mind as young Scott's.

He speaks of himself as occasionally "glancing like a meteor from the bottom to the top of the form." His school-fellow, Mr. Claud Russell, remembers that he once made a great leap in consequence of the stupidity of some laggard on what is called the *dull's* (dolt's) bench, who being asked, on boggling at *cum*, "what part of speech is *with?*" answered, "*a substantive.*" The rector, after a moment's pause, thought it worth while to ask his *dux*—"Is *with* ever a substantive?" but all were silent until the query reached Scott, then near the bottom of the class, who instantly responded by quoting a verse of the book of Judges:—"And Sampson said unto Delilah, If they bind me with seven green *withs* that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and as another man."* Another upward movement, accomplished in a less laudable manner, but still one strikingly illustrative of his ingenious resources, I am enabled to preserve through the kindness of a brother poet and esteemed friend, to whom Sir Walter himself communicated it in the melancholy twilight of his bright day.

Mr. Rogers says—"Sitting one day alone with him in your house, in the Regent's Park—(it was the day but one before he left it to embark at Portsmouth for Malta)—I led him, among other things, to tell me once again a story of himself, which he had formerly told me, and which I had often wished to recover. When I returned home, I wrote it down, as nearly as I could, in his own words; and here they are. The subject is an achievement worthy of Ulysses himself, and such as many of his school-fellows could, no doubt, have related of him; but I fear I have done it no justice, though the story is so very characteristic that it should not be lost. The inimitable manner in which he told it—the glance of the eye, the turn of the head, and the light that played over his faded features as, one by one, the circumstances came back to him, accompanied by a thousand boyish feelings, that had slept perhaps for years—there is no language, not even his own, could convey to you; but you can supply them. Would that others could do so, who had not the good fortune to know him!—The memorandum (Friday, October 21, 1831) is as follows:—

"There was a boy in my class at school, who stood always at the top,† nor could I with all my efforts supplant him. Day came after day, and still he kept his place, do what I would; till at length I observed that when a question was asked him, he always fumbled with his fingers at a particular button in the lower part of his waistcoat. To remove it, therefore, became expedient in my eyes; and in an evil moment it was removed with a knife. Great was my anxiety to know the success of my measure; and it succeeded too well. When the boy was again questioned, his fingers sought again for the button, but it was not to be found. In his distress he looked down for it; it was to be seen no more than to be felt. He stood confounded, and I took possession of his place; nor did he ever recover it, or ever, I believe, suspect who was the author of his wrong. Often in after-life has the sight of him smote me as I passed by him; and often have I resolved to make him some reparation; but it ended in good resolutions. Though I never renewed my acquaintance with him, I often saw him, for he filled some inferior office in one of the courts of law at Edinburgh. Poor fellow! I believe he is dead; he took early to drinking."

The autobiography tells us that his translations in verse from Horace and Virgil were often approved by Dr. Adam. One of these little pieces, written in a weak boyish scrawl within pencilled marks still visible, had been carefully preserved by his mother; it was found folded up in a cover inscribed by the old lady—"*My Walter's first lines*, 1782."

"In awful ruins Ætna thunders nigh,
And sends in pitchy whirlwinds to the sky
Black clouds of smoke, which, still as they aspire,
From their dark sides there bursts the glowing fire;
At other times huge balls of fire are toss'd,
That lick the stars, and in the smoke are lost:
Sometimes the mount, with vast convulsions torn,
Emits huge rocks, which instantly are borne
With loud explosions to the starry skies,
The stones made liquid as the huge mass flies.
Then back again with greater weight recoils,
While Ætna thundering from the bottom boils."

I gather from Mr. Irving that these lines were considered as the second best set of those produced on the occasion—Colin Mackenzie of Portmore, through life Scott's dear friend, carrying off the premium.

In his introduction to the "Lay," he alludes to an original effusion of these "schoolboy days," prompted by a thunder-storm, which, he says, "was much approved of, until a malevolent critic sprung up in the shape of an apothecary's blue-buskined wife, who affirmed that my most sweet poetry was copied from an old magazine. I never" (he continues) "forgave the imputation, and even now I acknowledge some resentment against the poor woman's memory. She indeed accused me unjustly, when she said I had stolen my poem ready made; but as I had, like most premature poets, copied all the words and ideas of which my verses consisted, she was so far right. I made one or two faint attempts at verse after I had undergone this sort of daw-plucking at the hands of the apothecary's wife, but some friend or other always advised me to put my verses into the fire; and, like Dorax in the play, I submitted, though with a swelling heart." These lines, and another short piece "on the Setting Sun," were lately found wrapped up in a cover, inscribed by Dr. Adam, "Walter Scott, July, 1783," and have been kindly transmitted to me by the gentleman who discovered them.

"On a Thunder-storm.

"Loud o'er my head though awful thunders roll,
And vivid lightnings flash from pole to pole,
Yet 'tis thy voice, my God, that bids them fly,
Thy arm directs those lightnings through the sky.
Then let the good thy mighty name revere,
And hardened sinners thy just vengeance fear."

"On the Setting Sun.

"Those evening clouds, that setting ray,
And beauteous tints, serve to display
Their great Creator's praise;
Then let the short-lived thing call'd man,
Whose life's comprised within a span,
To Him his homage raise.

"We often praise the evening clouds,
And tints so gay and bold,
But seldom think upon our God,
Who tinged these clouds with gold!"*

It must, I think, be allowed that these lines, though of the class to which the poet himself modestly ascribes them, and not to be compared with the efforts of Pope, still less of Cowley, at the same period, show, nevertheless, praiseworthy dexterity for a boy of twelve.

The fragment tells us, that, on the whole, he was

* Chap. xvi. v. 7.

† Mr. Irving inclines to think that this incident must have occurred during Scott's attendance on Luke Fraser, not after he went to Dr. Adam; and he also suspects that the boy referred to sat at the top not to the *class*, but of Scott's own bench or division of the class.

* I am obliged for these little memorials to the Rev. W. Steven of Rotterdam, author of an interesting book on the history of the branch of the Scotch Church long established in Holland, and still flourishing under the protection of the enlightened government of that country. Mr. Steven found them in the course of his recent researches, undertaken with a view to some memoirs of the High School of Edinburgh, at which he had received his own early education.

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"more distinguished in *the Yards* (as the High School play-ground was called) than in *the class*;" and this, not less than the intellectual advancement which years before had excited the admiration of Mrs. Cockburn, was the natural result of his life-long "rebellion against external circumstances." He might now, with very slender exertion, have been the *dux* of his form, but if there was more difficulty, there was also more to whet his ambition, in the attempt to overcome the disadvantages of his physical misfortune, and in spite of them assert equality with the best of his compeers on the ground, which they considered as the true arena of honour. He told me, in walking through these same *yards* forty years afterwards, that he had scarcely made his first appearance there, before some dispute arising, his opponent remarked, that "there was no use to hargle-bargle with a cripple;" upon which he replied, that if he might fight *mounted*, he would try his hand with any one of his inches. "An elder boy," (said he,) "who had perhaps been chuckling over our friend Roderick Random, when his mother supposed him to be in full cry after Pyrrhus, or Porus, suggested that the two little tinklers might be lashed front to front upon a deal board—and—'O gran bonta de' cavalier antichi'—the proposal being forthwith agreed to, I received my first bloody nose in an attitude which would have entitled me, in the blessed days of personal cognizances, to assume that of a *lioncel sejant gules*. My pugilistic trophies here," (he continued,) "were all the results of such *sittings in banco*." Considering his utter ignorance of fear, the strength of his chest and upper limbs, and that the scientific part of pugilism never flourished in Scotland, I dare say these trophies were not few.

The mettle of the High School boys, however, was principally displayed elsewhere than in their own *yards*; and Sir Walter has furnished us with ample indications of the delight with which he found himself at length capable of rivalling others in such achievements as required the exertion of active locomotive powers. Speaking of some scene of his infancy, in one of his latest tales, he says: "Every step of the way, after I have passed through the green already mentioned," (probably the *Meadows* behind George's Square,) "has for me something of an early remembrance. There is the stile at which I can recollect a cross child's-maid upbraiding me with my infirmity, as she lifted me coarsely and carelessly over the flinty steps which my brothers traversed with shout and bound. I remember the *suppressed bitterness* of the moment, and conscious of my own infirmity, the envy with which I regarded the easy movements and elastic steps of my more happily formed brethren. Alas!" (he adds,) "these goodly barks have all perished in life's wide ocean, and only that which seemed, as the naval phrase goes, so little sea-worthy, has reached the port when the tempest is over." How touching to compare with this passage, that in which he records his pride in being found, before he left the High School, one of the boldest and nimblest climbers of "the kittle nine stanes," a passage of difficulty which might puzzle a chamois hunter of the Alps, its steps "few and far between," projected high in air from the precipitous black granite of the Castle rock. But climbing and fighting could sometimes be combined, and he has in almost the same page dwelt upon, perhaps, the most favourite of all these juvenile exploits—namely, "the manning of the Cowgate Port,"—in the season when snowballs could be employed by the young scorners of discipline for the annoyance of the Town-guard. To understand fully the feelings of a High-School boy of that day, with regard to those ancient Highlanders, who then formed the only police of the city of Edinburgh, the reader must consult the poetry of the scapegrace Ferguson. It was in defiance of their Lochaber axes that the Cowgate Port was manned—and many were the occasions on which its defence presented at least a formidable mimicry of warfare. "The gateway," Sir Walter adds, "is now demolished, and probably most of its garrison lie as low as the fortress! To recollect that I, however naturally disqualified, was one of these juvenile dreadnoughts, is a sad reflection for one who cannot now step over a brook without assistance."

I am unwilling to swell this narrative by extracts from Scott's published works, but there is one juvenile exploit told in the general preface to the Waverly Novels, which I must crave leave to introduce here in his own language, because it is essentially necessary to complete our notion of his schoolboy life and character. "It is well known," (he says,) "that there is little boxing at the Scottish schools. About forty or fifty years ago, however, a far more dangerous mode of fighting, in parties or factions, was permitted in the streets of Edinburgh, to the great disgrace of the police, and danger of the parties concerned. These parties were generally formed from the quarters of the town in which the combatants resided, those of a particular square or district fighting against those of an adjoining one. Hence it happened, that the children of the higher classes were often pitted against those of the lower, each taking their side, according to the residence of their friends. So far as I recollect, however, it was unmingled either with feelings of democracy or aristocracy, or, indeed, with malice or ill-will of any kind towards the opposite party. In fact, it was only a rough mode of play. Such contests were, however, maintained with great vigour with stones, and sticks, and fisticuffs, when one party dared to charge and the other stood their ground. Of course, mischief sometimes happened; boys are said to have been killed at these *Bickers*, as they were called, and serious accidents certainly took place, as many contemporaries can bear witness.

"The author's father, residing in George's Square, in the southern side of Edinburgh, the boys belonging to that family, with others in the square, were arranged into a sort of company, to which a lady of distinction presented a handsome set of colours.* Now, this company or regiment, as a matter of course, was engaged in weekly warfare with the boys inhabiting the Crosscauseway, Bristo-Street, the Potterrow,—in short, the neighbouring suburbs. These last were chiefly of the lower rank, but hardy loons, who threw stones to a hair's-breadth, and were very rugged antagonists at close quarters. The skirmish sometimes lasted for a whole evening, until one party or the other was victorious, when, if ours were successful, we drove the enemy to their quarters, and were usually chased back by the re-enforcement of bigger lads, who came to their assistance. If, on the contrary, we were pursued, as was often the case, into the precincts of our square, we were in our turn supported by our elder brothers, domestic servants, and similar auxiliaries. It followed, from our frequent opposition to each other, that, though not knowing the names of our enemies, we were yet well acquainted with their appearance, and had nicknames for the most remarkable of them. One very active and spirited boy might be considered as the principal leader in the cohort of the suburbs. He was, I suppose, thirteen or fourteen years old, finely made, tall, blue-eyed, with long fair hair, the very picture of a youthful Goth. This lad was always first in the charge, and last in the retreat—the Achilles at once and Ajax of the Crosscauseway. He was too formidable to us not to have a cognomen, and, like that of a knight of old, it was taken from the most remarkable part of his dress, being a pair of old green livery breeches, which was the principal part of his clothing; for, like Pentapolin, according to Don Quixote's account, Green-breeks, as we called him, always entered the battle with bare arms, legs, and feet.

"It fell, that once upon a time, when the combat was at the thickest, this plebeian champion headed a charge so rapid and furious, that all fled before him. He was several paces before his comrades, and had actually laid his hands upon the patrician standard, when one of our party, whom some mis-

* This young patroness was the present Countess-Duchess of Sutherland.

juding friend had intrusted with a *couteau de chasse*, or hanger, inspired with a zeal for the honour of the corps, worthy of Major Sturgeon himself, struck poor Green-breeks over the head, with strength sufficient to cut him down. When this was seen, the casualty was so far beyond what had ever taken place before, that both parties fled different ways, leaving poor Green-breeks, with his bright hair plentifully dabbled in blood, to the care of the watchman, who (honest man) took care not to know who had done the mischief. The bloody hanger was thrown into one of the Meadow ditches, and solemn secrecy was sworn on all hands; but the remorse and terror of the actor were beyond all bounds, and his apprehensions of the most dreadful character. The wounded hero was for a few days in the Infirmary, the case being only a trifling one. But though inquiry was strongly pressed on him, no argument could make him indicate the person from whom he had received the wound, though he must have been perfectly well known to him. When he recovered, and was dismissed, the author and his brothers opened a communication with him, through the medium of a popular gingerbread baker, of whom both parties were customers, in order to tender a subsidy in the name of smart-money. The sum would excite ridicule were I to name it; but sure I am, that the pockets of the noted Green-breeks never held as much money of his own. He declined the remittance, saying that he would not sell his blood; but at the same time reprobated the idea of being an informer, which he said was *clam*, i. e. base or mean. With much urgency, he accepted a pound of snuff for the use of some old woman—aunt, grandmother, or the like—with whom he lived. We did not become friends, for the *bickers* were more agreeable to both parties than any more pacific amusement; but we conducted them ever after, under mutual assurances of the highest consideration for each other." Sir Walter adds:—"Of five brothers, all healthy and promising, in a degree far beyond one whose infancy was visited by personal infirmity, and whose health after this period seemed long very precarious, I am, nevertheless, the only survivor. The best loved, and the best deserving to be loved, who had destined this incident to be the foundation of a literary composition, died 'before his day,' in a distant and foreign land; and trifles assume an importance not their own, when connected with those who have been loved and lost."

During some part of his attendance on the High School, young Walter spent one hour daily at a small separate seminary of writing and arithmetic, kept by one Morton, where, as was, and I suppose continues to be, the custom of Edinburgh, young girls came for instruction as well as boys; and one of Mr. Morton's female pupils has been kind enough to set down some little reminiscences of Scott, who happened to sit at the same desk with herself. They appear to me the more interesting, because the lady had no acquaintance with him in the course of his subsequent life. Her nephew, Mr. James, (the accomplished author of Richelieu,) to whose friendship I owe her communication, assures me, too, that he had constantly heard her tell the same things in the very same way, as far back as his own memory reaches, many years before he had ever seen Sir Walter, or his aunt could have dreamt of surviving to assist in the biography of his early days.

"He attracted," Mrs. Churnside says, "the regard and fondness of all his companions, for he was ever rational, fanciful, lively, and possessed of that urbane gentleness of manner, which makes its way to the heart. His imagination was constantly at work, and he often so engrossed the attention of those who learnt with him, that little could be done—Mr. Morton himself being forced to laugh as much as the little scholars at the odd turns and devices he fell upon; for he did nothing in the ordinary way, but, for example, even when he wanted ink to his pen, would get up some ludicrous story about sending his doggie to the mill again. He used also to interest us in a more serious way, by telling us his *visions*, as he called them, which he had lying alone on the floor, or sofa, when kept from going to church on a Sunday by ill health. Child as I was, I could not help being highly delighted with his description of the glories he had seen—his misty and sublime sketches of the regions above, which he had visited in his trance. Recollecting these descriptions, radiant, and not gloomy, as they were, I have often thought since, that there must have been a bias in his mind to superstition—the marvellous seemed to have such power over him, though the mere offspring of his own imagination, that the expression of his face, habitually that of genuine benevolence, mingled with a shrewd innocent humour, changed greatly while he was speaking of these things, and showed a deep intenseness of feeling, as if he were awed even by his own recital. . . . I may add, that in walking he used always to keep his eyes turned downwards, as if thinking, but with a pleasing expression of countenance, as if enjoying his thoughts. Having once known him, it was impossible ever to forget him. In this manner, after all the changes of a long life, he constantly appears as fresh as yesterday to my mind's eye."

This beautiful extract needs no commentary. I may as well, however, bear witness, that exactly as the schoolboy still walks before "her mind's eye," his image rises familiarly to mine, who never saw him until he was past the middle of life: that I trace in every feature of her delineation, the same gentleness of aspect and demeanour which the presence of the female sex, whether in silk or in russet, ever commanded in the man; and that her description of the change on his countenance, when passing from the "doggie of the mill," to the dream of Paradise, is a perfect picture of what no one that has heard him recite a fragment of high poetry, in the course of table-talk, can ever forget. Strangers may catch some notion of what fondly dwells on the memory of every friend, by glancing from the conversational bust of Chantrey, to the first portrait by Raeburn, which represents the Last Minstrel as musing in his prime within sight of Hermitage.*

I believe it was about this time that, as he expresses it in one of his latest works, "the first images of horror from the scenes of real life were stamped upon his mind," by the tragical death of his great-aunt, Mrs. Margaret Swinton. This old lady, whose extraordinary nerve of character he illustrates largely in the introduction to the story of Aunt Margaret's Mirror, was now living with one female attendant, in a small house, not far from Mr. Scott's residence in George's Square. The maid-servant, in a sudden access of insanity, struck her mistress to death with a coal-axe, and then rushed furiously into the street with the bloody weapon in her hand, proclaiming aloud the horror she had perpetrated. I need not dwell on the effects which must have been produced in a virtuous and affectionate circle by this shocking incident. The old lady had been tenderly attached to her nephew. "She was" (he says) "our constant resource in sickness, or when we tired of noisy play, and closed around her to listen to her tales."

It was at this same period that Mr. and Mrs. Scott received into their house, as tutor for their children, Mr. James Mitchell, of whom the Ashestiel Memoir gives us a description, such as I could not have presented had he been still alive. Mr. Mitchell was still living, however, at the time of his pupil's death, and I am now not only at liberty to present Scott's unmutilated account of their intercourse, but enabled to give also the most simple and characteristic narrative of the other party. I am sure no one, however nearly related to Mr. Mitchell, will now complain of seeing his keen-sighted pupil's sketch placed by the side, as it were, of the fuller portraiture drawn by the unconscious hand of the amiable and worthy man himself. The

* The Duke of Buccleuch, who now possesses this admirable portrait, has kindly permitted it to be re-engraved for the illustration of the present volume.

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following is an extract from Mr. Mitchell's MS., entitled, "Memorials of the most remarkable occurrences and transactions of my life, drawn up in the hope that, when I shall be no more, they may be read with profit and pleasure by my children." The good man was so kind as to copy out one chapter for my use, as soon as he heard of Sir Walter Scott's death. He was then, and had for many years been, minister of a Presbyterian chapel at Wooler, in Northumberland, to which situation he had retired on losing his benefice at Montrose, in consequence of the Sabbatarian scruples alluded to in Scott's Autobiography.

"In 1782," says Mr. Mitchell, "I became a tutor in Mr. Walter Scott's family. He was a Writer to the Signet, in George's Square, Edinburgh. Mr. Scott was a fine looking man, then a little past the meridian of life, of dignified, yet agreeable manners. His business was extensive. He was a man of tried integrity, of strict morals, and had a respect for religion and its ordinances. The church the family attended was the Old Gray Friars, of which the celebrated Doctors Robertson and Erskine were the ministers. Thither went Mr. and Mrs. Scott every Sabbath, when well and at home, attended by their fine young family of children, and their domestic servants—a sight so amiable and exemplary, as often to excite in my breast a glow of heartfelt satisfaction. According to an established and laudable practice in the family, the heads of it, the children, and servants, were assembled on Sunday evenings in the drawing-room, and examined on the Church catechism and sermons they had heard delivered during the course of the day; on which occasions, I had to perform the part of chaplain, and conclude with prayer. From Mrs. Scott I learned that Mr. Scott was one that had not been seduced from the paths of virtue; but had been enabled to venerate good morals from his youth. When he first came to Edinburgh to follow out his profession, some of his schoolfellows, who, like him, had come to reside in Edinburgh, attempted to unhinge his principles, and corrupt his morals; but when they found him resolute, and unshaken in his virtuous dispositions, they gave up the attempt; but, instead of abandoning him altogether, they thought the more of him, and honoured him with their confidence and patronage; which is certainly a great inducement to young men in the outset of life to act a similar part.

"After having heard of his inflexible adherence to the cause of virtue in his youth, and his regular attendance on the ordinances of religion in after-life, we will not be surprised to be told that he bore a sacred regard for the Sabbath, nor at the following anecdote illustrative of it. An opulent farmer of East Lothian had employed Mr. Scott as his agent, in a cause depending before the Court of Session. Having a curiosity to see something in the papers relative to the process, which were deposited in Mr. Scott's hands, this worldly man came into Edinburgh on a Sunday to have an inspection of them. As there was no immediate necessity for this measure, Mr. Scott asked the farmer if an ordinary week-day would not answer equally well. The farmer was not willing to take this advice, but insisted on the production of his papers. Mr. Scott then delivered them up to him, saying, it was not his practice to engage in secular business on Sabbath, and that he would have no difficulty in Edinburgh to find some of his profession who would have none of his scruples. No wonder such a man was confided in, and greatly honoured in his professional line. All the poor services I did to his family were more than repaid by the comfort and honour I had by being in the family, the pecuniary remuneration I received, and particularly by his recommendation of me, some times afterwards, to the Magistrates and Town-Council of Montrose, when there was a vacancy, and this brought me on the carpet, which, as he said, was all he could do, as the settlement would ultimately hinge on a popular election.

"Mrs. Scott was a wife in every respect worthy of such a husband. Like her partner, she was then a little past the meridian of life, of a prepossessing appearance, amiable manners, of a cultivated understanding, affectionate disposition, and fine taste. She was both able and disposed to soothe her husband's mind under the asperities of business, and to be a rich blessing to her numerous progeny. But what constituted her distinguishing ornament was, that she was sincerely religious. Some years previous to my entrance into the family, I understood from one of the servants she had been under deep religious concern about her soul's salvation, which had ultimately issued in a conviction of the truth of Christianity, and in the enjoyment of its divine consolations. She liked Dr. Erskine's sermons, but was not fond of the Principal's, however rational, eloquent, and well composed, and would, if other things had answered, have gone, when he preached, to have heard Dr. Davidson. Mrs. Scott was a descendant of Dr. Daniel Rutherford, a professor in the Medical School of Edinburgh, and one of those eminent men, who, by learning and professional skill, brought it to the high pitch of celebrity to which it has attained. He was an excellent linguist, and, according to the custom of the times, delivered his prelections to the students in Latin. Mrs. Scott told me, that, when prescribing to his patients, it was his custom to offer up at the same time a prayer for the accompanying blessing of heaven; a laudable practice, in which, I fear, he has not been generally imitated by those of his profession.

"Mr. Scott's family consisted of six children, all of which were at home except the eldest, who was an officer in the army; and as they were of an age fit for instruction, they were all committed to my superintendence, which, in dependance on God, I exercised with an earnest and faithful regard to their temporal and spiritual good. As the most of them were under public teachers, the duty assigned me was mainly to assist them in the prosecution of their studies. In all the excellencies, whether as to temper, conduct, talents natural or acquired, which any of the children individually possessed, to Master Walter, since the celebrated Sir Walter, must a decided preference be ascribed. Though, like the rest of the children, placed under my tuition, the conducting of his education comparatively cost me but little trouble, being, by the quickness of his intellect, tenacity of memory, and diligent application to his studies, generally equal of himself to the acquisition of those tasks I or others prescribed to him. So that Master Walter might be regarded not so much as a pupil of mine, but as a friend and companion, and I may add, as an assistant also; for, by his example and admonitions, he greatly strengthened my hands, and stimulated my other pupils to industry and good behaviour. I seldom had occasion all the time I was in the family to find fault with him even for trifles, and only once to threaten serious castigation, of which he was no sooner aware than he suddenly sprung up, threw his arms about my neck, and kissed me. It is hardly needful to state, that now the intended castigation was no longer thought of. By such generous and noble conduct my displeasure was in a moment converted into esteem and admiration; my soul melted into tenderness, and I was ready to mingle my tears with his. Some incidents in reference to him in that early period, and some interesting and useful conversations I had with him, then deeply impressed on my mind, and which the lapse of near half a century has not yet obliterated, afforded no doubtful presage of his future greatness and celebrity. On my going into the family, as far as I can judge, he might be in his twelfth or thirteenth year, a boy in the Rector's class. However elevated above the other boys in genius, though generally in the list of the duxes, he was seldom, as far as I recollect, the leader of the school; nor need this be deemed surprising, as it has often been observed, that boys of original genius have been outstripped by those that were far inferior to themselves, in the acquisition of the dead languages. Dr. Adam, the rector, celebrated for his knowledge of the Latin language, was deserv-

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edly held by Mr. Walter in high admiration and regard; of which the following anecdote may be adduced as a proof. In the High School, as is well known, there are four masters and a rector. The classes of those masters the rector in rotation inspects, and in the mean time the master, whose school is examined, goes in to take care of the rector's. One of the masters, on account of some grudge, had rudely assaulted and injured the venerable rector one night in the High School Wynd. The rector's scholars, exasperated at the outrage, at the instigation of Master Walter, determined on revenge, and which was to be executed when this obnoxious master should again come to teach the class. When this occurred, the task the class had prescribed to them was that passage in the Æneid of Virgil, where the Queen of Carthage interrogates the court as to the stranger that had come to her habitation—

'Quis novus hic hospes successit sedibus nostris?'*

Master Walter having taken a piece of paper, inscribed upon it these words, substituting *vanus* for *novus*, and pinned it to the tail of the master's coat, and turned him into ridicule by raising the laugh of the whole school against him. Though this juvenile action could not be justified on the footing of Christian principles, yet certainly it was so far honourable, that it was not a dictate of personal revenge; but that it originated in respect for a worthy and injured man, and detestation of one whom he looked upon as a bad character.

"One forenoon, on coming from the High School, he said he wished to know my opinion as to his conduct in a matter he should state to me. When passing through the High School Yards, he found a half-guinea piece on the ground. Instead of appropriating this to his own use, a sense of honesty led him to look around, and on doing so he espied a countryman, whom he suspected to be the proprietor. Having asked the man if he had lost any thing, he searched his pockets, and then replied, that he had lost half-a-guinea. Master Walter with pleasure presented him with his lost treasure. In this transaction, his ingenuity in finding out the proper owner, and his integrity in restoring the property, met my most cordial approbation.'

"When in church, Master Walter had more of a soporific tendency than the rest of my young charge. This seemed to be constitutional. He needed one or other of the family to arouse him, and from this it might be inferred that he would cut a poor figure on the Sabbath evening when examined about the sermons. But what excited the admiration of the family was, that none of the children, however wakeful, could answer as he did. The only way that I could account for this was, that when he heard the text, and divisions of the subject, his good sense, memory, and genius, supplied the thoughts which would occur to the preacher.

"On one occasion, in the dining-room, when, according to custom, he was reading some author in the time of relaxation from study, I asked him how he accounted for the superiority of knowledge he possessed above the rest of the family. His reply was—Some years' ago he had been attacked by a swelling in one of his ankles, which confined him to the house, and prevented him taking amusement and exercise, and which was the cause of his lameness; as under this ailment he could not romp with his brothers and the other young people in the green in George's Square, he found himself compelled to have recourse to some substitute for the juvenile amusements of his comrades, and this was reading. So that, to what he no doubt accounted a painful dispensation of Providence, he probably stood indebted for his future celebrity. When it was understood I was to leave the family, Master Walter told me that he had a small present to give me, to be kept as a memorandum of his friendship, and that it was of little value: 'But you know, Mr. Mitchell,' said he, 'that presents are not to be estimated, according to their intrinsic value, but according to the intention of the donor.' This was his Adam's grammar, which had seen hard service in its day, and had many animals and inscriptions on its margins. This, to my regret, is no longer to be found in my collection of books, nor do I know what has become of it.

"Since leaving the family, although no stranger to the widely spreading fame of Sir Walter, I have had few opportunities of personal intercourse with him. When minister in the second charge of the Established Church at Montrose, he paid me a visit, and spent a night with me; few visits have been more gratifying. He was then on his return from Aberdeen, where he, as an advocate, had attended the Court of Justiciary in its northern circuit. Nor was his attendance in this court his sole object; another, and perhaps the principal, was, as he stated to me, to collect in his excursion ancient ballads and traditional stories about fairies, witches, and ghosts. Such intelligence proved to me as an electrical shock; and as I then sincerely regretted, so do I still, that Sir Walter's precious time was so much devoted to the *dulce*, rather than the *utile* of composition, and that his great talent should have been wasted on such subjects. At the same time I feel happy to qualify this censure, as I am generally given to understand that his Novels are of a more pure and unexceptionable nature than characterizes writings of a similar description; while at the same time his pen has been occupied in the production of works of a better and nobler order. Impressed with the conviction that he would one day arrive at honour and influence in his native country, I endeavoured to improve the occasion of his visit to secure his patronage in behalf of the strict and evangelical party in the Church of Scotland, in exerting himself to induce patrons to grant to the Christian people liberty to elect their own pastors in cases of vacancy. His answer struck me much—it was: 'Nay, nay, Mr. Mitchell, I'll not do that; for if that were to be done, I and the like of me would have no life with such as you;' from which I inferred he thought that, were the evangelical clergy to obtain the superiority, they would introduce such strictness of discipline as would not quadrate with the ideas of that party called *the moderate* in the Church of Scotland, whose views, I presume, Sir Walter had now adopted. Some, however, to whom I have mentioned Sir Walter's reply, have suggested that I had misunderstood his meaning, and that what he said was not in earnest, but in joculority and good-humour. This may be true, and certainly is a candid interpretation. As to the ideal beings already mentioned as the subject of his inquiries, my materials were too scanty to afford him much information."

Notwithstanding the rigidly Presbyterian habits which this chronicle describes with so much more satisfaction than the corresponding page in the Ashestiel Memoir, I am reminded, by a communication already quoted from a lady of the Ravelstone family, that Mrs. Scott, who had, she says, "a turn for literature quite uncommon among the ladies of the time," encouraged her son in his passion for Shakspeare—that his plays, and the Arabian Nights, were often read aloud in the family circle by Walter, "and served to spend many a happy evening hour"—nay, that, however good Mitchell may have frowned at such a suggestion, even Mr. Scott made little objection to his children, and some of their young friends, getting up private theatricals occasionally in the dining-room, after the lessons of the day were over. The lady adds, that Walter was always the manager, and had the whole charge of the affair, and that the favourite piece used to be Jane Shore, in which he was the Hastings, his sister the Alicia. I have heard from another friend of the family, that Richard III. also was attempted, and that Walter took the part of the Duke

* This transposition of *hospes* and *nostris* sufficiently confirms his pupil's statement, that Mr. Mitchell "superintended his classical themes, but not classically." The "obnoxious master" alluded to was Burns's friend Nicoll, the hero of the song—

"Willie brewed a peck o' maut,
An' Rob and Allan came to see," &c.

of Gloucester, observing, that "the limp would do well enough to represent the bump."

A story which I have seen in print, about his partaking in the dancing lessons of his brothers, I do not believe. But it was during Mr. Mitchell's residence in the family that they all made their unsuccessful attempts in the art of music, under the auspices of poor *Elshender* Campbell—the Editor of "Albyn's Anthology."

Mr. Mitchell appears to have terminated his superintendence before Walter left Dr. Adam; and in the interval between this and his entrance at College, he spent some time with his aunt, who now inhabited a cottage at Kelso; but the Memoir, I suspect, gives too much extension to that residence—which may be accounted for by his blending with it a similar visit which he paid to the same place during his College vacation of the next year.

Some of the features of Miss Jenny's abode at Kelso are alluded to in the Memoir, but the fullest description of it occurs in his "Essay on Landscape Gardening," (1828,) where, talking of grounds laid out in the *Dutch taste*, he says:—"Their rarity *now* entitles them to some care as a species of antiques, and unquestionably they give character to some snug, quiet, and sequestered situations, which would otherwise have no marked feature of any kind. I retain an early and pleasing recollection of the seclusion of such a scene. A small cottage, adjacent to a beautiful village, the habitation of an ancient maiden lady, was for some time my abode. It was situated in a garden of seven or eight acres, planted about the beginning of the eighteenth century, by one of the Millars related to the author of the 'Gardeners' Dictionary,' or, for aught I know, by himself. It was full of long straight walks, between hedges of yew and hornbeam, which rose tall and close on every side. There were thickets of flowery shrubs, a bower, and an arbour, to which access was obtained through a little maze of contorted walks, calling itself a labyrinth. In the centre of the bower was a splendid Platanus, or Oriental plane—a huge hill of leaves—one of the noblest specimens of that regularly beautiful tree which I remember to have seen. In different parts of the garden were fine ornamental trees, which had attained great size, and the orchard was filled with fruit trees of the best description. There were seats and hilly walks, and a banqueting house. I visited this scene lately, after an absence of many years. Its air of retreat, the seclusion which its alleys afforded, was entirely gone; the huge Platanus had died, like most of its kind, in the beginning of this century; the hedges were cut down, the trees stubbed up, and the whole character of the place so destroyed, that I was glad when I could leave it." It was under this *Platanus* that Scott first devoured Percy's Reliques. I remember well being with him, in 1820 or 1821, when he revisited the favourite scene, and the sadness of his looks when he discovered that "the huge hill of leaves" was no more.

To keep up his scholarship while inhabiting *the garden*, he attended daily, as he informs us, the public school of Kelso, and here he made his first acquaintance with a family, two members of which were intimately connected with the most important literary transactions of his after life—James Ballantyne, the printer of almost all his works, and his brother John, who had a share in the publication of many of them. Their father was a respectable tradesman in this pretty town. The elder of the brothers, who did not long survive his illustrious friend, was kind enough to make an exertion on behalf of this work, while stretched on the bed from which he never rose, and dictated a valuable paper of *memoranda*, from which I shall here introduce my first extract:—

"I think," (says James Ballantyne,) "it was in the year 1783, that I first became acquainted with Sir Walter Scott, then a boy about my own age, at the Grammar School of Kelso, of which Mr. Lancelot Whale was the Rector. The impression left by his manners was, even at that early period, calculated to be deep, and I cannot recall any other instance in which the man and the boy continued to resemble each other so much and so long. Walter Scott was not a constant school-fellow at this seminary; he only attended it for a few weeks during the vacation of the Edinburgh High School He was then, as he continued during all his after life to be, devoted to antiquarian lore, and was certainly the best story-teller I had ever heard, either then or since. He soon discovered that I was as fond of listening as he himself was of relating; and I remember it was a thing of daily occurrence, that aften he had made himself master of his own lesson, I, alas! being still sadly to seek in mine, he used to whisper to me, 'Come, slink over beside me, Jamie, and I'll tell you a story.' I well recollect that he had a form, or seat, appropriated to himself, the particular reason of which I cannot tell, but he was always treated with a peculiar degree of respect, not by the boys of the different classes merely, but by the venerable Master Lancelot himself, who, an absent, grotesque being, betwixt six and seven feet high, was nevertheless an admirable scholar, and sure to be delighted to find any one so well qualified to sympathize with him as young Walter Scott; and the affectionate gratitude of the young pupil was never intermitted, so long as his venerable master continued to live. I may mention, in passing, that old Whale bore, in many particulars, a strong resemblance to Dominie Sampson, though, it must be admitted, combining more gentlemanly manners with equal classical lore, and, on the whole, being a much superior sort of person. In the intervals of school hours, it was our constant practice to walk together by the banks of the Tweed, our employment continuing exactly the same, for his stories seemed to be quite inexhaustible. This intercourse continued during the summers of the years 1783-4, but was broken off in 1785-6, when I went into Edinburgh to College."

Perhaps the separate seat assigned to Walter Scott, by the Kelso schoolmaster, was considered due to him as a temporary visiter from the great Edinburgh seminary. Very possibly, however, the worthy Mr. Whale thought of nothing but protecting his solitary student of Persius and Tacitus from the chances of being jostled among the adherents of Ruddiman and Cornelius Nepos.

Another of his Kelso schoolfellows was Robert Waldie, (son of Mr. Waldie of Henderside,) and to this connexion he owed, both while quartered in the Garden, and afterwards at Rosebank, many kind attentions, of which he ever preserved a grateful recollection, and which have left strong traces on every page of his works in which he has occasion to introduce the Society of Friends. This young companion's mother, though always called in the neighbourhood "Lady Waldie," belonged to that community; and the style of life and manners depicted in the household of Joshua Geddes of Mount Sharon and his amiable sister, in some of the sweetest chapters of Redgauntlet, is a slightly decorated edition of what he witnessed under her hospitable roof. He records, in a note to the Novel, the "liberality and benevolence" of this "kind old lady," in allowing him to "rummage at pleasure, and carry home, any volumes he chose of her small but valuable library,"—annexing only the condition that he should "take at the same time some of the tracts printed for encouraging and extending the doctrines of her own sect.—She did not," he adds, "even exact any assurance that I would read these performances, being too justly afraid of involving me in a breach of promise, but was merely desirous that I should have the chance of instruction within my reach, in case whim, curiosity, or accident, might induce me to have recourse to it." I remember the pleasure with which he read, late in life, "Rome in the Nineteenth Century," an ingenious work produced by one of Mrs. Waldie's granddaughters, and how comically he pictured the alarm with which his ancient friend would have perused some of its delineations of the high places of Popery.

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I shall be pardoned for adding in this place a marginal note written apparently late in Scott's life, on his copy of a little forgotten volume, entitled, "Trifles in Verse, by a Young Soldier." "In 1783," (he says,) "or about that time, I remember John Marjoribanks, a smart recruiting officer in the village of Kelso, the Weekly Chronicle of which he filled with his love verses. His Delia was a Miss Dickson, daughter of a shopkeeper in the same village—his Gloriana a certain prudish old maiden lady, benempt Miss Goldie; I think I see her still, with her thin arms sheathed in scarlet gloves, and crossed like two lobsters in a fishmonger's stand. Poor Delia was a very beautiful girl, and not more conceited than a be-rhymed miss ought to be. Many years afterwards I found the Kelso *belle* thin and pale, her good looks gone, and her smart dress neglected, governess to the brats of a Paisley manufacturer. I ought to say there was not an atom of scandal in her flirtation with the young military poet. The bard's fate was not much better; after some service in India, and elsewhere, he led a half-pay life about Edinburgh, and died there. There is a tenuity of thought in what he has written, but his verses are usually easy, and I like them because they recall my school boy days, when I thought him a Horace, and his Delia a goddess."

CHAPTER IV.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BIOGRAPHY CONTINUED—ANECDOTES OF SCOTT'S COLLEGE LIFE—1783-1786.

On returning to Edinburgh, and entering the College, in November, 1783, Scott found himself once more in the fellowship of all his intimates of the High School; of whom, besides those mentioned in his autobiographical fragment, he speaks in his diaries with particular affection of Sir William Rae, Bart., David Monypenny, afterwards Lord Pitmilly, Thomas Tod, W. S., Sir Archibald Campbell of Succoth, Bart., all familiar friends of his through manhood,—and the present Earl of Dalhousie, whom, on meeting with him after a long separation in the evening of life, he records as still being, and having always been, "the same manly and generous character that all about him loved as the *Lordie Ramsay* of the Yards." His chosen intimate, however, continued to be for some time Mr. John Irving—his suburban walks with whom have been recollected so tenderly, both in the Memoir of 1808, and in the preface to Waverley of 1829. It will interest the reader to compare, with those beautiful descriptions, the following extract from a letter with which Mr. Irving has favoured me:—

"Every Saturday, and more frequently during the vacations, we used to retire, with three or four books from the circulating library, to Salisbury Crags, Arthur's Seat, or Blackford Hill, and read them together. He read faster than I, and had on this account to wait a little at finishing every two pages, before turning the leaf. The books we most delighted in were romances of knight-errantry—the Castle of Otranto, Spenser, Ariosto, and Boiardo, were great favourites. We used to climb up the rocks in search of places where we might sit sheltered from the wind; and the more inaccessible they were, the better we liked them. He was very expert at climbing. Sometimes we got into places where we found it difficult to move either up or down, and I recollect it being proposed, on several occasions, that I should go for a ladder to see and extricate him, but I never had any need really to do so, for he always managed somehow either to get down or ascend to the top. The number of books we thus devoured was very great. I forgot great part of what I read, but my friend, notwithstanding he read with such rapidity, remained, to my surprise, master of it all, and could even, weeks or months afterwards, repeat a whole page in which any thing had particularly struck him at the moment. After we had continued this practice of reading for two years or more together, he proposed that we should recite to each other alternately such adventures of knight-errants as we could ourselves contrive; and we continued to do so a long while. He found no difficulty in it, and used to recite for half an hour or more at a time, while I seldom continued half that space. The stories we told were, as Sir Walter has said, interminable—for we were unwilling to have any of our favourite knights killed! Our passion for romance led us to learn Italian together; after a time we could both read it with fluency, and we then copied such tales as we had met with in that language, being a continued succession of battles and enchantments. He began early to collect old ballads, and as my mother could repeat a great many, he used to come and learn those she could recite to him. He used to get all the copies of these ballads he could, and select the best."

These, no doubt, were among the germs of the collection of ballads in six little volumes, which, from the handwriting, had been begun at this early period, and which is still preserved at Abbotsford. And it appears, that at least as early a date must be ascribed to another collection of little humorous stories in prose, the *Penny Chap-books*, as they are called, still in high favour among the lower classes in Scotland, which stands on the same shelf. In a letter of 1830* he states that he had bound up things of this kind to the extent of several volumes, before he was ten years old.

Although the Ashestiel Memoir mentions so very lightly his boyish addiction to verse, and the rebuke which his vein received from the Apothecary's blue-buskined wife as having been followed by similar treatment on the part of others, I am inclined to believe that while thus devouring, along with his young friend, the stores of Italian romance, he essayed, from time to time, to weave some of their materials into rhyme;—nay, that he must have made at least one rather serious effort of this kind, as early as the date of these rambles to the Salisbury Crags. I have found among his mother's papers a copy of verses headed, "*Lines to Mr. Walter Scott—on reading his poem of Guiscard and Matilda, inscribed to Miss Keith of Ravelstone.*" There is no date; but I conceive the lines bear internal evidence of having been written when he was very young—not, I should suppose, above fourteen or fifteen at most. I think it also certain that the writer was a woman; and have almost as little doubt that they came from the pen of his old admirer, Mrs. Cockburn. They are as follows:—

"If such the accents of thy early youth,
When playful fancy holds the place of truth;
If so divinely sweet thy numbers flow,
And thy young heart melts with such tender wo,
What praise, what admiration shall be thine,
When sense mature with science shall combine
To raise thy genius and thy taste refine!

"Go on, dear youth, the glorious path pursue
Which bounteous Nature kindly smooths for you;
Go, bid the seeds her hand hath sown arise,
By timely culture, to their native skies;
Go, and employ the poet's heavenly art,
Not merely to delight, but mend the heart.
Than other poets happier mayst thou prove,
More blest in friendship, fortunate in love,
Whilst Fame, who longs to make true merit known,
Impatient waits, to claim thee as her own.

"Scorning the yoke of prejudice and pride,
Thy tender mind let truth and reason guide—
Let meek humility thy steps attend,
And firm integrity, youth's surest friend.
So peace and honour all thy hours shall bless,
And conscious rectitude each joy increase;
A nobler meed be thine than empty praise—
Heaven shall approve thy life, and Keith thy lays."

At the period to which I refer these verses, Scott's parents still continued to have some expectations of curing his lameness, and Mr. Irving remembers to have often assisted in applying the electrical apparatus, on which for a considerable time they principally rested their hopes. There is

* See Strang's Germany in 1831, vol. I., p. 266.

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an allusion to these experiments in Scott's autobiographical fragment, but I have found a fuller notice on the margin of his copy of the "Guide to Health, Beauty, Riches, and Longevity," as Captain Grose chose to entitle an amusing collection of quack advertisements.

"The celebrated Dr. Graham" (says the annotator) "was an empiric of some genius and great assurance. In fact, he had a dash of madness in his composition. He had a fine electrical apparatus, and used it with skill. I myself, amongst others, was subjected to a course of electricity under his charge. I remember seeing the old Earl of Hopetoun seated in a large arm-chair, and hung round with a collar, and a belt of magnets, like an Indian chief. After this, growing quite wild, Graham set up his *Temple of Health*, and lectured on the *celestial bed*. He attempted a course of these lectures at Edinburgh, and as the Magistrates refused to let him do so, he libelled them in a series of advertisements, the flights of which were infinitely more absurd and exalted than those which Grose has collected. In one tirade (long in my possession) he declared that 'he looked down upon them' (the Magistrates) 'as the sun in his meridian glory looks down on the poor, feeble, stinking glimmer of an expiring farthing candle, or as G— himself, in the plenitude of his omnipotence, may regard the insolent bouncings of a few refractory maggots in a rotten cheese.' Graham was a good-looking man; he used to come to the Grayfriars' Church in a suit of white and silver, with a chapeau-bras, and his hair marvellously dressed into a sort of double toupee, which divided upon his head like the two tops of Parnassus. Mrs. Macauley, the historianess, married his brother. Lady Hamilton is said to have first enacted his Goddess of Health, being at this time a *fille de joie* of great celebrity.* The Temple of Health dwindled into a sort of obscene *hell*, or gambling house. In a quarrel which took place there, a poor young man was run into the bowels with a red-hot poker, of which injury he died. The mob vented their fury on the house, and the Magistrates, somewhat of the latest, shut up the exhibition. A quantity of glass and crystal trumpery, the remains of the splendid apparatus, was sold on the South Bridge for next to nothing. Graham's next receipt was *the earth-bath*, with which he wrought some cures, but that also failing, he was, I believe, literally starved to death."

Graham's earth-bath top was, I understand, tried upon Scott, but his was not one of the cases, if any such there were, in which it worked a cure. He, however, improved about this time greatly in his general health and strength, and Mr. Irving, in accordance with the statement in the Memoir, assures me, that while attending the early classes at the College, the young friends extended their walks so as to visit in succession all the old castles within eight or ten miles of Edinburgh. "Sir Walter" (he says) "was specially fond of Rosslyn. We frequently walked thither before breakfast—after breakfasting there walked all down the river side to Lasswade—and thence home to town before dinner. He used generally to rest one hand on my shoulder when we walked together, and leaned with the other on a stout stick."

The love of picturesque scenery, and especially of feudal castles, with which the vicinity of Edinburgh is plentifully garnished, awoke, as the Memoir tells us, the desire of being able to use the pencil. Mr. Irving says,—"I attended one summer a class of drawing along with him, but although both fond of it, we found it took up so much time that we gave this up before we had made much progress." In one of his later diaries, Scott himself gives the following more particular account of this matter:—

"I took lessons of oil-painting in youth from a little Jew animalcule—a smouch called Burrell—a clever sensible creature though. But I could make no progress either in painting or drawing. Nature denied me the correctness of eye and neatness of hand. Yet I was very desirous to be a draughtsman at least—and laboured harder to attain that point, than at any other in my recollection to which I did not make some approaches. Burrell was not useless to me altogether neither. He was a Prussian, and I got from him many a long story of the battles of Frederick, in whose armies his father had been a commissary, or perhaps a spy. I remember his picturesque account of seeing a party of the *black hussars* bringing in some forage carts which they had taken from a body of the Cossacks, whom he described as lying on the top of the carts of hay mortally wounded, and like the dying gladiator, eyeing their own blood as it ran down through the straw.

A year or two later Scott renewed his attempt. "I afterwards" (he says) "took lessons from Walker, whom we used to call *Blue Beard*. He was one of the most conceited persons in the world, but a good teacher—one of the ugliest countenances he had that need be exhibited—enough, as we say, *to spean weans*. The man was always extremely precise in the quality of every thing about him; his dress, accommodations, and every thing else. He became insolvent, poor man, and for some reason or other, I attended the meeting of those concerned in his affairs. Instead of ordinary accommodations for writing, each of the persons present was equipped with a large sheet of drawing-paper, and a swan's quill. It was mournfully ridiculous enough. Skirving made an admirable likeness of Walker; not a single scar or mark of the smallpox, which seamed his countenance, but the too accurate brother of the brush had faithfully laid it down in longitude and latitude. Poor Walker destroyed it (being in crayons) rather then let the caricature of his ugliness appear at the sale of his effects. I did learn myself to take some vile views from nature. When Will Clerk and I lived very much together, I used sometimes to make them under his instruction. He to whom, as to all his family, art is a familiar attribute, wondered at me as a Newfoundland dog would at a greyhound which showed fear of the water."

Notwithstanding all that Scott says about the total failure of his attempts in the art of the pencil, I presume few will doubt that they proved very useful to him afterwards; from them it is natural to suppose he caught the habit of analyzing, with some approach at least to accuracy, the scenes over which his eye might have continued to wander with the vague sense of delight. I may add, that a longer and more successful practice of the crayon might, I cannot but think, have proved the reverse of serviceable to him as a future painter with the pen. He might have contracted the habit of copying from pictures rather than from nature itself; and we should thus have lost that which constitutes the very highest charm in his delineations of scenery, namely, that the effect is produced by the selection of a few striking features, arranged with a light unconscious grace, neither too much nor too little—equally remote from the barren generalizations of a former age, and the dull servile fidelity with which so many inferior writers of our time fill in both background and foreground, having no more notion of the perspective of genius than Chinese paperstainers have of that of the atmosphere, and producing in fact not descriptions but inventories.

The illness, which he alludes to in his Memoir as interrupting for a considerable period his attendance on the Latin and Greek classes in Edinburgh College, is spoken of more largely in one of his prefaces.* It arose from the bursting of a blood-vessel in the lower bowels; and I have heard him say that his uncle, Dr. Rutherford, considered his recovery from it as little less than miraculous. His sweet temper and calm courage were no doubt important elements of safety. He submitted without a murmur to the severe discipline prescribed by his affectionate physician, and found consolation in poetry, romance, and the enthusiasm of

* Lord Nelson's connexion with this lady will preserve her celebrity.

* See Preface to Waverley, 1829.

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young friendship. Day after day John Irving relieved his mother and sister in their attendance upon him. The bed on which he lay was piled with a constant succession of works of imagination, and sad realities were forgotten amidst the brilliant daydreams of genius, drinking unwearied from the eternal fountains of Spenser and Shakspeare. Chess was recommended as a relief to these unintermitted though desultory studies; and he engaged eagerly in the game which had found favour with so many of his Paladins. Mr. Irving remembers playing it with him hour after hour, in very cold weather, when, the windows being kept open as a part of the medical treatment, nothing but youthful nerves and spirit could have persevered. But Scott did not pursue the science of chess after his boyhood. He used to say that it was a shame to throw away upon mastering a mere game, however ingenious, the time which would suffice for the acquisition of a new language. "Surely," he said, "chess-playing is a sad waste of brains."

His recovery was completed by another visit to Roxburghshire. Captain Robert Scott, who had been so kind to the sickly infant at Bath, finally retired about this time from his profession, and purchased the elegant villa of Rosebank, on the Tweed, a little below Kelso. Here Walter now took up his quarters, and here, during all the rest of his youth, he found, whenever he chose, a second home, in many respects more agreeable than his own. His uncle, as letters to be subsequently quoted will show, had nothing of his father's coldness for polite letters, but entered into all his favourite pursuits with keen sympathy, and was consulted, from this time forth, upon all his juvenile essays, both in prose and verse.

He does not seem to have resumed attendance at College during the session of 1785-6; so that the Latin and Greek classes, with that of Logic, were the only ones he had passed through previous to the signing of his indentures as an apprentice to his father. The Memoir mentions the ethical course of Dugald Stewart, as if he had gone immediately from the logical professor (Mr. Bruce) to that eminent lecturer; but he, in fact, attended Mr. Stewart four years afterwards, when beginning to consider himself as finally destined for the bar.

I shall only add to what he sets down on the subject of his early academical studies, that in this, as in almost every case, he appears to have underrated his own attainments. He had, indeed, no pretensions to the name of an extensive, far less of an accurate, Latin scholar; but he could read, I believe, any Latin author, of any age, so as to catch without difficulty his meaning; and although his favourite Latin poet, as well as historian, in later days, was Buchanan, he had preserved, or subsequently acquired, a strong relish for some other of more ancient date. I may mention, in particular, Lucan and Claudian. Of Greek, he does not exaggerate in saying that he had forgotten even the alphabet; for he was puzzled with the words *λοιδος* and *ποιητης*, which he had occasion to introduce, from some authority on his table, into his "Introduction to Popular Poetry," written in April, 1830; and happening to be in the house with him at the time, he sent for me to insert them for him in his MS. Mr. Irving has informed us of the early period at which he enjoyed the real Tasso and Ariosto. I presume he had at least as soon as this enabled himself to read Gil Blas in the original; and, in all probability, we may refer to the same time of his life, or one not much later, his acquisition of as much Spanish as served for the Guerras Civiles de Granada, Lazarillo de Tormes, and above all, Don Quixote. He read all these languages in after life with about the same facility. I never but once heard him attempt to speak any of them, and that was when some of the courtiers of Charles X. came to Abbotsford, soon after that unfortunate prince took up his residence for the second time at Holyroodhouse. Finding that one or two of these gentlemen could speak no English at all, he made some efforts to amuse them in their own language after the champagne had been passing briskly round the table; and I was amused next morning with the expression of one of the party, who, alluding to the sort of reading in which Sir Walter seemed to have chiefly occupied himself, said, "Mon Dieu! comme il estropiait, entre deux vins, le Français du bon sire de Joinville!" Of all these tongues, as of German somewhat later, he acquired as much as was needful for his own purposes, of which a critical study of any foreign language made at no time any part. In them he sought for incidents, and he found images; but for the treasures of diction he was content to dig on British soil. He had all he wanted in the old wells of "English undefiled," and the still living, though fast shrinking, waters of that sister idiom which had not always, as he flattered himself, deserved the name of a dialect.

As may be said, I believe, with perfect truth of every really great man, Scott was self-educated in every branch of knowledge which he ever turned to account in the works of his genius; and he has himself told us, that his real studies were those lonely and desultory ones, of which he has given a copy in the first chapter of Waverley, where the hero is represented as "driving through the sea of books, like a vessel without pilot or rudder;" that is to say, obeying nothing but the strong breath of native inclination;—"He had read, and stored in a memory of uncommon tenacity, much curious, though ill arranged and miscellaneous information. In English literature, he was master of Shakspeare and Milton, of our earlier dramatic authors, of many picturesque and interesting passages from our old historical chronicles, and was particularly well acquainted with Spenser, Drayton, and other poets, who have exercised themselves on romantic fiction,—*of all themes the most fascinating to a youthful imagination, before the passions have roused themselves, and demand poetry of a more sentimental description.*"* I need not repeat his enumeration of other favourites, Pulci, the Decameron, Froissart, Brantome, Delanoue, and the chivalrous and romantic lore of Spain. I have quoted a passage so well known, only for the sake of the striking circumstance by which it marks the very early date of these multifarious studies.

CHAPTER V.

ILLUSTRATIONS CONTINUED—SCOTT'S APPRENTICESHIP TO HIS FATHER—EXCURSIONS TO THE HIGHLANDS, &c.—DEBATING SOCIETIES—EARLY CORRESPONDENCE, &c. &c.—1786-1790.

In the Minute-books of the Society of Writers to the Signet appears the following entry:—"Edinburgh, 15th May, 1786. Compeared Walter Scott, and presented an indenture, dated 31st March last, entered into between him and Walter Scott, his son, for five years from the date thereof, under a mutual penalty of £40 sterling."

An inauspicious step this might at first sight appear, in the early history of one so strongly predisposed for pursuits wide as the antipodes asunder from the dry technicalities of conveyancing; but he himself, I believe, was never heard, in his mature age, to express any regret that it should have been taken; and I am convinced for my part that it was a fortunate one. It prevented him, indeed, from passing with the usual regularity through a long course of Scotch metaphysics; but I extremely doubt whether any discipline could ever have led him to derive either pleasure or profit from studies of that order. His apprenticeship left him time enough, as we shall find, for continuing his application to the stores of poetry and romance, and those old chroniclers, who to the end were his darling historians. Indeed, if he had wanted any new stimulus, the necessity of devoting certain hours of every day to a routine of drudgery, however it might have operated on a spirit more prone to earth,

* Waverley, vol. i. p. 32.

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must have tended to quicken his appetite for "the sweet bread eaten in secret." But the duties which he had now to fulfil were, in various ways, directly and positively beneficial to the development both of his genius and his character. It was in the discharge of his functions as a Writer's Apprentice that he first penetrated into the Highlands, and formed those friendships among the surviving heroes of 1745, which laid the foundation for one great class of his works. Even the less attractive parts of his new vocation were calculated to give him a more complete insight into the smaller workings of poor human nature, than can ever perhaps be gathered from the experience of the legal profession in its higher walk;—the etiquette of the bar in Scotland, as in England, being averse to personal intercourse between the advocate and his client. But, finally, and I will say chiefly, it was to this prosaic discipline that he owed those habits of steady, sober diligence, which few imaginative authors had ever before exemplified—and which, unless thus beaten into his composition at a ductile stage, even he, in all probability, could never have carried into the almost professional exercise of some of the highest and most delicate faculties of the human mind. He speaks, in not the least remarkable passage of the preceding Memoir, as if constitutional indolence had been his portion in common with all the members of his father's family. When Gifford, in a dispute with Soame Jenyns, quoted Doctor Johnson's own confession that he "knew little Greek," Jenyns answered, "Yes, young man; but how shall we know what Johnson would have called much Greek?" and Gifford has recorded the deep impression which this hint left on his own mind. What Scott would have called constitutional diligence, I know not; but surely if indolence of any kind had been inherent in his nature, even the triumph of Socrates was not more signal than his.

It will be, by some of my friends, considered as trivial to remark on such a circumstance—but the reader who is unacquainted with the professional habits of the Scotch lawyers, may as well be told that the Writer's Apprentice receives a certain allowance in money for every page he transcribes; and that, as in those days the greater part of the business, even of the supreme courts, was carried on by means of written papers, a ready penman, in a well-employed chamber, could earn in this way enough, at all events, to make a handsome addition to the pocket-money which was likely to be thought suitable for a youth of fifteen by such a man as the elder Scott. The allowance being, I believe, threepence for every page containing a certain fixed number of words, when Walter had finished, as he tells us he occasionally did, 120 pages within twenty-four hours, his fee would amount to thirty shillings; and in his early letters I find him more than once congratulating himself on having been, by some such exertion, enabled to purchase a book, or a coin, otherwise beyond his reach. A schoolfellow, who was now, like himself, a writer's apprentice, recollects the eagerness with which he thus made himself master of "Evans's Ballads," shortly after their publication; and another of them, already often referred to, remembers, in particular, his rapture with Meikle's Cumnor Hall," which first appeared in that collection. "After the labours of the day were over," says Mr. Irving, "we often walked in *the Meadows*," (a large field intersected by formal alleys of old trees, adjoining George's Square,) "especially in the moonlight nights: and he seemed never weary of repeating the first stanza—

> 'The dews of summer light did fall—
> The Moon, sweet regent of the sky,
> Silvered the walls of Cumnor Hall,
> And many an oak that grew thereby.'"

I have thought it worth while to preserve these reminiscences of his companions at the time, though he has himself stated the circumstance in his preface to Kenilworth. "There is a period in youth," he there says, "when the mere power of numbers has a more strong effect on ear and imagination than in after life. At this season of immature taste, the author was greatly delighted with the poems of Meikle and Langhorne. The first stanza of Cumnor Hall especially had a peculiar enchantment for his youthful ear—the force of which is not yet (1829) entirely spent."—

Thus that favourite elegy, after having dwelt on his memory and imagination for forty years, suggested the subject of one of his noblest romances.

It is affirmed by a preceding biographer, on the authority of one of these brother-apprentices, that about this period Scott showed him a MS. poem on "the Conquest of Granada," in four books, each amounting to about 400 lines, which soon after it was finished, he committed to the flames.* As he states in his Essay on the Imitation of Popular Poetry, that, for ten years previous to 1796, when his first translation from the German was executed, he had written no verses "except an occasional sonnet to his mistress's eyebrow," I presume this Conquest of Granada, the fruit of his study of the *Guerras Civiles*, must be assigned to the summer of 1786—or, making allowance for trivial inaccuracy, to the next year at latest. It was probably composed in imitation of Meikle's Lusiad:—at all events, we have a very distinct statement, that he made no attempts in the manner of the old minstrels, early as his admiration for them had been, until the period of his aquaintance with Bürger. Thus with him, as with most others, genius had hazarded many a random effort ere it discovered the true key-note. Long had

> "Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
> And an uncertain warbling made,"

before "the measure wild" was caught, and

> "In varying cadence, soft or strong,
> He swept the sounding chords along."

His youthful admiration of Langhorne has been rendered memorable by his own record of his first and only interview with his great predecessor, Robert Burns. Although the letter, in which he narrates this incident, addressed to myself in 1827, when I was writing a short biography of that poet, has been often reprinted, it is too important for my present purpose to be omitted here.

"As for Burns," (he writes,) "I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum*. I was a lad of fifteen in 1786-7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him; but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country, the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner, but had no opportunity to keep his word, otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Fergusson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course we youngsters sate silent, looked and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns' manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on the one side, on the other his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath—

> 'Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
> Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain;
> Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
> The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
> Gave the sad presage of his future years,
> The child of misery baptized in tears.'

Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were, and it chanced that nobody but myself remember-

* Life of Scott, by Mr. Allan, p. 83.

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ed that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's, called by the unpromising title of 'The Justice of the Peace.' I whispered my information to a friend present, who mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received and still recollect with very great pleasure.

"His person was strong and robust: his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture, but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I would have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school —*i. e.* none of your modern agriculturists, who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, and glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men in my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted, nor did I ever see him again except in the street, where he did not recognise me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh, but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

"I remember on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns's acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited, and also, that having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson, he talked of them with too much humility as his models; there was doubtless national predilection in his estimate."

I need not remark on the extent of knowledge, and justice of taste, exemplified in this early measurement of Burns, both as a student of English literature, and as a Scottish poet. The print, over which Scott saw Burns shed tears, is still in the possession of Dr. Fergusson's family, and I had often heard him tell the story, in the room where the precious relic hangs, before I requested him to set it down in writing—how little anticipating the use to which I should ultimately apply it!

His intimacy with Adam (now Sir Adam Fergusson) was thus his first means of introduction to the higher literary society of Edinburgh, and it was very probably to that connexion that he owed, among the rest, his acquaintance with the blind poet Blacklock, whom Johnson, twelve years earlier, "beheld with reverence." We have seen, however, that the venerable author of Douglas was a friend of his own parents, and had noticed him even in his infancy at Bath. John Home now inhabited a villa at no great distance from Edinburgh, and there, all through his young days, Scott was a frequent guest. Nor must it be forgotten that his uncle, Dr. Rutherford, inherited much of the general accomplishments, as well as the professional reputation of his father—and that it was beneath that roof he saw, several years before this, Dr. Cartwright, then in the enjoyment of some fame as a poet. In this family, indeed, he had more than one kind and strenuous encourager of his early literary tastes, as will be shown abundantly when we reach certain relics of his correspondence with his mother's sister, Miss Christian Rutherford. Dr. Rutherford's good natured remonstrances with him, as a boy, for reading at breakfast, are well remembered, and will remind my reader of a similar trait in the juvenile manners both of Burns and Byron; nor was this habit entirely laid aside even in Scott's advanced age.

If he is quite accurate in referring his first acquaintance with the Highlands to his fifteenth year, this incident also belongs to the first season of his apprenticeship. His father had, among a rather numerous list of Highland clients, Alexander Stewart of Invernahyle, an enthusiastic Jacobite, who had survived to recount, in secure and vigorous old age, his active experiences in the insurrections both of 1715 and 1745. He had, it appears, attracted Walter's attention and admiration at a very early date; for he speaks of having "seen him in arms," and heard him "exult in the prospect of drawing his claymore once more before he died," when Paul Jones threatened a descent on Edinburgh; which transaction occurred in September, 1779. Invernahyle, as Scott adds, was the only person who seemed to have retained possession of his cool senses at the period of that disgraceful alarm, and offered the magistrates to collect as many Highlanders as would suffice for cutting off any part of the pirate's crew that might venture in quest of plunder into a city full of high houses and narrow lanes, and every way well calculated for defence. The eager delight with which the young apprentice now listened to the tales of this fine old man's early days, produced an invitation to his residence among the mountains, and to this excursion he probably devoted the few weeks of an autumnal vacation—whether in 1786 or 1787, it is of no great consequence to ascertain.

In the Introduction to one of his novels, he has preserved a vivid picture of his sensations when the vale of Perth first burst on his view, in the course of his progress to Invernahyle, and the description has made classical ground of the *Wicks of Baiglie*, the spot from which that beautiful landscape was surveyed. "Childish wonder, indeed," he says, "was an ingredient in my delight, for I was not above fifteen years old, and as this had been the first excursion which I was permitted to make on a pony of my own, I also experienced the glow of independence, mingled with that degree of anxiety which the most conceited boy feels when he is first abandoned to his own undirected counsels. I recollect pulling up the reins, without meaning to do so, and gazing on the scene before me, as if I had been afraid it would shift, like those in a theatre, before I could distinctly observe its different parts, or convince myself that what I saw was real. Since that hour, the recollection of that inimitable landscape has possessed the strongest influence over my mind, and retained its place as a memorable thing, while much that was influential on my own fortunes has fled from my recollection." So speaks the poet; and who will not recognise his habitual modesty, in thus undervaluing, as uninfluential in comparison with some affair of worldly business, the ineffaceable impression thus stamped on the glowing imagination of his boyhood?

I need not quote the numerous passages scattered over his writings, both early and late, in which he dwells with fond affection on the chivalrous character of Invernahyle—the delight with which he heard the veteran describe his broadsword duel with Rob Roy—his campaigns with Mar and Charles Edward—and his long seclusion (as pictured in the story of Bradwardine) within a rocky cave, situated not far from his own house, while it was garrisoned by a party of English soldiers, after the battle of Culloden. Here, too, still survived the trusty henchman who had attended the chieftain in many a bloody field and perilous escape, the same "grim-looking old Highlander" who was in the act of cutting down Colonel Whitefoord with his Lochaber axe at Prestonpans, when his master arrested the blow—an incident to which Invernahyle owed his life, and we are indebted for another of the most striking pages in Waverley.

I have often heard Scott mention some curious particulars of his first visit to the remote fastness

of one of these Highland friends; but whether he told the story of Invernahyle, or of one of his own relations of the Clan Campbell, I do not recollect; I rather think the latter was the case. On reaching the brow of a bleak eminence overhanging the primitive tower and its tiny patch of cultivated ground, he found his host and three sons, and perhaps half-a-dozen attendant *gillies*, all stretched half asleep in their tartans upon the heath, with guns and dogs, and a profusion of game about them; while in the courtyard, far below, appeared a company of women, actively engaged in loading a cart with manure. The stranger was not a little astonished when he discovered, on descending from the height, that among these industrious females were the laird's own lady, and two or three of her daughters; but they seemed quite unconscious of having been detected in an occupation unsuitable to their rank—retired presently to their "bowers," and when they reappeared in other dresses, retained no traces of their morning's work, except complexions glowing with a radiant freshness, for one evening of which many a high-bred beauty would have bartered half her diamonds. He found the young ladies not ill informed, and exceedingly agreeable; and the song and the dance seemed to form the invariable termination of their busy days. I must not forget his admiration at the principal article of this laird's first course; namely, a gigantic *haggis*, borne into the hall in a wicker basket by two half-naked Celts, while the piper strutted fiercely behind them, blowing a tempest of dissonance.

These Highland visits were repeated almost every summer for several successive years, and perhaps even the first of them was in some degree connected with his professional business. At all events, it was to his allotted task of enforcing the execution of a legal instrument against some Maclarens, refractory tenants of Stewart of Appin, brother-in-law to Invernahyle, that Scott owed his introduction to the scenery of the Lady of the Lake. "An escort of a sergeant and six men," he says, "was obtained from a Highland regiment lying in Stirling, and the author, then a writer's apprentice, equivalent to the honourable situation of an attorney's clerk, was invested with the superintendence of the expedition, with directions to see that the messenger discharged his duty fully, and that the gallant sergeant did not exceed his part by committing violence or plunder. And thus it happened, oddly enough, that the author first entered the romantic scenery of Loch Katrine, of which he may perhaps say he has somewhat extended the reputation, riding in all the dignity of danger, with a front and rear guard, and loaded arms. The sergeant was absolutely a Highland Sergeant Kite, full of stories of Rob Roy and of himself, and a very good companion. We experienced no interruption whatever, and when we came to Invernenty, found the house deserted. We took up our quarters for the night, and used some of the victuals which we found there. The Maclarens, who probably had never thought of any serious opposition, went to America, where, having had some slight share in removing them from their *paupera regna*, I sincerely hope they prospered."*

That he entered with ready zeal into such professional business as inferred Highland expeditions with comrades who had known Rob Roy, no one will think strange; but more than one of his biographers allege, that in the ordinary indoor fagging of the chamber in George's Square, he was always an unwilling, and rarely an efficient assistant. Their addition, that he often played chess with one of his companions in the office, and had to conceal the board with precipitation when the old gentleman's footsteps were heard on the staircase, is, I do not doubt, true; and we may remember along with it his own insinuation, that his father was sometimes poring in his secret nook over Spottiswoode or Wodrow, when his apprentices supposed him to be deep in Dirleton's Doubts, or Stair's Decisions. But the Memoir of 1808, so candid—indeed, more than candid—as to many juvenile irregularities, contains no confession that supports the broad assertion to which I have alluded; nor can I easily believe, that with his affection for his father, and that sense of duty which seems to have been inherent in his character, and, lastly, with the evidence of a most severe training in industry which the habits of his after-life presented, it is at all deserving of serious acceptation. His mere handwriting, indeed, continued, during the whole of his prime, to afford most striking and irresistible proof how completely he must have submitted himself for some very considerable period to the mechanical discipline of his father's office. It spoke to months after months of this humble toil, as distinctly as the illegible scrawl of Lord Byron did to his self-mastership from the hour that he left Harrow. There are some little technical tricks, such as no gentleman who has not been subjected to a similar regimen ever can fall into, which he practised invariably while composing his poetry, which appear not unfrequently on the MSS. of his best novels, and which now and then dropt instinctively from his pen, even in the private letters and diaries of his closing years. I allude particularly to a sort of flourish at the bottom of the page, originally, I presume, adopted in engrossing, as a safeguard against the intrusion of a forged line between the legitimate text and the attesting signature. He was quite sensible that this ornament might as well be dispensed with; and his family often heard him mutter, after involuntarily performing it, "There goes the old shop again!"

I dwell on this matter, because it was always his favourite tenet, in contradiction to what he called the cant of sonnetteers, that there is no necessary connexion between genius and an aversion or contempt for any of the common duties of life; he thought, on the contrary, that to spend some fair portion of every day in any matter of fact occupation, is good for the higher faculties themselves in the upshot. In a word, from beginning to end, he piqued himself on being *a man of business;* and did—with one sad and memorable exception—whatever the ordinary course of things threw in his way, in exactly the business-like fashion which might have been expected from the son of a thoroughbred old Clerk to the Signet, who had never deserted his father's profession.

In the winter of 1788, however, his apprentice habits were exposed to a new danger; and from that date I believe them to have undergone a considerable change. He was then sent to attend the lectures of the Professor of Civil Law in the University, this course forming part of the usual professional education of Writers to the Signet, as well as of Advocates. For some time his companions, when in Edinburgh, had been chiefly, almost solely, his brother apprentices and the clerks in his father's office. He had latterly seen comparatively little even of the better of his old High School friends, such as Fergusson and Irving—for though both of these also were writer's apprentices, they had been indentured to other masters, and each had naturally formed new intimacies within his own chamber. The civil law class brought him again into daily contact with both Irving and Fergusson, as well as others of his earlier acquaintance of the higher ranks; but it also led him into the society of some young gentlemen previously unknown to him, who had from the outset been destined for the bar, and whose conversation, tinctured with certain prejudices natural to scions of what he calls in Redgauntlet *the Scottish noblesse de la robe*, soon banished from his mind every thought of ultimately adhering to the secondary branch of the law. He found these future barristers cultivating general literature, without any apprehension that such elegant pursuits could be regarded by any one as interfering with the proper studies of their professional career; justly believing, on the contrary, that for the higher class of forensic exertion some acquaintance with almost every branch of science and letters is a necessary preparative. He contrasted their liberal aspirations, and the encouragement which

* Introduction to Rob Roy, p. lxxxix., *note*.

these received in their domestic circles, with the narrower views which predominated in his own home, and resolved to gratify his ambition by adopting a most precarious walk in life, instead of adhering to that in which he might have counted with perfect security on the early attainment of pecuniary independence. This resolution appears to have been foreseen by his father, long before it was announced in terms; and the handsome manner in which the old gentleman conducted himself upon the occasion, is remembered with dutiful gratitude in the preceding autobiography.

The most important of these new alliances was the intimate friendship which he now formed with William Clerk of Eldin, of whose powerful talents and extensive accomplishments we shall hereafter meet with many enthusiastic notices. It was in company with this gentleman that he entered the debating societies described in his Memoir; through him he soon became linked in the closest intimacy with George Cranstoun (now Lord Corehouse,) George Abercromby, (now Lord Abercromby,) Sir Patrick Murray of Ochtertyre, John James Edmonstone of Newton, Patrick Murray of Simprim, and a group of other young men, all high in birth and connexion, and all remarkable in early life for the qualities which afterwards led them to eminent station, or adorned it. The introduction to their several families is alluded to by Scott as having opened to him abundantly certain advantages, which no one could have been more qualified to improve, but from which he had hitherto been in great measure debarred in consequence of the retired habits of his parents.

Mr. Clerk says, that he had been struck from the first day he entered the civil law class room, with something odd and remarkable in Scott's appearance; what this something was he cannot now recall, but he remembers telling his companion some time afterwards, that he thought he looked like a *hautboy-player*. Scott was amused with this notion, as he had never touched any musical instrument of any kind; but I fancy his friend had been watching a certain noticeable but altogether indescribable play of the upper lip when in an abstracted mood. He rallied Walter, he says, during one of their first evening walks together, on the slovenliness of his dress; he wore a pair of corduroy breeches, much glazed by the rubbing of his staff, which he immediately flourished—and said, "they be good enough for drinking in—let us go and have some oysters in the Covenant Close."

Convivial habits were then indulged among the young men of Edinburgh, whether students of law, writers, or barristers, to an extent now happily unknown: and this anecdote recalls some striking hints on that subject which occur in Scott's brief autobiography. That he partook profusely in the juvenile bacchanalia of that day, and continued to take a plentiful share in such jollities down to the time of his marriage, are facts worthy of being distinctly stated—for no man in mature life was more habitually averse to every sort of intemperance. He could, when I first knew him, swallow a great quantity of wine without being at all visibly disordered by it; but nothing short of some very particular occasion could ever induce him to put this strength of head to a trial; and I have heard him many times utter words which no one in the days of his youthful temptation can be the worse for remembering:—"Depend upon it, of all vices, drinking is the most incompatible with greatness."

The liveliness of his conversation—the strange variety of his knowledge—and above all, perhaps, the portentous tenacity of his memory—riveted more and more Clerk's attention, and commanded the wonder of all his new allies; but of these extraordinary gifts Scott himself appeared to be little conscious; or at least he impressed them all as attaching infinitely greater consequence (exactly as had been the case with him in the days of the Cowgate Port and the *kittle nine stepe*) to feats of personal agility and prowess. William Clerk's brother, James, a midshipman in the navy, happened to come home from a cruise in the Mediterranean shortly after this acquaintance began, and Scott and the sailor became almost at sight "sworn brothers." In order to complete his time under the late Sir Alexander Cochrane, who was then on the Leith station, James Clerk obtained the command of a lugger, and the young friends often made little excursions to sea with him. "The first time Scott dined on board," says William Clerk, "we met before embarking at a tavern in Leith—it was a large party, mostly midshipmen, and strangers to him, and our host introducing his landsmen guests, said, 'my brother you know, gentlemen; as for Mr. Scott, mayhaps you may take him for a poor lamiter, but he is the first to begin a row, and the last to end it;' which eulogium he confirmed with some of the expletives of Tom Pipes."* When, many years afterwards, Clerk read The Pirate, he was startled by the resurrection of a hundred traits of the table talk of this lugger: but the author has since traced some of the most striking passages in that novel to his recollection of the almost childish period when he hung on his own brother Robert's stories about Rodney's battles and the haunted *keys* of the West Indies.

One morning Scott called on Clerk, and exhibiting his stick all cut and marked, told him he had been attacked in the streets the night before by three fellows, against whom he had defended himself for an hour. "By Shrewsbury clock?" said his friend. "No," says Scott smiling, "by the Tron." But thenceforth, adds Mr. Clerk, and for twenty years after, he called his walking stick by the name of "Shrewsbury."

With these comrades Scott now resumed, and pushed to a much greater extent, his early habits of wandering over the country in quest of castles and other remains of antiquity, his passion for which derived a new impulse from the conversation of the celebrated John Clerk of Eldin,† the father of his friend. William Clerk well remembers his father telling a story which was introduced in due time in The Antiquary. While he was visiting his grandfather, Sir John Clerk, at Dumcrieff, in Dumfriesshire, many years before this time, the old Baronet carried some English Virtuosos to see a supposed Roman camp; and on his exclaiming at a particular spot, "this I take to have been the Prætorium," a herdsman, who stood by, answered, "Prætorium here, Prætorium there, I made it wi' a flaughter spade."‡ Many traits of the elder Clerk were, his son has no doubt, embroidered on the character of George Constable in the composition of Jonathan Oldbuck. The old gentleman's enthusiasm for antiquities was often played on by these young friends, but more effectually by his eldest son, John Clerk, (Lord Eldin,) who, having a great genius for art, used to amuse himself with manufacturing mutilated heads, which, after being buried for a convenient time in the ground, were accidentally discovered in some fortunate hour, and received by the laird with great honour, as valuable accessions to his museum.§

On a fishing excursion to a loch near Howgate, among the Moorfoot Hills, Scott, Clerk, Irving, and Abercromby, spent the night at a little public-house kept by one Mrs. Margaret Dods. When St. Ronan's Well was published, Clerk meeting Scott in the street, observed, "That's an odd name; surely I have met with it somewhere before." Scott smiled, said, "Don't you remember Howgate?" and passed on. The name alone, however, was taken from the Howgate hostess.

At one of their drinking bouts of those days, Wil-

* "Dinna steer him," says Hobbie Elliot; "ye may think Elshie's but a lamiter, but I warrant ye, grippie for grippie, he'll gar the blue blood spin frae your nails—his hand's like a smith's vice."—*Black Dwarf—Waverley Novels*, vol. ix. p. 202.

† Author of the famous Essay on dividing the Line in Seafights.

‡ Compare "The Antiquary," vol. i. p. 49.

§ The most remarkable of these *antique heads* was so highly appreciated by another distinguished connoisseur, the late Earl of Buchan, that he carried it off from Mr. Clerk's museum, and presented it to the Scottish Society of Antiquaries—in whose collection, no doubt, it may still be admired.

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Adam Clerk, Sir P. Murray, Edmonstone, and Abercromby, being of the party, the sitting was prolonged to a very late hour, and Scott fell asleep. When he awoke, his friends succeeded in convincing him that he had sung a song in the course of the evening, and sung it extremely well. How must these gentlemen have chuckled when they read Frank Osbaldistone's account of his revels in the old hall!—"It has even been reported by maligners that I sung a song while under this vinous influence; but as I remember nothing of it, and never attempted to turn a tune in all my life, either before or since, I would willingly hope there is no actual foundation for the calumny."*

On one of his first long walks with Clerk and others of the same set, their pace, being about four miles an hour, was found rather too much for Scott, and he offered to contract for three, which measure was thenceforth considered as the legal one. At this rate they often continued to wander from five in the morning till eight in the evening, halting for such refreshment at mid-day as any village alehouse might afford. On many occasions, however, they had stretched so far into the country, that they were obliged to be absent from home all night; and though great was the alarm which the first occurrence of this sort created in George's Square, the family soon got accustomed to such things, and little notice was taken, even though Walter remained away for the better part of a week. I have heard him laugh heartily over the recollections of one protracted excursion, towards the close of which the party found themselves a long day's walk—thirty miles, I think—from Edinburgh, without a single sixpence left among them. "We were put to our shifts," said he; "but we asked every now and then at a cottage-door for a drink of water; and one or two of the goodwives, observing our worn-out looks, brought forth milk in place of water—so with that, and hips and haws, we came in little the worse." His father met him with some impatient questions as to what he had been living on so long, for the old man well knew how scantily his pocket was supplied. "Pretty much like the young ravens," answered he; "I only wished I had been as good a player on the flute as poor George Primrose in The Vicar of Wakefield. If I had his art, I should like nothing better than to tramp like him from cottage to cottage over the world."—"I doubt," said the grave Clerk to the Signet, "I greatly doubt, sir, you were born for nae better than a *gangrel scrape-gut*." Some allusions to reproaches of this kind occur in the "Memoir;" and we shall find others in letters subsequent to his admission at the bar.

The debating club formed among these young friends at this era of their studies, was called *The Literary Society*; and is not to be confounded with the more celebrated Speculative Society, which Scott did not join for two years later. At *the Literary* he spoke frequently, and very amusingly and sensibly, but was not at all numbered among the most brilliant members. He had a world of knowledge to produce; but he had not acquired the art of arranging it to the best advantage in a continued address; nor, indeed, did he ever, I think, except under the influence of strong personal feeling, even when years and fame had given him full confidence in himself, exhibit upon any occasion the powers of oral eloquence. His antiquarian information, however, supplied many an interesting feature in these evenings of discussion. He had already dabbled in Anglo-Saxon and the Norse Sagas: in his Essay on Imitations of Popular Poetry, he alludes to these studies as having facilitated his acquisition of German:—But he was deep especially in Fordun and Wyntoun, and all the Scotch chronicles; and his friends rewarded him by the honourable title of *Duns Scotus*.

A smaller society, formed with less ambitious views, originated in a ride to Pennycuik, the seat of the head of Mr. Clerk's family, whose elegant hospitalities are recorded in the Memoir. This was called, by way of excellence, *The Club*, and I believe it is continued under the same name to this day. Here, too, Walter had his sobriquet; and—his corduroy breeches, I presume, not being as yet worn out—it was *Colonel Grogg*.*

Meantime he had not broken up his connexion with Rosebank; he appears to have spent several weeks in the autumn, both of 1788 and 1789, under his uncle's roof; and it was, I think, of his journey thither, in the last named year, that he used to tell an anecdote, which I shall here set down—how shorn, alas! of all the accessaries that gave it life when he recited it. Calling, before he set out, on one of the ancient spinsters of his family, to inquire if she had any message for Kelso, she retired, and presently placed in his hands a packet of some bulk and weight, which required, she said, very particular attention. He took it without examining the address, and carried it in his pocket next day, not at all to the lightening of a forty miles' ride in August. On his arrival, it turned out to contain one of the old lady's pattens, sealed up for a particular cobbler in Kelso, and accompanied with fourpence to pay for mending it, and special directions that it might be brought back to her by the same economical conveyance.

It will be seen from the following letter, the earliest of Scott's writing that has fallen into my hands, that professional business had some share in this excursion to Kelso; but I consider with more interest the brief allusion to a day at Sandy-Knowe.

"*To Mrs. Scott, George Square, Edinburgh.*

"(*With a parcel.*)

"*Rosebank, 5th Sept.* 1788.

"Dear Mother,

"I was favoured with your letter, and send you Anne's stockings along with this: I would have sent them last week, but had some expectations of a private opportunity. I have been very happy for this fortnight; we have some plan or other for every day. Last week my uncle, my cousin William,† and I, rode to Smailholm, and from thence walked to Sandy-knowe Craigs, where we spent the whole day, and made a very hearty dinner by the side of the Orderlaw Well, on some cold beef and bread and cheese: we had also a small case-bottle of rum to make grog with, which we drank to the Sandy-knowe bairns, and all their connexions. This jaunt gave me much pleasure, and had I time, I would give you a more full account of it.

"The fishing has been hitherto but indifferent, and I fear I shall not be able to accomplish my promise with regard to the wild-ducks. I was out on Friday and only saw three. I may probably, however, send you a hare, as my uncle has got a present of two greyhounds from Sir H. MacDougall, and as he has a license, only waits till the corn is off the ground to commence coursing. Be it known to you, however, I am not altogether employed in amusements, for I have got two or three clients besides my uncle, and am busy drawing tacks and contracts,—not, however, of marriage. I am in a fair way of making money, if I stay here long.

"Here I have written a pretty long letter, and nothing

* "The members of *The Club* used to meet on Friday evenings in a room in Carrubber's Close, from which some of them usually adjourned to sup at an oyster tavern in the same neighbourhood. In after life those of them who chanced to be in Edinburgh dined together twice every year, at the close of the winter and summer sessions of the Law Courts; and during thirty years, Sir Walter was very rarely absent on these occasions. It was also a rule, that when any member received an appointment or promotion, he should give a dinner to his old associates; and they had accordingly two such dinners from him—one when he became Sheriff of Selkirkshire, and another when he was named Clerk of Session. The original members were, in number, nineteen—viz., *Sir Walter Scott*, Mr. William Clerk, Sir A. Fergusson, Mr. James Edmonstone, Mr. George Abercromby (Lord Abercromby,) Mr. D. Boyle (now Lord Justice-Clerk,) Mr. James Glassford (Advocate,) Mr. James Ferguson (Clerk of Session,) Mr. David Monypenny (Lord Pitmilly,) Mr. Robert Davidson (Professor of Law at Glasgow,) Sir William Rae, Bart., Sir Partick Murray, Bart., *David Douglas* (Lord Reston,) Mr. Murray of Simprim, Mr. Monteath of Closeburn, *Mr. Archibald Miller* (son of Professor Miller,) *Baron Roden*, a Hanoverian, the Honourable *Thomas Douglas*, afterwards Earl of Selkirk,—and John Irving. Except the five whose names are *underlined*, these original members are all still alive."—*Letter from Mr. Irving, dated 29th September*, 1836.

† The present Laird of Raeburn.

* "Rob Roy." Waverley Novels, vol. vii. p. 122.

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in it; but you know writing to one's friends is the next thing to seeing them. My love to my father and the boys, from, dear mother, your dutiful and affectionate son,

WALTER SCOTT."

It appears from James Ballantyne's *memoranda*, that having been very early bound apprentice to a solicitor in Kelso, he had no intercouse with Scott during the three or four years that followed their companionship at the school of Lancelot Whale; but Ballantyne was now sent to spend a winter in Edinburgh for the completion of his professional education, and in the course of his attendance on the Scots-law class, became a member of a young Teviotdale club, where Walter Scott seldom failed to make his appearance. They supped together, it seems, once a-month; and here, as in the associations above mentioned, good fellowship was often pushed beyond the limits of modern indulgence. The strict intimacy between Scott and Ballantyne was not at this time renewed—their avocations prevented it—but the latter was no uninterested observer of his old comrade's bearing on this new scene. "Upon all these occasions," he says, "one of the principal features of his character was displayed as conspicuously as I believe it ever was at any later period. This was the remarkable ascendency he never failed to exhibit among his young companions, and which appeared to arise from their involuntary and unconscious submission to the same firmness of understanding, and gentle exercise of it, which produced the same effects throughout his after life. Where there was always a good deal of drinking, there was of course now and then a good deal of quarrelling. But three words from Walter Scott never failed to put all such propensities to quietness."

Mr. Ballantyne's account of his friend's peace-making exertions at this club may seem a little at variance with same preceding details. There is a difference, however, between encouraging quarrels in the bosom of a convivial party, and taking a fair part in a *row* between one's own party and another. But Ballantyne adds, that at *The Teviotdale*, Scott was always remarkable for being the most temperate of the set; and if the club consisted chiefly of persons, like Ballantyne himself, somewhat inferior to Scott in birth and station, his carefulness both of sobriety and decorum at their meetings was but another feature of his unchanged and unchangeable character—*qualis ab imo*.

At one of the many merry suppers of this time, Walter Scott had said something, of which, on recollecting himself next morning, he was sensible that his friend Clerk might have reason to complain. He sent him accordingly a note apologetical, which has by some accident been preserved, and which I am sure every reader will agree with me in considering well worthy of preservation. In it Scott contrives to make use of *both* his own club designations, and addresses his friend by another of the same order, which Clerk had received in consequence of comparing himself on some forgotten occasion to Sir John Brute in the play. This characteristic document is as follows:—

To William Clerk, Esq.

"Dear Baronet.

"I am sorry to find that our friend Colonel Grogg has behaved with a very undue degree of vehemence in a dispute with you last night, occasioned by what I am convinced was a gross misconception of your expressions. As the Colonel, though a military man, is not too haughty to acknowledge an error, he has commissioned me to make his apology as a mutual friend, which I am convinced you will accept from yours, ever.

DUNS SCOTUS."

"Given at Castle-Duns,
Monday."

I should perhaps have mentioned sooner, that when first *Duns Scotus* became *the Baronet's* daily companion—this new alliance was observed with considerable jealousy by some of his former inseparables of the writing office. At the next annual supper of the clerks and apprentices, the *gaudy* of the chamber, this feeling snowed itself in various ways, and when the cloth was drawn, Walter rose and asked what was meant. "Well," said one of the lads, "since you will have it out, you are *cutting* your old friends for the sake of Clerk, and some more of these dons, that look down on the like of us." "Gentlemen," answered Scott, "I will never *cut* any man unless I detect him in scoundrelism; but I know not what right any of you have to interfere with my choice of my company. If any one thought I had injured him, he would have done well to ask an explanation in a more private manner. As it is, I fairly own that though I like many of you very much, and have long done so, I think William Clerk well worth you all put together." The senior in the chair was wise enough to laugh, and the evening passed off without further disturbance.

As one effect of his office education, Scott soon began to preserve in regular files the letters addressed to him; and from the style and tone of such letters, as Mr. Southey observes in his Life of Cowper, a man's character may often be gathered even more surely than from those written by himself. The first series of any considerable extent in his collection, includes letters dated as far back as 1786, and proceeds, with not many interruptions, down beyond the period when his fame had been established. I regret, that from the delicate nature of the transactions chiefly dwelt upon in the earlier of these communications, I dare not make a free use of them; but I feel it my duty to record the strong impression they have left on my own mind of high generosity of affection, coupled with calm judgment, and perseverance in well-doing, on the part of the stripling Scott. To these indeed every line in the collection bears pregnant testimony. A young gentleman, born of good family, and heir to a tolerable fortune, is sent to Edinburgh College, and is seen partaking, along with Scott, through several apparently happy and careless years, of the studies and amusements of which the reader may by this time have formed an adequate notion. By degrees, from the usual license of his equal comrades, he sinks into habits of a looser description—becomes reckless, contracts debts, irritates his own family almost beyond hope of reconciliation, is virtually cast off by them, runs away from Scotland, forms a marriage far below his condition in a remote part of the sister kingdom—and, when the poor girl has made him a father, then first begins to open his eyes to the full consequences of his mad career. He appeals to Scott, by this time in his eighteenth year, "as the truest and noblest of friends," who had given him "the earliest and the strongest warnings," had assisted him "the most generously throughout all his wanderings and distresses," and will not now abandon him in his "penitent lowliness of misery," the result of his seeing "virtue and innocence involved in the punishment of his errors." I find Scott obtaining the slow and reluctant assistance of his own careful father,—who had long before observed this youth's wayward disposition, and often cautioned his son against the connexion,—to intercede with the unfortunate wanderer's family, and procure, if possible, some mitigation of their sentence. The result is, that he is furnished with the scanty means of removing himself to a distant colony, where he spends several years in the drudgery of a very humble occupation, but by degrees establishes for himself a new character, which commands the anxious interest of strangers;—and I find these strangers, particularly a benevolent and venerable clergyman, addressing, on his behalf, without his privacy, the young person, as yet unknown to the world, whom the object of their concern had painted to them as "uniting the warm feelings of youth with the sense of years"—whose hair he had, "from the day he left England, worn next his heart." Just at the time when this appeal reached Scott, he hears that his exiled friend's father has died suddenly, and after all intestate; he has actually been taking steps to ascertain the truth of the case at

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the moment when the American despatch is laid on his table. I leave the reader to guess with what pleasure Scott has to communicate the intelligence that his repentant and reformed friend may return to take possession of his inheritance. The letters before me contain touching pictures of their meeting—of Walter's first visit to the ancient hall, where a happy family are now assembled—and of the affectionately respectful sense which his friend retained ever afterwards of all that he had done for him in the season of his struggles. But what a grievous loss is Scott's part of this correspondence! I find this correspondent over and over again expressing his admiration of the letters in which Scott described to him his early tours both in the Highlands and the Border dales; I find him prophesying from them, as early as 1789, "one day your pen will make you famous,"—and already, in 1790, urging him to concentrate his ambition on a "history of the clans."*

This young gentleman appears to have had a decided turn for literature; and, though in his earlier epistles he makes no allusion to Scott as ever dabbling in rhyme, he often inserts verses of his own, some of which are not without merit. There is a long letter in doggrel, dated 1788, descriptive of a ramble from Edinburgh to Carlisle—of which I may quote the opening lines, as a sample of the simple habits of these young people.

"At four in the morning, I won't be too sure,
Yet, if right I remember me, that was the hour,
When with Fergusson, Ramsay, and Jones, sir, and you,
From Auld Reekie I southward my route did pursue.
But two of the dogs (yet God bless them, I said)
Grew tired, and but set me half way to Lasswade,
While Jones, you and I, Wat, went on without flutter,
And at Symonds's feasted on good bread and butter;
Where I, wanting a sixpence, you lugged out a shilling,
And paid for me too, though I was most unwilling.
We parted—be sure I was ready to snivel—
Jones and you to go home—I to go to the devil."

In a letter of later date, describing the adventurer's captivation with the cottage maiden whom he afterwards married, there are some lines of a very different stamp. This couplet at least seems to me exquisite:—

"Lowly beauty, dear friend, beams with primitive grace,
And 'tis innocence self plays the rogue in her face."

I find in another letter of this collection—and it is among the first of the series—the following passage:—"Your Quixotism, dear Walter, was highly characteristic. From the description of the blooming fair, as she appeared when she lowered her *manteau vert*, I am hopeful you have not dropt the acquaintance. At least I am certain some of our more rakish friends would have been glad enough of such an introduction." This hint I cannot help connecting with the first scene of *The Lady Green Mantle* in Redgauntlet; but indeed I could easily trace many more coincidences between these letters and that novel, though at the same time I have no sort of doubt that William Clerk was, in the main, *Darsie Latimer*, while Scott himself unquestionably sat for his own picture in young *Alan Fairford*.

The allusion to "our more rakish friends" is in keeping with the whole strain of this juvenile correspondence. Throughout there occurs no coarse or even jocular suggestion as to the conduct of *Scott* in that particular, as to which most youths of his then age are so apt to lay up stores of self-reproach. In this season of hot and impetuous blood, he may not have escaped quite blameless, but I have the concurrent testimony of all the most intimate amongst his surviving associates, that he was remarkably free from such indiscretions; that while his high sense of honour shielded him from the remotest dream of tampering with female innocence, he had an instinctive delicacy about him, which made him recoil with utter disgust from low and vulgar debaucheries. His friends, I have heard more than one of them confess, used often to rally him on the coldness of his nature. By degrees they discovered that he had, from almost the dawn of the passions, cherished a secret attachment, which continued, through all the most perilous stage of life, to act as a romantic charm in safeguard of virtue. This—(however he may have disguised the story by mixing it up with the Quixotic adventure of the damsel in the Green Mantle)—this was the early and innocent affection to which we owe the tenderest pages, not only of Redgauntlet, but of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, and of Rokeby. In all of these works the heroine has certain distinctive features, drawn from one and the same haunting dream of his manly adolescence.

It was about 1790, according to Mr. William Clerk, that Scott was observed to lay aside that carelessness, not to say slovenliness, as to dress, which used to furnish matter for joking at the beginning of their acquaintance. He now did himself more justice in these little matters, became fond of mixing in general female society, and, as his friend expresses it, "began to set up for a squire of dames."

His personal appearance at this time was not unengaging. A lady of high rank, who well remembers him in the Old Assembly Rooms, says, "Young Walter Scott was a comely creature." He had outgrown the sallowness of early ill health, and had a fresh brilliant complexion. His eyes were clear, open, and well set, with a changeful radiance, to which teeth of the most perfect regularity and whiteness lent their assistance, while the noble expanse and elevation of the brow gave to the whole aspect a dignity far above the charm of mere features. His smile was always delightful; and I can easily fancy the peculiar intermixture of tenderness and gravity, with playful innocent hilarity and humour in the expression, as being well calculated to fix a fair lady's eye. His figure, excepting the blemish in one limb, must in those days have been eminently handsome; tall, much above the usual standard, it was cast in the very mould of a young Hercules, the head set on with singular grace, the throat and chest after the truest model of the antique, the hands delicately finished, the whole outline that of extraordinary vigour, without as yet a touch of clumsiness. When he had acquired a little facility of manner, his conversation must have been such as could have dispensed with any exterior advantages, and certainly brought swift forgiveness for the one unkindness of nature. I have heard him, in talking of this part of his life, say, with an arch simplicity of look and tone which those who were familiar with him can fill in for themselves,—"It was a proud night with me, when I first found that a pretty young woman could think it worth her while to sit and talk with me, hour after hour, in a corner of the ball-room, while all the world were capering in our view."

I believe, however, that the "pretty young woman" here specially alluded to, had occupied his attention long before he ever appeared in the Edinburgh Assembly Rooms, or any of his friends took note of him as "setting up for a squire of dames." I have been told that their acquaintance began in the Grayfriars' Churchyard, where rain beginning to fall one Sunday as the congregation were dispersing, Scott happened to offer his umbrella, and the tender being accepted, so escorted her to her residence, which proved to be at no great distance from his own. To return from church together had, it seems, grown into something like a custom, before they met in society, Mrs. Scott being of the party. It then appeared that she and the lady's mother had been companions in their youth, though both living secludedly, they had scarcely seen each other for many years; and the two matrons now renewed their former intercourse. But no acquaintance appears to have existed between the fathers of the young people, until things had advanced in appearance further than met the approbation of the good Clerk to the Signet.

Being aware that the young lady, who was very highly connected, had prospects of fortune far above his son's, the upright and honourable man conceived it his duty to give her parents warning that he

* All Scott's letters to the friend here alluded to are said to have perished in an accidental fire.

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observed a degree of intimacy which, if allowed to go on, might involve the parties in future pain and disappointment. He had heard his son talk of a contemplated excursion to the part of the country in which his neighbour's estates lay, and not doubting that Walter's real object was different from that which he announced, introduced himself with a frank statement, that he wished no such affair to proceed, without the express sanction of those most interested in the happiness of persons as yet too young to calculate consequences for themselves. The northern Baronet had heard nothing of the young apprentice's intended excursion, and appeared to treat the whole business very lightly. He thanked Mr. Scott for his scrupulous attention—but added, that he believed he was mistaken; and this paternal interference, which Walter did not hear of till long afterwards, produced no change in his relations with the object of his growing attachment.

I have neither the power nor the wish to give in detail the sequel of this story. It is sufficient to say, that after he had through several long years nourished the dream of an ultimate union with this lady, his hopes terminated in her being married to a gentleman of the highest character, to whom some affectionate allusions occur in one of the greatest of his works, and who lived to act the part of a most generous friend to his early rival throughout the anxieties and distresses of 1826 and 1827. I have said enough for my purpose—which was only to render intelligible a few allusions in the letters which I shall by and by have to introduce; but I may add, that I have no doubt this unfortunate passion, besides one good effect already adverted to, had a powerful influence in nerving Scott's mind for the sedulous diligence with which he pursued his proper legal studies, as described in his Memoir, during the two or three years that preceded his call to the bar.

CHAPTER VI.

ILLUSTRATIONS CONTINUED—STUDIES FOR THE BAR—EXCURSIONS TO NORTHUMBERLAND—LETTER ON FLODDEN FIELD—CALL TO THE BAR—1790-1792.

THE two following letters may sufficiently illustrate the writer's every day existence in the autumn of 1790. The first, addressed to his *fidus Achates*, has not a few indications of the vein of humour from which he afterwards drew so largely in his novels; and indeed, even in his last days, he delighted to tell the story of the Jedburgh bailies' *boots*.

To William Clerk, Esq., at John Clerk's, Esq., of Eldin, Prince's-street, Edinburgh.

"Rosebank, 6th August, 1790.

"Dear William,

"Here am I, the weather, according to your phrase, most bitchiferous; the Tweed within twenty yards of the window at which I am writing, swelled from bank to brae, and roaring like thunder. It is paying you but a poor compliment to tell you I waited for such a day to perform my promise of writing, but you must consider that it is the point here to reserve such within-doors' employment as we think most agreeable for bad weather, which in the country always wants something to help it away. In fair weather we are far from wanting amusement, which at present is my business; on the contrary, every fair day has some plan of pleasure annexed to it, in so much that I can hardly believe I have been here above two days, so swiftly does the time pass away. You will ask how it is employed. Why, negatively, I read *no* civil law. Heineccius and his fellow worthies have ample time to gather a venerable coat of dust, which they merit by their dulness. As to my positive amusements, besides riding, fishing, and the other usual sports of the country, I often spend an hour or two in the evening in shooting herons, which are numerous on this part of the river. To do this, I have no farther to go than the bottom of our garden, which literally hangs over the river. When you fire at a bird she always crosses the river, and when again shot at with ball, usually returns to your side, and will cross in this way several times before she takes wing. This furnishes fine sport; nor are they easily shot, as you never can get very near them. The intervals between their appearing is spent very agreeably in eating gooseberries.

"Yesterday was St. James's Fair, a day of great business. There was a great show of black cattle—I mean of ministers; the narrowness of their stipends here obliges many of them to enlarge their incomes by taking farms and grazing cattle. This, in my opinion, diminishes their respectability, nor can the farmer be supposed to entertain any great reverence for the ghostly advice of a *pastor*, (they literally deserve the epithet,) who perhaps the day before overreached him in a bargain. I would not have you to suppose there are no exceptions to this character, but it would serve most of them. I had been fishing with my uncle, Captain Scott, on the Teviot, and returned through the ground where the Fair is kept. The servant was waiting there with our horses, as we were to ride the water. Lucky it was that it was so; for just about that time the magistrates of Jedburgh, who preside there, began their solemn procession through the Fair. For the greater dignity upon this occasion, they had a pair of boots among three men—*i. e.*, as they ride three in a rank, the *outer* legs of those personages who formed the outside, as they may be called, of the procession, were each clothed in a boot. This and several other incongruous appearances, were thrown in the teeth of those cavaliers by the Kelso populace, and, by the assistance of whiskey, parties were soon inflamed to a very tight battle, one of that kind which, for distinction sake, is called royal. It was not without great difficulty that we extricated ourselves from the confusion; and had we been on foot, we might have been trampled down by these fierce Jedburghians, who charged like so many troopers. We were spectators of the combat from an eminence, but peace was soon after restored, which made the older warriors regret the effeminacy of the age, as, regularly, it ought to have lasted till night. Two lives were lost, I mean of horses; indeed, had you seen them, you would rather have wondered that they were able to bear their masters to the scene of action, than that they could not carry them off.

"I am ashamed to read over this sheet of nonsense, so excuse inaccuracies. Remember me to the lads of the Literary, those of *the club* in particular. I wrote Irving. Remember my most respectful compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Clerk and family, particularly James; when you write, let me know how he did when you heard of him. Imitate me in writing a long letter, but not in being long in writing it. Direct to me at Miss Scott's Garden, Kelso. My letters lie there for me, as it saves their being sent down to Rosebank. The carrier puts up at the Grassmarket, and goes away on Wednesday forenoon.

"Yours, WALTER SCOTT."

The next letter is dated from a house at which I have often seen the writer in his latter days. Kippilaw, situated about five or six miles behind Abbotsford, on the high ground between the Tweed and the Water of Ayle, is the seat of an ancient laird of the clan Kerr, but was at this time tenanted by the family of Walter's brother-apprentice, James Ramsay, who afterwards realized a fortune in the civil service of the East India Company at Ceylon.

"To William Clerk, Esq.

"Kippilaw, Sept. 3, 1790.

"Dear Clerk,

"I am now writing from the country habitation of our friend Ramsay, where I have been spending a week as pleasantly as ever I spent one in my life. Imagine a commodious old house, pleasantly situated amongst a knot of venerable elms, in a fine sporting, open country, and only two miles from an excellent water for trouts, inhabited by two of the best old ladies, (Ramsay's aunts,) and three as pleasant young ones, (his sisters,) as any person would wish to converse with—and you will have some idea of Kippilaw. James and I wander about, fish, or look for hares, the whole day, and at night laugh, chat, and play round games at cards. Such is the fatherland in which I have been living for some days past, and which I leave to-night or to-morrow. This day is very bad; notwithstanding which, James has sallied out to make some calls, as he soon leaves the country. I have a great mind to trouble him with the care of this.

"And now for your letter, the receipt of which I have not, I think, yet acknowledged, though I am much obliged to you for it. I dare say you would relish your jaunt to Pennycuick very much, especially considering the solitary desert of Edinburgh, from which it relieved you. By the by, know, O thou devourer of grapes, who contemnest the vulgar gooseberry, that thou art not singular in thy devouring—*nec tam aversus equos sol jungit ab urbe (Kelsoniand ecilicet)*—my uncle being the lawful possessor of a vinery, measuring no less than twenty-four feet

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by twelve, the contents of which come often in my way; and, according to the proverb, that enough is as good as a feast, are equally acceptable as if they came out of the most extensive vineyard in France. I cannot, however, equal your boast of breakfasting, dining, and supping on them. As for the civilians'—peace be with them, and may the dust lie light upon their heads—they deserve this prayer in return for those sweet slumbers which their benign influence infuses into their readers. I fear I shall too soon be forced to disturb them, for some of our family being now at Kelso, I am under the agonies lest I be obliged to escort them into town. The only pleasure I shall reap by this, is that of asking you how you do, and, perhaps, the solid advantage of completing our studies before the College sits down. Employ, therefore, your mornings in slumber while you can, for soon it will be chased from your eyes. I plume myself on my sagacity with regard to C. J. Fox.† I always foretold you would tire of him—a vile brute. I have not yet forgot the narrow escape of my fingers. I rejoice at James's‡ intimacy with Miss Menzies. She promised to turn out a fine girl, has a fine fortune, and could James get her, he might sing, 'I'll go no more to sea, to sea.' Give my love to him when you write.—'God preserve us, what a scrawl!' says one of the ladies just now, in admiration at the expedition with which I scribble. Well—I was never able in my life to do any thing with what is called gravity and deliberation.

"I dined two days ago *tête à tête* with Lord Buchan. Heard a history of all his ancestors whom he has hung round his chimney-piece. From counting of pedigrees, good Lord deliver us! He is thinking of erecting a monument to Thomson. He frequented Dryburgh much in *my grandfather's* time. It will be a handsome thing. As to *your* scamp of a boy, I saw nothing of him; but the face is enough to condemn there. I have seen a man flogged for stealing spirits on the sole information of his nose. Remember me respectfully to all your family.

"Believe me yours, affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

After his return from the scene of these merry doings, he writes as follows to his kind uncle. The reader will see that, in the course of the preceding year, he had announced his early views of the origin of what is called the feudal system, in a paper read before *the Literary Society*. He, in the succeeding winter, chose the same subject for an essay, submitted to Mr. Dugald Stewart, whose prelections on ethics he was then attending. Some time later he again illustrated the same opinions more at length, in a disquisition before the Speculative Society; and, indeed, he always adhered to them. One of the last historical books he read, before leaving Abbotsford for Malta in 1831, was Colonel Tod's interesting account of Rajasthan; and I well remember the delight he expressed on finding his views confirmed, as they certainly are in a very striking manner, by the philosophical soldier's details of the structure of society in that remote region of the East.

"*To Captain Robert Scott, Rosebank, Kelso.*

"Edinburgh, September, 1790.

"Dear Uncle,

"We arrived here without any accident about five o'clock on Monday evening. The good weather made our journey pleasant. I have been attending to your commissions here, and find that the last volume of Dodsley's Annual Register published is that for 1787, which I was about to send you; but the bookseller I frequent had not one in boards, though he expects to procure one for me. There is a new work of the same title and size, on the same plan, which, being published every year regularly, has almost cut out Dodsley's, so that this last is expected to stop altogether. You will let me know if you would wish to have the new work, which is a good one, will join very well with those volumes of Dodsley's which you already have, and is published up to the present year. Byron's Narrative is not yet published, but you shall have it whenever it comes out.

"Agreeable to your permission, I send you the scroll copy of an essay on the origin of the feudal system, written for the Literary Society last year. As you are kind enough to interest yourself in my style and manner of writing, I thought you might like better to see it in its original state, than one on the polishing of which more time had been bestowed. You will see that the intention and attempt of the essay is principally to controvert two propositions laid down by the writers on the subject:—1st. That the system was invented by the Lombards; and, 2dly, that its foundation depended on the king's being acknowledged the sole lord of all the lands in the country, which he afterwards distributed to be held by military tenures. I have endeavored to assign it a more general origin, and to prove that it proceeds upon principles common to all nations when placed in a certain situation. I am afraid the matter will but poorly reward the trouble you will find in reading some parts. I hope, however, you will make out enough to enable you to favour me with your sentiments upon its faults. There is none whose advice I prize so high, for there is none in whose judgment I can so much confide, or who has shown me so much kindness.

"I also send, as amusement for an idle half hour, a copy of the regulations of our Society, some of which will, I think, be favoured with your approbation.

"My mother and sister join in compliments to aunt and you, and also in thanks for the attentions and hospitality which they experienced at Rosebank. And I am ever your affectionate nephew, WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—If you continue to want a mastiff, I think I can procure you one of a good breed, and send him by the carrier."

While attending Mr. Dugald Stewart's class, in the winter of 1790–1, Scott produced, in compliance with the usual custom of ethical students, several essays besides that to which I have already made an allusion, and which was, I believe, entitled, "On the Manners and Customs of the Northern Nations." But this essay it was that first attracted, in any particular manner, his professor's attention. Mr. Robert Ainslie, well known as the friend and fellow-traveller of Burns, happened to attend Stewart the same session, and remembers his saying *ex cathedrâ*, "The author of this paper shows much knowledge of his subject, and a great taste for such researches." Scott became, before the close of the Session, a frequent visiter in Mr. Stewart's family, and an affectionate intercourse was maintained between them through their after-lives.

Let me here set down a little story which most of his friends must have heard him tell of the same period. While attending Dugald Stewart's lectures on moral philosophy, Scott happened to sit frequently beside a modest and diligent youth, considerably his senior, and obviously of very humble condition. Their acquaintance soon became rather intimate, and he occasionally made this new friend the companion of his country walks, but as to his parentage and place of residence he always preserved total silence. One day, towards the end of the session, as Scott was returning to Edinburgh from a solitary ramble, his eye was arrested by a singularly venerable *Bluegown*, a beggar of the Edie Ochiltree order, who stood propped on his stick, with his hat in his hand, but silent and motionless, at one of the outskirts of the city. Scott gave the old man what trifle he had in his pocket, and passed on his way. Two or three times afterwards the same thing happened, and he had begun to consider the Bluegown as one who had established a claim on his bounty: when one day he fell in with him as he was walking with his humble student. Observing some confusion in his companion's manner as he saluted his pensioner, and bestowed the usual benefaction, he could not help saying, after they had proceeded a few yards further, "Do you know any thing to the old man's discredit?" Upon which the youth burst into tears, and cried, "O no, sir, God forbid—but I am a poor wretch to be ashamed to speak to him—he is my own father. He has enough laid by to serve for his own old days, but he stands bleaching his head in the wind, that he may get the means of paying for my education." Compassionating the young man's situation, Scott soothed his weakness, and kept his secret, but by no means broke off the acquaintance. Some months had elapsed before he again met the Bluegown—it was in a retired place, and the old man begged to speak a word with him. "I find, sir," he said, "that you have been very kind to my Willie. He had often spoke of it before I saw you together. Will you pardon such a liberty, and give me the honour and pleasure of seeing you under my

* Books on Civil Law.

† A tame fox of Mr. Clerk's, which he soon dismissed.

‡ Mr. James Clerk, R. N.

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poor roof? To-morrow is Saturday, will you come at two o'clock? Willie has not been very well, and it would do him meikle good to see your face." His curiosity, besides better feelings, was touched, and he accepted this strange invitation. The appointed hour found him within sight of a sequestered little cottage, near St. Leonard's—the hamlet where he has placed the residence of his David Dean's. His fellow-student, pale and emaciated from recent sickness, was seated on a stone bench by the door, looking out for his coming, and introduced him into a not untidy cabin, where the old man, divested of his professional garb, was directing the last vibrations of a leg of mutton that hung by a hempen cord before the fire. The mutton was excellent—so were the potatoes and whiskey: and Scott returned home from an entertaining conversation, in which, besides telling many queer stories of his own life—and he had seen service in his youth—the old man more than once used an expression, which was long afterwards put into the mouth of Dominie Sampson's mother:—"Please God, I may live to see my bairn wag his head in a pulpit yet."

Walter could not help telling all this the same night to his mother, and added, that he would fain see his poor friend obtain a tutor's place in some gentleman's family. "Dinna speak to your father about it," said the good lady; "if it had been *a shoulder* he might have thought less, but he will say *the jigot* was a sin. I'll see what I can do." Mrs. Scott made inquiries in her own way among the professors, and having satisfied herself as to the young man's character, applied to her favourite minister, Dr. Erskine, whose influence soon procured such a situation as had been suggested for him, in the north of Scotland. "And thenceforth," said Sir Walter, "I lost sight of my friend—but let us hope he made out his *curriculum* at Aberdeen, and is now wagging his head where the fine old carle wished to see him."*

On the 4th of January, 1791, Scott was admitted a member of *The Speculative Society*, where it had, long before, been the custom of those about to be called to the bar, and those who, after assuming the gown were left in possession of leisure by the solicitors, to train or exercise themselves in the arts of elocution and debate. From time to time, each member produces an essay, and his treatment of his subject is then discussed by the conclave. Scott's essays were, for November, 1791, "On the Origin of the Feudal System;" for the 14th February, 1792, "On the Authenticity of Ossian's Poems;" and, on the 11th December, of the same year, he read one "On the Origin of the Scandinavian Mythology." The selection of these subjects shows the course of his private studies and predilections; but he appears, from the minutes, to have taken a fair share in the ordinary debates of the Society,—and spoke, in the spring of 1791, on these questions, which all belong to the established text-book for juvevile speculation in Edinburgh:—"Ought any permanent support to be provided for the poor?" "Ought there to be an established religion?" "Is attainder and corruption of blood ever a proper punishment?" "Ought the public expenses to be defrayed by levying the amount directly upon the people, or is it expedient to contract national debt for that purpose?" "Was the execution of Charles I. justifiable?" "Should the slave-trade be abolished?" In the next session, previous to his call to the bar, he spoke in the debates, of which these were the theses:—"Has the belief in a future state been of advantage to mankind, or is it ever likely to be so?" "Is it for the interest of Britain to maintain what is called the balance of Europe?" and again, on the eternal question as to the fate of King Charles I., which, by the way, was thus set up for re-discussion, on a motion by Walter Scott.

He took, for several winters, an ardent interest in this society. Very soon after his admission, (16th January, 1791,) he was elected their librarian; and in the November following, he became also their secretary and treasurer; all which appointments indicate the reliance placed on his careful habits of business, the fruit of his chamoer education. The minutes kept in his handwriting attest the strict regularity of his attention to the small affairs, literary and financial, of the club; but they show, also, as do all his early letters, a strange carelessness in spelling. His constant good temper softened the asperities of debate; while his multifarious lore, and the quaint humour with which he enlivened its display, made him more a favourite as a speaker than some whose powers of rhetoric were far above his.

Lord Jeffrey remembers being struck, the first night he spent at the Speculative, with the singular appearance of the secretary, who sat gravely at the bottom of the table in a huge woollen night-cap; and when the president took the chair, pleaded a bad toothache as his apology for coming into that worshipful assembly in such a "portentous machine." He read that night an essay on ballads, which so much interested the new member, that he requested to be introduced to him. Mr. Jeffrey called on him next evening, and found him "in a small den, on the sunk floor of his father's house, in George's Square, surrounded with dingy books," from which they adjourned to a tavern, and supped together. Such was the commencement of an acquaintance, which by degrees ripened into friendship, between the two most distinguished men of letters whom Edinburgh produced in their time. I may add here the description of that early *den*, with which I am favoured by a lady of Scott's family. "Walter had soon begun to collect out-of-the-way things of all sorts. He had more books than shelves; a small painted cabinet, with Scotch and Roman coins in it, and so forth. A claymore and Lochaber axe, given him by old Invernahyle, mounted guard on a little print of Prince Charlie; and *Broughton's Saucer* was hooked up against the wall below it." Such was the germ of the magnificent library and museum of Abbotsford; and such were the "new realms" in which he, on taking possession, had arranged his little paraphernalia about him "with all the feelings of novelty and liberty." Since those days the habits of life in Edinburgh, as elsewhere, have undergone many changes; and the "convenient parlour," in which Scott first showed Jeffrey his collections of minstrelsy, is now, in all probability, thought hardly good enough for a menial's sleeping-room.

But I have forgotten to explain *Broughton's Saucer*. We read of Mr. Saunders Fairford, that though "an elder of the kirk, and of course zealous for King George and the Government," yet, having "many clients and connexions of business among families of opposite political tenets, he was particularly cautious to use all the conventional phrases which the civility of the time had devised as an admissible mode of language betwixt the two parties: Thus he spoke sometimes of the Chevalier, but never either of the *Prince*, which would have been sacrificing his own principles, or of *the Pretender*, which would have been offensive to those of others: Again, he usually designated the Rebellion as the *affair* of 1745, and spoke of any one engaged in it as a person who had been *out* at a certain period—so that, on the whole, he was much liked and respected on all sides."* All this was true of Mr. Walter Scott, W. S.; but I have often heard his son tell an anecdote of him which he dwelt on with particular satisfaction, as illustrative of the man, and of the difficult time through which he had lived.

Mrs. Scott's curiosity was strongly excited one autumn by the regular appearance, at a certain hour every evening, of a sedan chair, to deposit a person carefully muffled up in a mantle, who was immediately ushered into her husband's private room, and commonly remained with him there until long after the usual bed-time of this orderly family. Mr. Scott

* The reader will find a story not unlike this in the Introduction to the "Antiquary," 1830. When I first read that note, I asked him why he had altered so many circumstances from the usual oral edition of his anecdote. "Nay," said he, "both stories may be true, and why should I be always lugging in myself, when what happened to another of our class would serve equally well for the purpose I had in view?" I regretted the *leg of mutton*.

* Redgauntlet, vol. i. p. 244.

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answered her repeated inquiries with a vagueness which irritated the lady's feelings more and more; until, at last, she could bear the thing no longer; but one evening, just as she heard the bell ring as for the stranger's chair to carry him off, she made her appearance within the forbidden parlour with a salver in her hand, observing, that she thought the gentlemen had sat so long they would be the better of a dish of tea, and had ventured accordingly to bring some for their acceptance. The stranger, a person of distinguished appearance, and richly dressed, bowed to the lady, and accepted a cup; but her husband knit his brows, and refused very coldly to partake the refreshment. A moment afterwards the visiter withdrew—and Mr. Scott, lifting up the window-sash, took the cup, which he had left empty on the table, and tossed it out upon the pavement. The lady exclaimed for her china, but was put to silence by her husband's saying, "I can forgive your little curiosity, madam, but you must pay the penalty. I may admit into my house, on a piece of business, persons wholly unworthy to be treated as guests by my wife. Neither lip of me nor of mine comes after Mr. Murray of Broughton's."

This was the unhappy man who, after attending Prince Charles Stuart as his secretary throughout the greater part of his expedition, condescended to redeem his own life and fortune by bearing evidence against the noblest of his late master's adherents, when,

> "Pitied by gentle hearts Kilmarnock died—
> The brave, Balmerino, were on thy side."

When first confronted with the last named peer before the Privy Council in St. James's, the prisoner was asked, "do you know this witness, my lord?" "Not I," answered Balmerino; "I once knew a person who bore the designation of Murray of Broughton—but that was a gentleman and a man of honour, and one that could hold up his head!"

The saucer belonging to Broughton's teacup had been preserved; and Walter, at a very early period, made prize of it. One can fancy young Alan Fairford pointing significantly to the relic when Mr. Saunders was vouchsafing him one of his customary lectures about listening with unseemly sympathy to "the blawing, bleezing stories which the Highland gentlemen told of those troublous times."*

The following letter is the only one of the autumn of 1791 that has reached my hands. It must be read with particular interest, for its account of Scott's first visit to Flodden field, destined to be celebrated seventeen years afterwards in the very noblest specimen of his numbers.

To William Clerk, Esq. Prince's Street, Edinburgh.

"Northumberland, 26th August, 1791.

"Dear Clerk,

"Behold a letter from the mountains, for I am very snugly settled here, in a farmer's house, about six miles from Wooler, in the very centre of the Cheviot hills, in one of the wildest and most romantic situations which your imagination, fertile upon the subject of cottages, ever suggested. And what the deuce are you about there? methinks I hear you say. Why, sir, of all things in the world—drinking goat's whey—not that I stand in the least need of it, but my uncle having a slight cold, and being a little tired of home, asked me last Sunday evening if I would like to go with him to Wooler, and I answering in the affirmative, next morning's sun beheld us on our journey, through a pass in the Cheviots, upon the back of two special nags, and man Thomas behind with a portmanteau, and two fishing rods fastened across his back, much in the style of St. Andrew's Cross. Upon reaching Wooler, we found the accommodations so bad that we were forced to use some interest to get lodgings here, where we are most delightfully appointed indeed. To add to my satisfaction, we are amidst places renowned by the feats of former days; each hill is crowned with a tower, or camp, or cairn, and in no situation can you be near more fields of battle: Flodden, Otterburn, Chevy Chase, Ford Castle, Chillingham Castle, Copland Castle, and many another scene of blood, are within the compass of a forenoon's ride. Out of the brooks with which these hills are intersected we pull trouts of half a yard in length, as fast as we did the perches from the pond at Pennycuick, and we are in the very country of muirfowl.

"Often as I have wished for your company, I never did it more earnestly than when I rode over Flodden Edge. I know your taste for these things, and could have undertaken to demonstrate, that never was an affair more completely bungled than that day's work was. Suppose one army posted upon the face of a hill, and secured by high grounds projecting on each flank, with the river Till in front, a deep and still river, winding through a very extensive valley called Milfield Plain, and the only passage over it by a narrow bridge, which the Scots artillery, from the hill, could in a moment have demolished. Add that the English must have hazarded a battle while their troops, which were tumultuously levied, remained together; and that the Scots, behind whom the country was open to Scotland, had nothing to do but to wait for the attack as they were posted. Yet did two thirds of the army, actuated by the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum*, rush down and give an opportunity to Stanley to occupy the ground they had quitted, by coming over the shoulder of the hill, while the other third, under Lord Home, kept their ground, and having seen their King and about 10,000 of their countrymen cut to pieces, retired into Scotland without loss. For the reason of the bridge not being destroyed while the English passed, I refer you to Pitscottie, who narrates at large, and to whom I give credit for a most accurate and clear description, agreeing perfectly with the ground.

"My uncle drinks the whey here, as I do ever since I understood it was brought to his bedside every morning at six, by a very pretty dairy-maid. So much for my residence; all the day we shoot, fish, walk, and ride; dine and sup upon fish struggling from the stream, and the most delicious heath-fed mutton, barn-door fowls, poys,* milk-cheese, &c., all in perfection; and so much simplicity resides among these hills, that a pen, which could write at least, was not to be found about the house, though belonging to a considerable farmer, till I shot the crow with whose quill I write this epistle. I wrote to Irving before leaving Kelso. Poor fellow, I am sure his sister's death must have hurt him much; though he makes no noise about feelings, yet still streams always run deepest. I sent a message by him to Edie,† poor devil, adding my mite of consolation to him in his affliction. I pity poor * * * * *, who is more deserving of compassion, being his first offence. Write soon, and as long as the last; you will have Perthshire news I suppose soon. Jamie's adventure diverted me much. I read it to my uncle, who being long in the India service, was affronted. Remember to James when you write, and to all your family and friends in general. I send this to Kelso—you may address as usual; my letters will be forwarded—adieu—au revoir,

WALTER SCOTT."

With the exception of this little excursion, Scott appears to have been nailed to Edinburgh during this autumn, by that course of legal study, in company with Clerk, on which he dwells in his Memoir with more satisfaction than on any other passage in his early life. He copied out *twice*, as the Fragment tells us, his notes of those lectures of the eminent Scotch law professor, (afterwards Mr. Baron Hume,) which he speaks of in such a high strain of eulogy; and Mr. Irving adds, that the second copy, being fairly finished and bound into volumes, was presented to his father. The old gentleman was highly gratified with this performance, not only as a satisfactory proof of his son's assiduous attention to the Law Professor, but inasmuch as the lectures afforded himself "very pleasant reading for leisure hours."

Mr. Clerk assures me, that nothing could be more exact (excepting as to a few petty circumstances introduced for obvious reasons) than the resemblance of the Mr. Saunders Fairford of Redgauntlet to his friend's father:—"He was a man of business of the old school, moderate in his charges, economical, and even niggardly in his expenditure; strictly honest in conducting his own affairs and those of his clients; but taught by long experience to be wary and suspicious in observing the motions of others. Punctual as the clock of St. Giles tolled nine," (the hour at which the Court of Session meets,) "the dapper form of the hale old gentleman was seen at the threshold of the court hall, or at farthest, at the head of the Back Stairs," (the most

* Redgauntlet, vol. i. p. 142.

* Pies. † Sir A. Fergusson.

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convenient access to the Parliament House from George's Square,) "trimly dressed in a complete suit of snuff-coloured brown, with stockings of silk or woollen, as suited the weather; a bob wig, and a small cocked hat; shoes blacked as Warren would have blacked them; silver shoebuckles, and a gold stock-buckle. His manners corresponded with his attire, for they were scrupulously civil, and not a little formal .... On the whole, he was a man much liked and respected, though his friends would not have been sorry if he had given a dinner more frequently, as his little cellar contained some choice old wine, of which, on such rare occasions, he was no niggard. The whole pleasure of this good old-fashioned man of method, besides that which he really felt in the discharge of his own daily business, was the hope to see his son attain what in the father's eyes was the proudest of all distinctions—the rank and fame of a well-employed lawyer. Every profession has its peculiar honours, and his mind was constructed upon so limited and exclusive a plan, that he valued nothing save the objects of ambition which his own presented. He would have shuddered at his son's acquiring the renown of a hero, and laughed with scorn at the equally barren laurels of literature; it was by the path of the law alone that he was desirous to see him rise to eminence; and the probabilities of success or disappointment, were the thoughts of his father by day, and his dream by night."*

It is easy to imagine the original of this portrait, writing to one of his friends, about the end of June, 1792,—"I have the pleasure to tell you that my son has passed his private Scots law examinations with good approbation—a great relief to my mind, especially as worthy Mr. Pest told me in my ear, there was no fear of the 'callant,' as he familiarly called him, which gives me great heart. His public trials, which are nothing in comparison save a mere form, are to take place, by order of the Honourable Dean of Faculty,† on Wednesday first, and on Friday he puts on the gown, and gives a bit chack of dinner to his friends and acquaintances, as is the custom. Your company will be wished for there by more than him.—*P. S.*—His thesis is, on the title, '*De periculo et commodo rei venditæ*,' and is a very pretty piece of Latinity."‡

And all things passed in due order, even as they are figured. The real *Darsie* was present at the real Alan Fairford's "bit chack of dinner," and the old clerk of the Signet was very joyous on the occasion. Scott's *thesis* was, in fact, on the Title of the Pandects, concerning the disposal of the dead bodies of criminals. It was dedicated, I doubt not by the careful father's advice, to his friend and neighbour in George's Square, the coarsely humorous, but acute and able, and still well-remembered, Macqueen of Braxfield, then Lord Justice-Clerk (or President of the Supreme Criminal Court) of Scotland.

I have often heard both *Alan* and *Darsie* laugh over their reminiscences of the important day when they "put on the gown." After the ceremony was completed, and they had mingled for some time with the crowd of barristers in the outer Court, Scott said to his comrade, mimicking the air and tone of a Highland lass waiting at the cross of Edinburgh to be hired for the harvest work,—"We've stood here an hour by the Tron, hinny, and diel a ane has speered our price." Some friendly solicitor, however, gave him a guinea fee before the Court rose; and as they walked down the High Street together, he said to Mr. Clerk, in passing a hosier's shop—"This is a sort of a wedding-day, Willie; I think I must go in and buy me a new night-cap." He did so accordingly; perhaps this was Lord Jeffrey's "portentous machine." His first fee of any consequence, however, was expended on a silver taper-stand for his mother, which the old lady used to point to with great satisfaction, as it stood on her chimney-piece five-and-twenty years afterwards.

* Redgauntlet, vol. i. p. 243-5

† The situation of Dean of Faculty was filled in 1792 by the Honourable Henry Erskine, of witty and benevolent memory.

‡ Redgauntlet, vol. i. p. 144.

CHAPTER VII.

FIRST EXPEDITION INTO LIDDESDALE—STUDY OF GE MAN—POLITICAL TRIALS, &c.—SPECIMEN OF LA PAPERS—BURGER'S LENORE TRANSLATED—DISA POINTMENT IN LOVE—1792-1796.

Scott was called to the bar only the day befo the closing of the session, and he appears to ha almost immediately escaped to the country. O the 2d of August I find his father writing, "I ha sent the copies of your *thesis*, as desired;" and the 15th he addressed to him at Rosebank a lett in which there is this paragraph, an undoubt autograph of Mr. Saunders Fairford, *anno ætat* sixty-three.

"Dear Walter,

"... I am glad that your expedition to the we proved agreeable. You do well to warn your moth against Ashestiel. Although I said little, yet I new thought that road could be agreeable; besides, it taking too wide a circle. Lord Justice-Clerk is in tow attending the Bills.* He called here yesterday, and i quired very particularly for you. I told him where y was, and he expects to see you at Jedburgh upon t 21st. He is to be at Mellerstaint on the 20th, and w be there all night. His Lordship said, in a very ple sant manner, that something might cast up at Jedburg to give you an opportunity of appearing, and that I would insist upon it, and that in future he meant to gi you a share of the criminal business in this Court, s which is very kind. I told his Lordship that I had di suaded you from appearing at Jedburgh, but he sa I was wrong in doing so, and I therefore leave the ma ter to you and him. *I think it is probable he will brea fast with Sir H. H. MacDougall on the 21st, on his wa to Jedburgh.*" * * *

This last quiet hint, that the young lawyer migh as well be at Makerstoun (the seat of a relation when *His Lordship* breakfasted there, and of cours swell the train of His Lordship's little procession into the county town, seems delightfully characteristic. I think I hear Sir Walter himself lecturing *me*, when in the same sort of situation, thirty years afterwards. He declined, as one of the following letters will show, the opportunity of making hi first appearance on this occasion at Jedburgh. H was present, indeed, at the Court during the assizes but "durst not venture." His accounts to William Clerk of his vacation amusements, and more particularly of his second excursion to Northumberland, will, I am sure, interest every reader.

To William Clerk, Esq. Advocate, Prince's Street, Edinburgh.

"Rosebank, 10th Sept. 1792.

"Dear William,

"Taking the advantage of a very indifferent day, which is likely to float away a good deal of corn, and of my father's leaving this place, who will take charge of this scrawl, I sit down to answer your favour. I find you have been, like myself, taking advantage of the good weather, to look around you a little, and congratulate you upon the pleasure you must have received from your jaunt with Mr. Russell.‡ I apprehend, though you are silent on the subject, that your conversation was enlivened by many curious disquisitions of the nature of *undulating exhalations*. I should have bowed before the venerable grove of oaks at Hamilton, with as much respect as if I had been a Druid about to gather the sacred mistletoe. I should hardly have suspected your host Sir William§ of having been the occasion of the scandal brought upon the library and Mr. Gibb,‖ by the introduction of the Cabinet des Fées, of which I have a volume or two here. I am happy to think there is an admirer of *snug things* in the administration

* The Judges then attended in Edinburgh in rotation during the intervals of term, to take care of various sorts of business which could not brook delay, bills of injunction, &c.

† The beautiful seat of the Baillies of Jerviswood, in Berwickshire, a few miles below Drybrugh.

‡ Mr. Russell, surgeon, afterwards Professor of Clinical Surgery at Edinburgh.

§ Sir William Miller (Lord Glenlee.)

‖ Mr. Gibb was the Librarian of the Faculty of Advocates.

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of the library. Poor Linton's* misfortune, though I cannot say it surprises, yet heartily grieves me. I have no doubt he will have many advisers and animadverters upon the naughtiness of his ways, whose admonitions will be forgot upon the next opportunity.

"I am lounging about the country here, to speak sincerely, as idle as the day is long. Two old companions of mine, brothers of Mr. Walker of Wooden, having come to this country, we have renewed a great intimacy. As they live directly upon the opposite bank of the river, we have signals agreed upon by which we concert a plan of operations for the day. They are both officers, and very intelligent young fellows, and what is of some consequence, have a brace of fine greyhounds. Yesterday forenoon we killed seven hares, so you may see how plenty the game is with us. I have turned a keen duck shooter, though my success is not very great; and when reading through the mosses upon this errand, accoutred with the long gun, a jacket, musquito trowsers, and a rough cap, I might well pass for one of my redoubted moss-trooper progenitors, Walter Fire-the-Braes,† or rather Willie wi' the Bolt-Foot.

"For about-doors' amusement, I have constructed a seat in a large tree which spreads it branches horizontally over the Tweed. This is a favourite situation of mine for reading, especially in a day like this, when the west wind rocks the branches on which I am perched, and the river rolls its waves below me of a turbid blood colour. I have,' moreover, cut an embrasure, through which I can fire upon the gulls, herons, and cormorants, as they fly screaming past my nest. To crown the whole, I have carved an inscription upon it in the ancient Romant taste. I believe I shall hardly return into town, barring accidents, sooner than the middle of next month, perhaps not till November. Next week, weather permitting, is destined for a Northumberland expedition, in which I shall visit some parts of that country which I have not yet seen, particularly about Hexham. Some days ago I had nearly met with a worse accident than the tramp I took at Moorfoot;‡ for having bewildered myself among the Cheviot hills, it was nearly nightfall before I got to the village of Bowman, and the passes with which I was acquainted. You do not speak of being in Perthshire this season, though I suppose you intend it. I suppose we, that is, nous autres,§ are at present completely dispersed.

"Compliments to all who are in town, and best respects to you own family, both in Prince's Street and at Eldin.—Believe me ever most sincerely yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

"To William Clerk, Esq.

"Rosebank, 30th Sept., 1792.

'Dear William,

"I suppose this will find you flourishing like a green bay-tree on the mountains of Perthshire, and in full enjoyment of all the pleasures of the country. All that I envy you is the *noctes cenæque deum*, which, I take it for granted, you three merry men will be spending together, while I am poring over Bartholine in the long evenings, solitary enough; for, as for the lobsters, as you call them, I am separated from them by the Tweed, which precludes evening meetings, unless in fine weather and full moons. I have had an expedition through Hexham and the higher parts of Northumberland, which would have delighted the very cockles of your heart, not so much on account of the beautiful romantic appearance of the country, though that would have charmed you also, as because you would have seen more Roman inscriptions built into gate-post, barns, &c., than perhaps are to be found in any other part of Britain. These have been all dug up from the neighbouring Roman wall which is still in many places very entire, and gives a stupendous idea of the perseverance of its founders, who carried such an erection from sea to sea, over rocks, mountains, rivers, and morasses. There are several ruins among the mountains above Hexham, well worth going many miles to see, though their fame is eclipsed by their neighbourhood to those of Cumberland. They are surrounded by old towers and castles, in situations the most savagely romantic; what would I have given to have been able to take effect-pieces from some of them! Upon the Tyne, about Hexham, the country has a different aspect, presenting much of the beautiful though less of the sublime. I was particularly charmed with the situation of Beaufront, a house belonging to a mad sort of genius, whom, I am sure, I have told you some stories about. He used to call himself the Noble Errington, but of late has assumed the title of Duke of Hexham. Hard by the town is the field of battle where the forces of Queen Margaret were defeated by those of the House of York, a blow which the Red Rose never recovered during the civil wars. The spot where the Duke of Somerset and the northern nobility of the Lancastrian faction were executed after the battle is still called Dukesfield. The inhabitants of this country speak an odd dialect of the Saxon, approaching nearly that of Chaucer, and have retained some customs peculiar to themselves. They are the descendants of the ancient Danes, chased into the fastnesses of Northumberland by the severity of William the Conqueror. Their ignorance is surprising to a Scotchman. It is common for the traders in cattle, which business is carried on to a great extent, to carry all letters received in course of trade to the parish church, where the clerk reads them aloud after service, and answers them according to circumstances.

"We intended to visit the lakes in Cumberland, but our jaunt was cut short by the bad weather. I went to the circuit at Jedburgh, to make my bow to Lord J. Clerk, and might have had employment, but durst not venture. Nine of the Dunse rioters were condemned to banishment, but the ferment continues violent in the Merse. Kelso races afforded little sport—Wishaw* lost a horse which cost him £500, and foundered irrecoverably on the course. At another time I should quote George Buchanan's adage of 'a fool and his money,' but at present labour under a similar misfortune; my Galloway having yesterday thought proper (N. B., without a rider) to leap over a gate, and being lamed for the present. This is not his first *faux-pas*, for he jumped into a water with me on his back when in Northumberland, to the imminent danger of my life. He is, therefore, to be sold, (when recovered,) and another purchased. This accident has occasioned you the trouble of reading so long an epistle, the day being Sunday, and my uncle, the captain, busily engaged with your father's naval tactics, is too seriously employed to be an agreeable companion. Apropos (des bottes)—I am sincerely sorry to hear that James is still unemployed, but have no doubt a time will come round when his talents will have an opportunity of being displayed to his advantage. I have no prospect of seeing my *chère adorable* till winter, if then. As for you, I pity you not, seeing as how you have so good a succedaneum in M. G.; and on the contrary, hope, not only that Edmonstone may *roast* you, but that Cupid may again (as erst) *fry* you on the gridiron of jealousy for your infidelity. Compliments to our right trusty and well-beloved Linton and Jean Jacques.† If you write, which, by the way, I hardly have the conscience to expect, direct to my father's care, who will forward your letter. I have quite given up duck-shooting for the season, the birds being too old and the mosses too deep and cold. I have no reason to boast of my experience or success in the sport, and for my own part, should fire at any distance under eighty or ever ninety paces, though above forty-five I would reckon it a *coup desespere*, and as the bird is beyond measure shy, you may be sure I was not very bloody. Believe me, deferring, *as usual*, our dispute till another opportunity, always sincerely yours,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—I believe if my pony does not soon recover, that misfortune, with the bad weather, may send me soon to town."

It was within a few days after Scott's return from his excursion to Hexham, that, while attending the Michaelmas head-court, as an annual county-meeting is called, at Jedburgh, he was introduced, by an old companion, Charles Kerr of Abbotrule, to Mr. Robert Shortreed, that gentleman's near relation, who spent the greater part of his life in the enjoyment of much respect as Sheriff-substitute of Roxburghshire. Scott had been expressing his wish to visit the then wild and inaccessible district of Liddesdale, particularly with a view to examine the ruins of the famous castle of Hermitage, and to pick up some of the ancient *riding ballads*, said to be still preserved among the descendants of the moss-troopers, who had followed the banner of the

* Clerk, Abercromby, Scott, Fergusson, and others, had occasional boating excursions from Leith to Inchcolm, Inchkeith, &c.; in one of these their boat was neared by a Newhaven one—Ferguson, at the moment, was standing up talking; one of the Newhaven fishermen, taking him for a brother of his own craft, bawled out, "Linton, you lang bitch, is that you?" From that day Adam Fergusson's cognomen among his friends of *The Club* was Linton.

† Walter Scott of Synton (elder brother of *Bolt-Foot*, the first laird of Harden) was thus designated. He greatly distinguished himself in the battle of Melrose, A. D. 1526.

‡ This alludes to being lost in a fishing excursion.

§ The companions of *The Club*.

* William Hamilton of Wishaw,—who afterwards established his claim to the peerage of Belhaven.

† John James Edmonstone.

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Douglasses, when lords of that grim and remote fastness. Mr. Shortreed had many connexions in Liddesdale, and knew its passes well, and he was pointed out as the very guide the young advocate wanted. They started accordingly, in a day or two afterwards, from Abbotrule; and the laird meant to have been of the party; but "it was well for him," said Shortreed, "that he changed his mind—for he could never have done as we did."*

During seven successive years, Scott made a *raid*, as he called it, into Liddesdale, with Mr. Shortreed for his guide; exploring every rivulet to its source, and every ruined *peel* from foundation to battlement. At this time no wheeled carriage had ever been seen in the district—the first, indeed, that ever appeared there was a gig, driven by Scott himself for a part of his way, when on the last of these seven excursions. There was no inn nor public-house of any kind in the whole valley; the travellers passed from the shepherd's hut to the minister's manse, and again from the cheerful hospitality of the manse to the rough and jolly welcome of the homestead; gathering, wherever they went, songs and tunes, and occasionally more tangible relics of antiquity —even such "a rowth of auld nicknackets" as Burns ascribes to Captain Grose. To these rambles Scott owed much of the materials of his "Mistrelsy of the Scottish Border;" and not less of that intimate acquaintance with the living manners of these unsophisticated regions, which constitutes the chief charm of one of the most charming of his prose works. But how soon he had any definite object before him in his researches, seems very doubtful. "He was *makin' himself* a' the time," said Mr. Shortreed; "but he didna ken maybe what he was about till years had passed: At first he thought o' little, I dare say, but the queerness and the fun."

"In those days," says the Memorandum before me, "advocates were not so plenty—at least about Liddesdale;" and the worthy Sheriff-substitute goes on to describe the sort of bustle, not unmixed with alarm, produced at the first farm-house they visited, (Willie Elliot's at Millburnholm,) when the honest man was informed of the quality of one of his guests. When they dismounted, accordingly, he received Mr. Scott with great ceremony, and insisted upon himself leading his horse to the stable. Shortreed accompanied Willie, however, and the latter, after taking a deliberate peep at Scott, "outby the edge of the door-cheek," whispered, "Weel, Robin, I say, de'il hae me if I's be a bit feared for him now; he's just a chield like ourselves, I think." Half-a-dozen dogs of all degrees had already gathered round "the advocate," and his way of returning their compliments had set Willie Elliot at once at his ease.

According to Mr. Shortreed, this good-man of Millburnholm was the great original of Dandie Dinmont. As he seems to have been the first of these upland sheep-farmers that Scott ever visited, there can be little doubt that he sat for some parts of that inimitable portraiture; and it is certain that the James Davidson, who carried the name of Dandie to his grave with him, and whose thoroughbred deathbed scene is told in the Notes to Guy Mannering, was first pointed out to Scott by Mr. Shortreed himself, several years after the novel had established the man's celebrity all over the Border; some accidental report about his terriers, and their odd names, having alone been turned to account in the original composition of the tale. But I have the best reason to believe that the kind and manly character of Dandie, the gentle and delicious one of his wife, and some at least of the most picturesque peculiarities of the *menage* at Charlieshope, were filled up from Scott's observation, years after period, of a family, with one of whose members had, through the best part of his life, a close affectionate connexion. To those who were familiar with him, I have perhaps already sufficiently indicated the early home of his dear friend, Willi Laidlaw, among "the braes of Yarrow."

They dined at Millburnholm, and after having gered over Willie Elliot's punch-bowl, until, in Shortreed's phrase, they were "half glowr mounted their steeds again, and proceeded to Eiliott's at Clenghhead, where ("for," says my morandum, "folk were na very nice in those day the two travellers slept in one and the same be as, indeed, seems to have been the case with th throughout most of their excursions in this pri tive district. Dr. Elliot (a clergyman) had alre a large MS. collection of the ballads Scott was quest of; and finding how much his guest admi his acquisitions, thenceforth exerted himself, for se ral years, with redoubled diligence, in seeking the living depositaries of such lore among the da er recesses of the mountains. "The doctor," a Mr. Shortreed, "would have gane through fire water for Sir Walter, when he ance kenned him

Next morning they seem to have ridden a lo way, for the express purpose of visiting one "a Thomas o' Tuzzilehope," another Elliot, I suppo who was celebrated for his skill on the Border pi and in particular for being in possession of the r *lilt* of *Dick o' the Cow*. Before starting, that is, six o'clock, the ballad-hunters had, "just to lay stomach, a devilled duck or twae, and some *Lond* porter." Auld Thomas found them, nevertheles well disposed for "breakfast" on their arrival Tuzzilehope; and this being over, he delighted the with one of the most hideous and unearthly of the specimens of "riding music," and, moreov with considerable libations of whiskey-punch, ma ufactured in a certain wooden vessel, resembling very small milk-pail, which he called "Wisdom because it "made" only a few spoonfuls of spirits though he had the art of replenishing it so adroit that it had been celebrated for fifty years as mo fatal to sobriety than any bowl in the paris Having done due honour to "Wisdom," they aga mounted, and proceeded over moss and moor some other equally hospitable master of the pip "Ah me," says Shortreed, "sic an endless fund humour and drollery as he then had wi' him! Nev ten yards but we were either laughing or roarin and singing. Wherever we stopped, how brawl he suited himself to every body! He aye did as t lave did; never made himself the great man, took ony airs in the company. I've seen him in moods in these jaunts, grave and gay, daft an serious, sober and drunk—(this, however, even our wildest rambles, was but rare)—but drunk sober, he was aye the gentleman. He lookit e cessively heavy and stupid when he was *fou*, but h was never out o' gude-humour."

On reaching one evening, some *Charlieshope* other (I forget the name) among those wildernesse they found a kindly reception as usual; but, to the agreeable surprise, after some days of hard living, measured and orderly hospitality as respected liquo Soon after supper, at which a bottle of elderber wine alone had been produced, a young student divinity, who happened to be in the house, was cal ed upon to take the "big ha' Bible," in the goo old fashion of Burns's Saturday Night; and son progress had been already made in the service, whe the goodman of the farm, whose "tendency," Mr. Mitchell says, "was soporific," scandalize his wife and the dominie by starting suddenly fro his knees, and rubbing his eyes, with a stentoria exclamation of "By ——, here's the keg at last! and in tumbled, as he spake the word, a couple o sturdy herdsmen, whom, on hearing a day before o the advocate's approaching visit, he had despatche to a certain smuggler's haunt, at some considera ble distance, in quest of a supply of *run* brand from the Solway Frith. The picnic exercise" o the household was hopelessly interrupted. Wil

* I am obliged to Mr. John Elliot Shortreed, a son of Scott's early friend, for some *memoranda* of his father's conversations on this subject, which are the more interesting that they represent the worthy Sheriff-substitute's dialect exactly as it was. These notes were written in 1824; and I shall make several quotations from them. I had, however, many opportunities of hearing Mr. Shortreed's stories from his own lips, having often been under his hospitable roof in company with Sir Walter, who to the last always lodged there when any business took him to Jedburgh.

a thousand apologies for his hitherto shabby entertainment, this jolly Elliot, or Armstrong, had the welcome *keg* mounted on the table without a moment's delay, and gentle and simple, not forgetting the dominie, continued carousing about it until daylight streamed in upon the party. Sir Walter Scott seldom failed, when I saw him in company with his Liddesdale companion, to mimic, with infinite humour, the sudden outburst of his old host, on hearing the clatter of horses' feet, which he knew to indicate the arrival of the keg—the consternation of the dame—and the rueful despair with which the young clergyman closed the book.

"It was that same season, I think," says Mr. Shortreed, "that Sir Walter got from Dr. Elliot, the large old border war horn, which ye may still see hanging in the armoury at Abbotsford. How *great* he was when he was made master o' *that!* I believe it had been found in Hermitage Castle—and one of the doctor's servants had used it many a day as a grease-horn for his scythe, before they discovered its history. When cleaned out, it was never a hair the worse—the original chain, hoop, and mouthpiece of steel, were all entire, just as you now see them. Sir Walter carried it home all the way from Liddesdale to Jedburgh, slung about his neck like Johnny Gilpin's bottle, while I was intrusted with an ancient bridlebit, which we had likewise picked up.

'The feint o' pride—na pride had he . . .
A lang kail-gully hung down by his side,
And a great meikle nowt-horn to rout on had he,'

And meikle and sair we routed on't, and 'hotched and blew, wi' micht and main.' O what pleasant days! and then a' the nonsense we had cost us nothing. We never put hand in pocket for a week on end. Toll-bars there were none—and indeed I think our haill charges were a feed o' corn to our horses in the gangin' and comin' at Riccartoun mill."

It is a pity that we have no letters of Scott's, describing this first *raid* into Liddesdale; but as he must have left Kelso for Edinburgh very soon after its conclusion, he probably chose to be the bearer of his own tidings. At any rate, the wonder perhaps is not that we should have so few letters of this period, as that any have been recovered. "I ascribe the preservation of my little handful," says Mr. Clerk, "to a sort of instinctive prophetic sense of his future greatness."

I have found, however, two note-books, inscribed "Walter Scott, 1792," containing a variety of scraps and hints which may help us to fill up our notion of his private studies during that year. He appears to have used them indiscriminately. We have now an extract from the author he happened to be reading; now a memorandum of something that had struck him in conversation; a fragment of an essay; transcripts of favourite poems; remarks on curious cases in the old records of the Justiciary Court; in short, a most miscellaneous collection, in which there is whatever might have been looked for, with perhaps the single exception of original verse. One of the books opens with "Vegtam's Kvitha, or the Descent of Odin, with the Latin of Thomas Bartholine, and the English poetical version of Mr. Gray; with some account of the death of Balder, both as narrated in the Edda, and as handed down to us by the Northern historians—*Auctore Gualtero Scott.*" The Norse original, and the two versions, are then transcribed; and the historical account appended, extending to seven closely written quarto pages, was, I doubt not, read before one or other of his debating societies. Next comes a page, headed "Pecuniary distress of Charles the First," and containing a transcript of a receipt for some plate lent to the King in 1643. He then copies the "Owen of Carron," of Langhorne; the verses of Canute, on passing Ely; the lines to a cuckoo, given by Warton as the oldest specimen of English verse; a translation, "by a gentleman in Devonshire," of the death song of "Regner Lodbrog;" and the beautiful quatrain omitted in Gray's elegy,—

"There scattered oft, the earliest of the year," &c.

After this we have an Italian canzonet, on the praises of blue eyes, (which were much in favour at this time;) several pages of etymologies from Ducange; some more of notes on the Morte Arthur; extracts from the books of Adjournal, about Dame Janet Beaton, the Lady of Branxome of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, and her husband, "Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch, called *Wicked Watt;*" other extracts about witches and fairies; various couplets from Hall's Satires; a passage from *Albania;* notes on the Second Sight, with extracts from Aubry and Glanville; a "List of ballads to be discovered or recovered;" extracts from *Guerin de Montglave;* and after many more similar entries, a table of the Mæso-Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, and Runic alphabets—with a fourth section, headed *German*, but left blank. But enough perhaps of this record.

In November, 1792, Scott and Clerk began their regular attendance at the Parliament House, and Scott, to use Mr. Clerk's words, "by and by crept into a tolerable share of such business as may be expected from a writer's connexion." By this we are to understand that ne was employed from time to time by his father, and probably a few other solicitors, in that dreary every-day task-work, chiefly of long written *informations*, and other papers for the court, on which young counsellors of the Scotch bar were then expected to bestow a great deal of trouble for very scanty pecuniary remuneration, and with scarcely a chance of finding reserved for their hands any matter that could elicit the display of superior knowledge or understanding. He had also his part in the cases of persons suing *in forma pauperis;* but how little important those that came to his share were, and how slender was the impression they had left on his mind, we may gather from a note on Redgauntlet, wherein he signifies his doubts whether he really had ever been engaged in what he has certainly made the *cause célèbre* of *Poor Peter Peebles.*

But he soon became as famous for his powers of story-telling among the lawyers of the Outer-House, as he had been among the companions of his High School days. The place where these idlers mostly congregated was called, it seems, by a name which sufficiently marks the date—it was *the Mountain.* Here, as Roger North says of the Court of King's Bench in his early day, "there was more News than Law;"—here hour after hour passed away, week after week, month after month, and year after year, in the interchange of light-hearted merriment, among a circle of young men, more than one of whom, in after times, attained the highest honours of the profession. Among the most intimate of Scott's daily associates from this time, and during all his subsequent attendance at the bar, were, besides various since eminent persons that have been already named, the first legal antiquary of our time in Scotland, Mr. Thomas Thomson, and William Erskine, afterwards Lord Kinedder. Mr. Clerk remembers complaining one morning on finding the group convulsed with laughter, that *Duns Scotus* had been forestalling him in a good story, which he had communicated privately the day before—adding, moreover, that his friend had not only stolen, but disguised it. "Why," answered he, skilfully waving the main charge, "this is always the way with *the Baronet.* He is continually saying that I change his stories, whereas in fact I only put a cocked hat on their heads, and stick a cane into their hands—to make them fit for going into company."

The German class, of which we have an account in one of the Prefaces of 1830, was formed before the Christmas of 1792, and it included almost all these loungers of *the Mountain.* In the essay now referred to, Scott traces the interest excited in Scotland on the subject of German literature to a paper read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, on the 21st of April, 1788, by the author of the Man of Feeling. "The literary persons of Edinburgh," he says, "were then first made aware of the existence of works of genius in a language cognate with the English, and possessed of the same manly force of

expression; they learned at the same time, that the taste which dictated the German compositions was of a kind as nearly allied to the English as their language; those who were from their youth accustomed to admire Shakspeare and Milton, became acquainted for the first time with a race of poets, who had the same lofty ambition to spurn the flaming boundaries of the universe, and investigate the realms of Chaos and Old Night; and of dramatists, who, disclaiming the pedantry of the unities, sought, at the expense of occasional improbabilities and extravagance, to present life on the stage in its scenes of wildest contrast, and in all its boundless variety of character. . . . Their fictitious narratives, their ballad poetry, and other branches of their literature, which are particularly apt to bear the stamp of the extravagant and the supernatural, began also to occupy the attention of the British literati. In Edinburgh, where the remarkable coincidence between the German language and the Lowland Scottish, encouraged young men to approach this newly discovered spring of literature, a class was formed of six or seven intimate friends, who proposed to make themselves acquainted with the German language. They were in the habit of being much together, and the time they spent in this new study was felt as a period of great amusement. One source of this diversion was the laziness of one of their number, the present author, who, averse to the necessary toil of grammar, and the rules, was in the practice of fighting his way to the knowledge of the German by his acquaintance with the Scottish and Anglo-Saxon dialects, and of course frequently committed blunders which were not lost on his more accurate and more studious companions." The teacher, Dr. Willich, a medical man, is then described as striving with little success to make his pupils sympathize in his own passion for the "sickly monotony" and "affected ecstacies" of Gessner's Death of Abel; and the young students, having at length acquired enough of the language for their respective purposes, as selecting for their private pursuits, some the philosophical treatises of Kant, others the dramas of Schiller and Goethe. The chief, if not the only *Kantist* of the party, was, I believe, John Macfarlan of Kirkton: among those who turned zealously to the popular *Belles Lettres* of Germany were, with Scott, his most intimate friends of the period, William Clerk, William Erskine, and Thomas Thomson.

These studies were much encouraged by the example, and assisted by the advice, of an accomplished person, considerably Scott's superior in standing, Alexander Fraser Tytler, afterwards a Judge of the Court of Session by the title of Lord Woodhouselee. His version of Schiller's Robbers, was one of the earliest from the German theatre, and no doubt stimulated his young friend to his first experiments in the same walk.

The contemporary familiars of those days almost all survive; but one, and afterwards the most intimate of them all, went before him; and I may therefore hazard in this place a few words on the influence which he exercised at this critical period on Scott's literary tastes and studies. William Erskine was the son of an Episcopalian clergyman in Perthshire, of a good family, but far from wealthy. He had received his early education at Glasgow, where, while attending the college lectures, he was boarded under the roof of Andrew Macdonald, the author of Vimonda, who then officiated as minister to a small congregation of Episcopalian nonconformists. From this unfortunate but very ingenious man, Erskine had derived, in boyhood, a strong passion for old English literature, more especially the Elizabethan dramatists; which, however, he combined with a far livelier relish for the classics of antiquity than either Scott or his master ever possessed. From the beginning, accordingly, Scott had in Erskine a monitor who—entering most warmly into his taste for national lore, the life of the past—and the bold and picturesque style of the original English school—was constantly urging the advantages to be derived from combining with its varied and masculine breadth of delineation, such attention to the minor graces of arrangement and diction as might conciliate the fastidiousness of modern taste. Deferring what I may have to say as to Erskine's general character and manners, until I shall have approached the period when I myself had the pleasure of sharing his acquaintance, I introduce the general bearing of his literary opinions thus early, because I conceive there is no doubt that his companionship was, even in those days, highly serviceable to Scott as a student of the German drama and romance. Directed, as he mainly was, in the ultimate determination of his literary ambition, by the example of their great founders, he appears to have run at first no trivial hazard of adopting the extravagances, both of thought and language, which he found blended in their works, with such a captivating display of genius, and genius employed on subjects so much in unison with the deepest of his own juvenile predilections. His friendly critic was just as well as delicate; and unmerciful severity as to the mingled absurdities and vulgarities of German detail commanded deliberate attention from one, who admired not less enthusiastically than himself the genuine sublimity and pathos of his new favourites. I could, I believe, name one other at least among Scott's fellow-students of the same time, whose influence was combined in this matter with Erskine's; but his was that which continued to be exerted the longest, and always in the same direction. That it was not, accompanied with entire success, the readers of the Doom of Devorgoil, to say nothing of minor blemishes in far better works, must acknowledge.

These German studies divided Scott's attention with the business of the courts of law, on which he was at least a regular attendant, during the winter of 1792–3.

If the preceding autumn forms a remarkable point in Scott's history, as first introducing him to the manners of the wilder Border country, the summer which followed left traces of equal importance. He gave the greater part of it to an excursion which much extended his knowledge of Highland scenery and character; and in particular furnished him with the richest stores which he afterwards turned to account in one of the most beautiful of his great poems, and in several, including the first, of his prose romances.

Accompanied by Adam Fergusson, he visited on this occasion some of the finest districts of Stirlingshire and Perthshire; and not in the percursory manner of his more boyish expeditions, but taking up his residence for a week or ten days in succession at the family residences of several of his young allies of *the Mountain*, and from thence familiarizing himself at leisure with the country and the people round about. In this way, he lingered some time at Tullibody, the seat of the father of Sir Ralph Abercromby, and grandfather of his friend Mr. George Abercromby, (now Lord Abercromby;) and heard from the old gentleman's own lips his narrative of a journey which he had been obliged to make, shortly after he first settled in Stirlingshire, to the wild retreat of Rob Roy. The venerable laird told how he was received by the cateran "with much courtesy," in a cavern exactly such as that of *Bean Lean;* dined on collops cut from some of his own cattle, which he recognised hanging by their heels from the rocky roof beyond; and returned in all safety, after concluding a bargain of *black-mail*—in virtue of which annual payment, Rob Roy guaranteed the future security of his herds against, not his own followers merely, but all freebooters whatever. Scott next visited his friend Edmonstone, at Newton, a beautiful seat, close to the ruins of the once magnificent Castle of Doune, and heard another aged gentleman's vivid recollections of all that happened there when John Home, the author of Douglas, and other Hanoverian prisoners, escaped from the Highland garrison in 1745.* Proceeding towards the sources of the Teith, he was received for the first time under a roof which, in subsequent years, he regularly revisit-

* Waverley, vol. ii. p. 82.

ed, that of another of his associates, Buchanan, the young laird of Cambusmore. It was thus that the scenery of Loch Katrine came to be so associated with "the recollection of many a dear friend and merry expedition of former days," that to compose the Lady of the Lake was "a labour of love, and no less so to recall the manners and incidents introduced."* It was starting from the same house, when the poem itself had made some progress, that he put to the test the practicability of riding from the banks of Lochvennachar to the Castle of Stirling within the brief space which he had assigned to Fitz-James's Gray Bayard, after the duel with Roderick Dhu; and the principal landmarks in the description of that very progress are so many hospitable mansions all familiar to him at the same period—Blairdrummond, the residence of Lord Kaimes; Ochtertyre, that of John Ramsay, the scholar and antiquarian, (now best remembered for his kind and sagacious advice to Burns;) and "the lofty brow of ancient Kier," the splendid seat of the chief family of the name of Stirling; from which, to say nothing of remoter objects, the prospect has, on one hand, the rock of "Snowdon," and in front the field of Bannockburn.

Another resting place was Craighall, in Perthshire, the seat of the Rattrays, a family related to Mr. Clerk, who accompanied him. From the position of this striking place, as Mr. Clerk at once perceived, and as the author afterwards confessed to him, that of the *Tully-Veolan* was very faithfully copied; though in the description of the house itself, and its gardens, many features were adopted from Bruntsfield and Ravelstone.† Mr. Clerk has told me that he went through the first chapters of Waverley without more than a vague suspicion of the new novelist; but that when he read the arrival at Tully-Veolan, his suspicion was at once converted into certainty, and he handed the book to a mutual friend of his and the author's, saying, "This is Scott's—and I'll lay a bet you'll find such and such things in the next chapter." I hope Mr. Clerk will forgive me for mentioning *the* particular circumstance that first flashed the conviction on his mind. In the course of a ride from Craighall, they had both become considerably fagged and heated, and Clerk, seeing the smoke of a *clachan* a little way before them, ejaculated, "How agreeable if we should here fall in with one of those signposts where a red lion predominates over a punchbowl." The phrase happened to tickle Scott's fancy—he often introduced it on similar occasions afterwards—and at the distance of twenty years, Mr. Clerk was at no loss to recognise an old acquaintance in the "huge bear" which "predominates" over the stone basin in the court-yard of the Baron of Bradwardine.

I believe the longest stay he made this autumn was at Meigle, in Forfarshire, the seat of Patrick Murray of Simprim, a gentleman whose enthusiastic passion for antiquities, and especially military antiquities, had peculiarly endeared him both to Scott and Clerk. Here Adam Fergusson, too, was of the party; and I have often heard them each and all dwell on the thousand scenes of adventure and merriment which diversified that visit. In the village churchyard, close beneath Mr. Murray's gardens, tradition still points out the tomb of Queen Guenever; and the whole district abounds in objects of historical interest. Amidst them they spent their wandering days, while their evenings passed in the joyous festivity of a wealthy young bachelor's establishment, or sometimes under the roofs of neighbours less refined than their host, the *Balmawhapples* of the Braes of Angus. From Meigle they made a trip to Dunottar Castle, the ruins of the huge old fortress of the Earls Marischall, and it was in the churchyard of that place that Scott then saw for the first and last time Peter Paterson, the living *Old Mortality*. He and Mr. Walker, the minister of the parish, found the poor man refreshing the epitaphs on the tombs of certain Cameronians who had fallen under the oppressions of James the Second's brief insanity. Being invited into the manse after dinner to take a glass of whisky punch, "to which he was supposed to have no objections," he joined the minister's party accordingly, but "he was in a bad humour," says Scott, "and, to use his own phrase, had no freedom for conversation. His spirit had been sorely vexed by hearing, in a certain Aberdonian kirk, the psalmody directed by a pitch-pipe, or some similar instrument, which was to Old Mortality the abomination of abominations."

It was also while he had his head-quarters at Meigle at this time, that Scott visited for the first time *Glammis*, the residence of the Earls of Strathmore, by far the noblest specimen of a real feudal castle entire and perfect that had as yet come under his inspection. What its aspect was when he first saw it, and how grievously he lamented the change it had undergone when he revisited it some years afterwards, he has recorded in one of the most striking passages that I think ever came from his pen. Commenting, in his Essay on Landscape Gardening, (1828,) on the proper domestic ornaments of the Castle *Pleasance*, he has this beautiful burst of lamentation over the barbarous innovations of *the Capability men*:—"Down went many a trophy of old magnificence, court-yard, ornamented enclosure, fosse, avenue, barbican, and every external muniment of battled wall and flanking tower, out of the midst of which the ancient dome, rising high above all its characteristic accompaniments, and seemingly girt round by its appropriate defences, which again encircled each other in their different gradations, looked, as it should, the queen and mistress of the surrounding country. It was thus that the 'huge old tower of Glammis,' whose birth tradition notes not,' once showed its lordly head above seven circles (if I remember aright) of defensive boundaries, through which the friendly guest was admitted, and at each of which a suspicious person was unquestionably put to his answer. A disciple of Kent had the cruelty to render this splendid old mansion (the more modern part of which was the work of Inigo Jones) more *pavkish*, as he was pleased to call it; to raze all those exterior defences, and bring his mean and paltry gravel-walk up to the very door from which, deluded by the name, one might have imagined Lady Macbeth (with the form and features of Siddons) issuing forth to receive King Duncan. It is thirty years and upwards since I have seen Glammis, but I have not yet forgotten or forgiven the atrocity which, under pretence of improvement, deprived that lordly place of its appropriate accompaniments,

> 'Leaving an ancient dome and towers like these
> Begger'd and outraged.'"*

The night he spent at the yet unprofaned Glammis in 1793 was, as he elsewhere says, one of the "*two* periods, distant from each other," at which he could recollect experiencing "that degree of superstitious awe which his countrymen call *eerie*." "The heavy pile," he writes, "contains much in its appearance, and in the traditions connected with it, impressive to the imagination. It was the scene of the murder of a Scottish King of great antiquity, not indeed the gracious Duncan, with whom the name naturally associates itself, but Malcolm II. It contains also a curious monument of the peril of feudal times, being a secret chamber, the entrance of which, by the law or custom of the family, must only be known to three persons at once, namely, the Earl of Strathmore, his heir-apparent, and any third person whom they may take into their confidence. The extreme antiquity of the building is vouched by the thickness of the walls, and the wild straggling arrangement of the accommodation within doors. As the late earl seldom resided at Glammis, it was when I was there but half furnished, and that with [illegible]veables of great antiquity, which, with the [illegible]es of chivalric armour hanging on the walls, greatly contributed to the general effect of the whole. After a very hospitable

* Introduction to the Lady of the Lake. 1830.

† Waverley, vol. i. p. 88.

* Wordsworth's Sonnet on Neidpath Castle.

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reception from the late Peter Proctor, seneschal of the castle, I was conducted to my apartment in a distant part of the building. I must own that when I heard door after door shut, after my conductor had retired, I began to consider myself as too far from the living, and somewhat too near the dead. We had passed through what is called *the King's Room*, a vaulted apartment, garnished with stag's antlers and other trophies of the chase, and said by tradition to be the spot of Malcolm's murder, and I had an idea of the vicinity of the castle chapel. In spite of the truth of history, the whole night scene in Macbeth's Castle rushed at once upon me, and struck my mind more forcibly than even when I have seen its terrors represented by John Kemble and his inimitable sister. In a word, I experienced sensations which, though not remarkable for timidity or superstition, did not fail to affect me to the point of being disagreeable, while they were mingled at the same time with a strange and indescribable sort of pleasure, the recollection of which affords me gratification at this moment."*

He alludes here to the hospitable reception which had preceded the mingled sensations of this *eerie* night; but one of his notes on Waverley touches this not unimportant part of the story more distinctly; for we are there informed, that the *silver bear* of Tully-Veolan, "the *poculum potatorium* of the valiant baron," had its prototype at Glammis—a massive beaker of silver, double gilt, moulded into the form of a *lion*, the name and bearing of the Earls of Strathmore, and containing about an English pint of wine. "The author," he says, "ought perhaps to be ashamed of recording that he had the honour of swallowing the contents of *the lion*, and the recollection of the feat suggested the story of the Bear of Bradwardine."

From this pleasant tour, so rich in its results, Scott returned in time to attend the October assizes at Jedburgh, on which occasion he made his first appearance as counsel in a criminal court; and had the satisfaction of helping a veteran poacher and sheepstealer to escape through some of the meshes of the law. "You're a lucky scoundrel," Scott whispered to his client, when the verdict was pronounced. "I'm just o' your mind," quoth the desperado, "and I'll send ye a maukin† the morn, man." I am not sure whether it was at these assizes, or the next, in the same town, that he had less success in the case of a certain notorious housebreaker. The man, however, was well aware that no skill could have baffled the clear evidence against him, and was, after his fashion, grateful for such exertions as had been made in his behalf. He requested the young advocate to visit him once more before he left the place. Scott's curiosity induced him to accept this invitation, and his friend, as soon as they were alone together in the *condemned cell*, said, "I am very sorry, sir, that I have no fee to offer you—so let me beg your acceptance of two bits of advice, which may be useful perhaps when you come to have a house of your own. I am done with practice, you see, and here is my legacy. Never keep a large watchdog out of doors—we can always silence them cheaply—indeed if it be a *dog*, 'tis easier than whistling—but tie a little tight yelping terrier within; and secondly, put no trust in nice, clever, gimcrack locks—the only thing that bothers us is a huge old heavy one, no matter how simple the construction,—and the ruder and rustier the key, so much the better for the housekeeper.' I remember hearing him tell this story some thirty years after at a Judges' dinner at Jedburgh, and he summed it up with a rhyme—"Ay, ay, my lord," (I think he adressed his friend Lord Meadowbank)—

"Yelping terrier, rusty key,
Was Walter Scott's best Jeddart fee."

At these, or perhaps the next assizes, he was also counsel in an appeal on a cow which his client had sold as sound, but which the court below (the Sheriff) had pronounced to have what is called *the cliers*—a disease analogous to glanders in a horse. In opening his case before Sir David Rae, Lord Eskgrove, Scott stoutly maintained the healthiness of the cow, who, as he said, had merely a cough. "Stop there," quoth the judge, "I have had plenty of healthy kye in my time, but I never heard of ane of them coughing. A coughin' cow!—that will never do—sustain the Sheriff's judgment, and decern."

A day or two after this Scott and his old companion were again on their way into Liddesdale, and "just," says the Shortreed Memorandum, "as we were passing by Singdon, we saw a grand herd o' cattle a' feeding by the roadside, and a fine young bullock, the best in the whole lot, was in the midst of them, coughing lustily. "Ah," said Scot, "what a pity for my client that old Eskgrove had not taken Singdon on his way to the town. That bonny creature would have saved us—

'A Daniel come to judgment, yea a Daniel;
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!'"

The winter of 1793-4 appears to have been passed like the preceding one; the German class resumed their sittings; Scott spoke in his debating club on the questions of Parliamentary Reform and the Inviolability of the Person of the First Magistrate, which the circumstances of the time had invested with extraordinary interest, and in both of which he no doubt took the side adverse to the principles of the English, and the practice of the French Liberals. His love affair continued on exactly the same footing as before—and for the rest, like the young heroes in Redgauntlet, he "swept the boards of the Parliament House with the skirts of his gown; laughed, and made others laugh; drank claret at Bayle's, Fortune's, and Walker's, and eat oysters in the Covenant Close." On his desk "the new novel most in repute lay snugly intrenched beneath Stair's Institute, or an open volume of Decisions;" and his dressing-table was littered "with old playbills, letters respecting a meeting of the Faculty, Rules of the Speculative, Syllabus of Lectures—all the miscellaneous contents of a young advocate's pocket, which contains every thing but briefs and bank-notes." His own professional occupation, though gradually increasing, was still of the most humble sort; but he took a lively interest in the proceedings of the criminal court, and more especially in those arising out of the troubled state of the public feeling as to politics.

In the spring of 1794 I find him writing to his friends in Roxburghshire with great exultation about the "good spirit" manifesting itself among the upper classes of the citizens of Edinburgh, and above all, the organization of a regiment of volunteers, in which his brother Thomas, now a fine active young man, equally handsome and high-spirited, was enrolled as a grenadier; while, as he remarks, his own "unfortunate infirmity" condemned him to be "a mere spectator of the drills." In the course of the same year the plan of a corps of volunteer light horse was started; and, if the recollection of Mr. Skene be accurate, the suggestion originally proceeded from Scott himself, who certainly had a principal share in its subsequent success. He writes to his uncle at Rosebank, requesting him to be on the look out for a "strong gelding, such as would suit a stalwart dragoon;" and intimating his intention to part with his collection of Scottish coins, rather than not be mounted to his mind. The corps, however, was not organised for some time; and in the mean while he had an opportunity of displaying his zeal in a manner which Captain Scott by no means considered as so respectable.

A party of Irish medical students began, towards the end of April, to make themselves remarkable in the Edinburgh Theatre, where they mustered in a particular corner of the pit, and lost no opportunity of insulting the loyalists of the boxes, by calling for revolutionary tunes, applauding every speech that could bear a seditious meaning, and drowning the national anthem in howls and hootings. The

* Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, p. 398.
† i. e. a hare.

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young tories of the Parliament House resented this license warmly, and after a succession of minor disturbances, the quarrel was put to the issue of a regular trial by combat. Scott was conspicuous among the juvenile advocates and solicitors who on this grand night assembled in the front of the pit armed with stout cudgels, and determined to have *God save the King* not only played without interruption, but sung in full chorus by both company and audience. The Irishmen were ready at the first note of the anthem. They rose, clapped on their hats, and brandished their shilelahs; a stern battle ensued, and after many a head had been cracked, the loyalists at length found themselves in possession of the field. Next morning the more prominent rioters on both sides were bound over to keep the peace, and Scott was, of course, among the number. One of the party, Sir Alexander Wood, whose notes lie before me, says,—"Walter was certainly our Coriphæus, and signalized himself splendidly in this desperate fray; and nothing used afterwards to afford him more delight than dramatizing its incidents. Some of the most efficient of our allies were persons previously unknown to him, and of several of these whom he had particularly observed, he never lost sight afterwards. There were, I believe, cases in which they owed most valuable assistance in life to his recollection of *the playhouse row*." To this last part of Sir Alexander's testimony I can also add mine; and I am sure my worthy friend, Mr. Donald M'Lean, W. S., will gratefully confirm it. When that gentleman became candidate for some office in the Exchequer, about 1822 or 1823, and Sir Walter's interest was requested on his behalf,—"To be sure!" said he, "did not he sound the charge upon Paddy? Can I ever forget Donald's 'Sticks, by G—t?'" On the 9th May, 1794, Charles Kerr of Abbotrule writes to him,—"I was last night at Rosebank, and your uncle told me he had been giving you a very long and very sage lecture upon the occasion of these Edinburgh squabbles. I am happy to hear they are now at an end. They were rather of the serious cast, and though you encountered them with spirit and commendable resolution, I, with your uncle, should wish to see your abilities conspicuous on another theatre." The same gentleman, in his next letter, (June 3d,) congratulates Scott on having "seen *his name in the newspaper*," viz. as counsel for another Roxburghshire laird, by designation *Bedrule*. Such, no doubt, was Abbotrule's "other theatre."

Scott spent the long vacation of this year chiefly in Roxburghshire, but again visited Keir, Cambusmore, and others of his friends in Perthshire, and came to Edinburgh, early in September, to be present at the trials of Watt and Downie, on a charge of high treason. Watt seems to have tendered his services to government as a spy upon the Society of the Friends of the People in Edinburgh, but ultimately, considering himself as underpaid, to have embraced, to their wildest extent, the schemes he had become acquainted with in the course of this worthy occupation; and he and one Downie, a mechanic, were now arraigned as having taken a prominent part in the organizing of a plot for a general rising in Edinburgh, to seize the castle, the bank, the persons of the Judges, and proclaim a provisional Republican Government; all which was supposed to have been arranged in concert with the Hardies, Thelwalls, Holcrofts, and so forth, who were a few weeks later brought to trial in London, for an alleged conspiracy to "summon delegates to a National Convention, with a view to subvert the Government, and levy war upon the King." The English prisoners were acquitted, but Watt and Downie were not so fortunate. Scott writes as follows to his aunt, Miss Christian Rutherford, then at Ashestiel, in Selkirkshire:—

"Advocates' Library, 5th Sept. 1794.

"My dear Miss Christy will perceive, from the date of this epistle, that I have accomplished my purpose of coming to town to be present at the trial of the Edinburgh traitors. I arrived here on Monday evening from Kelso, and was present at Watt's trial on Wednesday, which displayed to the public the most atrocious and deliberate plan of villany which has occurred, perhaps, in the annals of Great Britain. I refer you for particulars to the papers, and shall only add, that the equivocations and perjury of the witnesses (most of them being accomplices in what they called the *great plan*) set the abilities of Mr. Anstruther, the King's counsel, in the most striking point of view. The patience and temper with which he tried them on every side, and screwed out of them the evidence they were so anxious to conceal, showed much knowledge of human nature; and the art with which he arranged the information he received, made the trial, upon the whole, the most interesting I ever was present at. Downie's trial is just now going forwards over my head; but as the evidence is just the same as formerly brought against Watt, is not so interesting. You will easily believe that on Wednesday my curiosity was too much excited to retire at an early hour, and, indeed, I sat in the Court from seven in the morning till two the next morning; but as I had provided myself with some cold meat and a bottle of wine, I contrived to support the fatigue pretty well. It strikes me, upon the whole, that the plan of these miscreants might, from its very desperate and improbable nature, have had no small chance of succeeding, at least as far as concerned cutting off the soldiers, and obtaining possession of the banks, besides shedding the blood of the most distinguished inhabitants. There, I think, the evil must have stopped, unless they had further support than has yet appeared. Stooks was the prime mover of the whole, and the person who supplied the money, and our theatrical disturbances are found to have formed one link of the chain. So, I have no doubt, Messrs. Stooks, Burk, &c., would have found out a new way of paying old debts. The *people* are perfectly quiescent upon this grand occasion, and seem to interest themselves very little in the fate of their *soi-disant friends*. The Edinburgh volunteers make a respectable and formidable appearance already. They are exercised four hours almost every day, with all the rigour of military discipline. The grenadier company consists entirely of men above six feet. So much for public news.

"As to home intelligence—know that my mother and Anne had projected a *jaunt* to Inverleithing; fate, however, has destined otherwise. The intended day of departure was ushered in by a most complete deluge, to which, and the consequent disappointment, our proposed travellers did not submit with that Christian meekness which might have beseemed. In short, both within and without doors it was a *devil* of a day. The second was like unto it. The third day came a post, a killing post, and in the shape of a letter from this fountain of health, informed us no lodgings were to be had there, so whatever be its virtues, or the grandeur attending a journey to its streams, we might as well have proposed to visit the river Jordan, or the walls of Jericho. Not so our heroic John; he has been arrived here for some time, (much the same as when he went way,) and has formed the desperate resolution of riding out with me to Kelso to-morow morning. I have stayed a day longer, waiting for the arrival of a pair of new boots and buckskin &c., in which the soldier is to be equipt. I ventured to hint the convenience of a roll of diacolum plaister, and a box of the most approved horseman-salve, in which recommendation our doctor* warmly joined. His impatience for the journey has been somewhat cooled by some inclination yesterday displayed by his charger (a pony belonging to Anne) to lay his warlike rider in the dust—a purpose he had nearly effected. He next mounted Queen Mab, who treated him with little more complaisance, and, in carters' phrase, would neither *hap* nor *wynd*, till she got rid of him. Seriously, however, if Jack has not returned covered with laurels, a crop which the Rock† no longer produces, he has brought back all his own good-nature, and a manner considerably improved, so that he is at times very agreeable company. Best love to Miss B., Jean, and Anne, (I hope they are improved at the battledore,) and the boys, not forgotting my friend Archy, though least not last in my remembrance. Best compliments to the Colonel.‡ I shall remember with pleasure Ashestiel hospitality, and not without a desire to put it to the proof next year. Adieu, ma chère amie. When you write, direct to Rosebank, and I shall be a good boy, and write you another sheet of nonsense soon. All friends here well. Ever yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

The letter, of which the following is an extract,

* Dr. Rutherford.

† Captain John Scott had been for some time with his regiment at Gibraltar.

‡ Colonel Russell of Ashestiel, married to a sister of Scott's mother.

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must have been written in October or November—Scott having been in Liddesdale, and again in Perthshire, during the interval. It is worth quoting for the little domestic allusions with which it concludes, and which every one who has witnessed the discipline of a Presbyterian family of the old school at the time of preparation for *the Communion*, will perfectly understand. Scott's father, though on particular occasions he could permit himself, like Saunders Fairford, to play the part of a good Amphytrion, was habitually ascetic in his habits. I have heard his son tell, that it was common with him, if any one observed that the soup was good, to taste it again, and say, "Yes, it is too good, bairns," and dash a tumbler of cold water into his plate. It is easy, therefore, to imagine with what rigidity he must have enforced the ultra-Catholic severities which marked, in those days, the yearly or half-yearly *retreat* of the descendants of John Knox.

To Miss Christian Rutherford—Ashestiel.

"Previous to my ramble, I stayed a single day in town to witness the exit of the *ci-devant* Jacobin, Mr. Watt. It was a very solemn scene, but the pusillanimity of the unfortunate victim was astonishing, considering the boldness of his nefarious plans. It is matter of general regret that his associate Downie should have received a reprieve, which, I understand, is now prolonged for a second month, I suppose to wait the issue of the London trials. Our volunteers are now completely embodied, and notwithstanding the heaviness of their dress, have a martial and striking appearance. Their accuracy in firing and manœuvring excites the surprise of military gentlemen, who are the best judges of their merit in that way. Tom is very proud of the grenadier company, to which he belongs, which has indisputably carried off the palm upon all public occasions. And now, give me leave to ask you whether the approaching *winter* does not remind you of your snug parlour in George's Street? Do you not feel a little uncomfortable when you see

'how bleak and bare
He wanders o'er the heights of *Yair*?'

Amidst all this regard for your accommodation, don't suppose I am devoid of a little self-interest when I press your speedy return to Auld Reekie, for I am really tiring excessively to see the said parlour again inhabited. Besides that, I want the assistance of your eloquence to convince my honoured father that nature did not mean me either for a vagabond or *travelling merchant*, when she honoured me with the wandering propensity lately so conspicuously displayed. I saw Dr. yesterday, who is well. I did not choose to intrude upon the little lady, this being sermon week; for the same reason we are looking very religious and very sour at home. However, it is with *some* faths, selon les règles, that in proportion as they are pure themselves, they are entitled to render uncomfortable those whom they consider as less perfect. Best love to Miss R., cousins, and friends in general, and believe me ever most sincerely yours, WALTER SCOTT."

In March, 1795, when the court rose, he proceeded into Galloway, where he had not before been, in order to make himself acquainted with the persons and localities mixed up with the case of a certain Rev. Mr. M'Naught, minister of Girthon, whose trial on charges of habitual drunkenness, singing of lewd and profane songs, dancing and toying at a penny-wedding with a "sweetie wife," (that is, an itinerant vender of gingerbread, &c.,) and moreover of promoting irregular marriages as a justice of the peace, was about to take place before the General Assembly of the Kirk.

As his "Case for M'Naught," dated May 22, 1795, is the first of his legal papers that I have discovered, and contains several characteristic enough turns, I make no apology for introducing a few extracts:—

"At the head of the first class of offences stands the extraordinary assertion, that, being a minister of the gospel, the respondent had illegally undertaken the office of a justice of peace. It is, the respondent believes, the first time that ever the undertaking an office of such extensive utility was stated as a crime; for he humbly apprehends, that by conferring the office of a justice of the peace upon clergymen, their influence may, in the general case, be rendered more extensive among their parishioners, and many trifling causes be settled by them, which might lead the litigants to enormous expenses, and become the subject of much contention before other courts. The duty being only occasional, and not daily, cannot be said to interfere with those of their function; and their education and presumed character, render them most proper for the office. It is indeed alleged, that the act 1584, chap. 133, excludes clergymen from acting under a commission of the peace. This act, however, was passed at a time when it was of the highest importance to the Crown to wrench from the hands of the clergy the power of administering justice in civil cases, which had, from the ignorance of the laity, been enjoyed by them almost exclusively. During the whole reign of James VI., as is well known to the Reverend Court, such a jealousy subsisted betwixt the Church and the State, that those who were at the head of the latter endeavoured, by every means in their power, to diminish the influence of the former. At present, when these dissentions happily no longer subsist, the law, as far as respects the office of justice of the peace, appears to have fallen into disuse; and the respondent conceives, that any minister is capable of acting in that, or any other judicial capacity, provided it is of such a nature as not to withdraw much of his time from what the statute calls the comfort and edification of the flock committed to him. Further, the act of 1584 is virtually repealed by the statute 6th Anne, c. 6, sec. 2, which makes the Scots law on the subject of justices of the peace the same with that of England, where the office is publicly exercised by the clergy of all descriptions.

* * * * "Another branch of the accusation against the defender as a justice of the peace, is the ratification of irregular marriages. The defender must here also call the attention of his reverend brethren and judges to the expediency of his conduct. The girls were usually with child at the time the application was made to the defender. In this situation, the children born out of matrimony, though begot under promise of marriage, must have been thrown upon the parish, or perhaps murdered in infancy, had not the men been persuaded to consent to a solemn declaration of betrothment, or private marriage, emitted before the defender as a justice of peace. The defender himself, commiserating the situation of such women, often endeavoured to persuade their seducers to do them justice; and men frequently acquiesced in this sort of marriage, when they could by no means have been prevailed upon to go through the ceremonies of proclamation of banns, or the expense and trouble of a public wedding. The declaration of a previous marriage was sometimes literally true; sometimes a fiction voluntarily emitted by the parties themselves, under the belief that it was the most safe way of constituting a private marriage *de presenti*. The defender had been induced, from the practice of other justices, to consider the receiving these declarations, whether true or false, as a part of his duty which he could not decline, even had he been willing to do so. Finally, the defender must remind the Venerable Assembly that he acted upon these occasions as a justice of peace, which brings him back to the point from which he set out, viz., that the Reverend Court are utterly incompetent to take cognizance of his conduct in that character, which no sentence that they can pronounce could give or take away.

"The second grand division of the libel against the defender refers to his conduct as a clergyman and a Christian. He was charged in the libel with the most gross and vulgar behaviour, with drunkenness, blasphemy, and impiety; yet all the evidence which the appellants have been able to bring forward, tends only to convict him of three acts of drunkenness during the course of fourteen years, for even the Presbytery, severe as they have been, acquit him *quoad ultra*. But the attention of the Reverend Court is earnestly entreated to the situation of the defender at the time, the circumstances which conduced to his imprudence, and the share which some of those had in occasioning his guilt, who have since been most active in persecuting and distressing him on account of it.

"The defender must premise, by observing, that the crime of drunkenness consists not in a man's having been in that situation twice or thrice in his life, but in the constant and habitual practice of the vice; the distinction between *ebrius* and *ebriosus* being founded in common sense, and recognised by law. A thousand cases may be supposed, in which a man, without being aware of what he is about, may be insensibly led on to intoxication, especially in a country where the vice is unfortunately so common, that upon some occasions a man may go to excess from a false sense of modesty, or a fear of disobliging his entertainer. The defender will not deny that after losing his senses upon the occasions, and in the manner to be afterwards stated, he may have committed improprieties which fill him with sorrow and regret; but he hopes, that in case he shall be able to show circum-

stances which abridge and palliate the guilt of his imprudent excess, the Venerable Court will consider these improprieties as the effects of that excess only, and not as arising from any radical vice in his temper or disposition. When a man is bereft of his judgment by the influence of wine, and commits any crime, he can only be said to be morally culpable, in proportion to the impropriety of the excess he has committed, and not in proportion to the magnitude of its evil consequences. In a legal view, indeed, a man must be held as answerable and punishable for such a crime, precisely as if he had been in a state of sobriety; but his crime is, in a moral light, comprised in the *origo mali*, the drunkenness only. His senses being once gone, he is no more than a human machine, as insensible of misconduct, in speech and action, as a parrot or an automaton. This is more particularly the case with respect to indecorums, such as the defender is accused of; for a man can no more be held a common swearer, or a habitual talker of obscenity, because he has been guilty of using such expressions when intoxicated, than he can be termed an idiot, because, when intoxicated, he has spoken nonsense. If, therefore, the defender can extenuate the guilt of his intoxication, he hopes that its consequences will be numbered rather among his misfortunes than faults; and his Reverend Brethren will consider him, while in that state, as acting from a mechanical impulse, and as incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong. For the scandal which his behaviour may have occasioned, he feels the most heartfelt sorrow, and will submit with penitence and conviction, to the severe rebuke which the Presbytery have decreed against him. But he cannot think that his unfortunate misdemeanour, circumstanced as he was, merits a severer punishment. He can show, that pains were at these times taken to lead him on, when bereft of his senses, to subjects which were likely to call forth improper or indecent expressions. The defender must further urge, that not being originally educated for the church, he may, before he assumed the sacred character, have occasionally permitted himself freedoms of expression which are reckoned less culpable among the laity. Thus, he may, during that time, have learned the songs which he is accused of singing, though rather inconsistent with his clerical character. What then was more natural than that, when thrown off his guard by the assumed conviviality and artful solicitations of those about him, former improper habits, though renounced during his thinking moments, might assume the reins of his imagination, when his situation rendered him utterly insensible of their impropriety?"

* * * * The Venerable Court will now consider how far three instances of ebriety, and their consequences, should ruin at once the character and the peace of mind of the unfortunate defender, and reduce him, at his advanced time of life, about sixty years, together with his aged parent, to a state of beggary. He hopes his severe sufferings may be considered as some atonement for the improprieties of which he may have been guilty; and that the Venerable Court will, in their judgment, remember mercy.

"In respect whereof, &c.

WALTER SCOTT."

This argument (for which he received five guineas) was sustained by Scott in a speech of considerable length at the bar of the Assembly. It was far the most important business in which any solicitor had as yet employed him, and *The Club* mustered strong in the gallery. He began in a low voice, but by degrees gathered more confidence; and when it became necessary for him to analyze the evidence touching a certain granny-wedding, repeated some very coarse specimens of his client's alleged conversation in a tone so bold and free, that he was called to order with great austerity by one of the leading members of the Venerable Court. This seemed to confuse him not a little; so when, by and by, he had to recite a stanza of one of M'Naught's convivial ditties, he breathed it out in a faint and hesitating style; whereupon, thinking he needed encouragement, the allies in the gallery astounded the Assembly by cordial shouts of *hear! hear!—encore! encore!* They were immediately turned out, and Scott got through the rest of his harangue very little to his own satisfaction.

He believed, in a word, that he had made a complete failure, and issued from the Court in a melancholy mood. At the door he found Adam Fergusson waiting to inform him that the brethren so unceremoniously extruded from the gallery had sought shelter in a neighbouring tavern, where they hoped he would join them. He complied with the invitation, but seemed for a long while incapable of enjoying the merriment of his friends. "Come, *Duns*," cried *the Baronet*—"cheer up, man, and fill another tumbler; here's ******** going to give us *The Tailor*."—"Ah!" he answered, with a groan, "the tailor was a better man than me, sirs; for he didna venture *ben* until he *kenned the way*." A certain comical old song, which had, perhaps, been a favourite with the Minister of Girthon—

> "The tailor he cam here to sew,
> And weel he kenn'd the way o't," &c.—

was, however, sung and chorussed; and the evening ended in the full jollity of *High Jinks*.

Mr. M'Naught was deposed from the ministry, and his young advocate has written out at the end of the printed papers on the case two of the *songs* which had been alleged in the evidence. They are both grossly indecent. It is to be observed, that the research he had made with a view to pleading this man's cause, carried him for the first, and I believe for the last time, into the scenery of his Guy Mannering; and I may add, that several of the names of the minor characters of the novel (that of *M'Guffog*, for example) appear in the list of witnesses for and against his client.

In the following July, a young lad, who had served for some time with excellent character on board a ship of war, and been discharged in consequence of a wound which disabled one of his hands, had the misfortune, in firing off a toy cannon in one of the narrow wynds of Edinburgh, to kill on the spot one of the doorkeepers of the Advocate's Library; a button, or some other hard substance, having been accidentally inserted with his cartridge. Scott was one of his counsel when he was arraigned for murder, and had occasion to draw up a written argument or *information* for the prisoner, from which also I shall make a short quotation. Considered as a whole, the production seems both crude and clumsy, but the following passages have, I think, several traces of the style of thought and language which he afterwards made familiar to the world.

"Murder," he writes, "or the premeditated slaughter of a citizen, is a crime of so deep and scarlet a dye, that there is scarce a nation to be found in which it has not, from the earliest period, been deemed worthy of a capital punishment. 'He who sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed,' is a general maxim, which has received the assent of all times and countries. But it is equally certain, that even the rude legislators of former days soon perceived, that the death of one man may be occasioned by another, without the slayer himself being the proper object of the *lex talionis*. Such an accident may happen either by the carelessness of the killer, or through that excess and vehemence of passion to which humanity is incident. In either case, though blameable, he ought not to be confounded with the cool and deliberate assassin; and the species of criminality attaching itself to those acts has been distinguished by the term *dolus*, in opposition to the milder term *culpa*. Again, there may be a third species of homicide, in which the perpetrator being the innocent and unfortunate cause of casual misfortune, becomes rather an object of compassion than punishment.

"Admitting there may have been a certain degree of culpability in the panel's conduct, still there is one circumstance which pleads strongly in his favour, so as to preclude all presumption of *dole*. This is the frequent practice, whether proper or improper, of using this amusement in the streets. It is a matter of public notoriety, that boys of all ages and descriptions are, or, at least till the late very proper proclamation of the magistrates, were to be seen every evening in almost every corner of this city amusing themselves with firearms and small cannons, and that without being checked or interfered with. When the panel, a poor ignorant raw lad, lately discharged from a ship of war, certainly not the most proper school to learn a prudent aversion to unlucky or mischievous practices, observed the sons of gentlemen of the first respectability engaged in such amusements, unchecked by their parents or by the magistrates, surely it can hardly be expected that he should discover that in imitating them in so common a practice, he was constituting himself *hostis humani generis*, a wretch the pest and scourge of mankind.

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"There is, no doubt, attached to every, even the most innocent of casual slaughter, a certain degree of blame, inasmuch as almost every thing of the kind might have been avoided, had the slayer exhibited the strictest degree of diligence. A well-known and authentic story will illustrate the proposition. A young gentleman just married to a young lady of which he was passionately fond, in affectionate trifling presented at her a pistol, of which he had drawn the charge some days before. The lady, entering into the joke, desired him to fire: he did so, and shot her dead; the pistol having been again charged by his servant without his knowledge. Can any one read this story, and feel any emotion but that of sympathy towards the unhappy husband? Can they ever connect the case with an idea of punishment? Yet, divesting it of these interesting circumstances which act upon the imagination, it is precisely that of the panel at your Lordships' bar; and though no one will pretend to say that such a homicide is other than casual, yet there is not the slightest question but it might have been avoided had the killer taken the precaution of examining his piece. But this is not the degree of *culpa* which can raise a misfortune to the pitch of a crime. It is only an instance that no accident can take place without its afterwards being discovered that the chief actor might have avoided committing it, had he been gifted with the spirit of prophecy, or with such an extreme degree of prudence as is almost equally rare.

"In the instance of shooting at butts, or at a bird, the person killed must have been somewhat in the line previous to the discharge of the shot, otherways it could never have come near him. The shooter must therefore have been guilty *culpa levis seu levissimæ* in firing while the deceased was in such a situation. In like manner, it is difficult to conceive how death should happen in consequence of a boxing or wrestling match, without some excess upon the part of the killer. Nay, in the exercise of the martial amusements of our forefathers, even by royal commission, should a champion be slain in running his barriers, or performing his tournament, it could scarcely happen without some *culpa seu levis seu levissima* on the part of his antagonist. Yet all these are enumerated in the English law-books as instances of casual homicide only; and we may therefore safely conclude, that by the law of the sister country a slight degree of blame will not subject the slayer *per infortunium* to the penalties of culpable homicide.

"Guilt, as an object of punishment, has its origin in the mind and intention of the actor; and therefore, where that is wanting, there is no proper object of chastisement. A madman, for example, can no more properly be said to be guilty of murder, than the sword with which he commits it, both being equally incapable of intending injury. In the present case, in like manner, although it ought no doubt to be matter of deep sorrow and contrition to the panel, that his folly should have occasioned the loss of life to a fellow-creature; yet, as that folly can neither be termed malice, nor yet doth amount to a gross negligence, he ought rather to be pitied than condemned. The fact done can never be recalled, and it rests with your Lordships to consider the case of this unfortunate young man, who has served his country in an humble though useful station,—deserved such a character as is given him in the letter of his officers,—and been disabled in that service. You will best judge how (considering he has suffered a confinement of six months) he can in humanity be the object of further or severer punishment, for a deed of which his mind at least, if not his hand, is guiltless. When a case is attended with some nicety, your Lordships will allow mercy to incline the balance of justice, well considering, with the legislator of the east, 'It is better ten guilty should escape, than that one innocent man should perish in his innocence.'"

The young sailor was acquitted.

To return for a moment to Scott's love-affair. I find him writing as follows, in March, 1795, to his cousin, William Scott, now Laird of Raeburn, who was then in the East Indies: "The lady you allude to has been in town all this winter, and going a good deal into public, which has not in the least altered the meekness of her manners. Matters, you see, stand just as they did."

To another friend he writes thus, from Rosebank, on the 23d of August, 1795:—

"It gave me the highest satisfaction to find, by the receipt of your letter of the 15th current, that you have formed precisely the same opinion with me, both with regard to the interpretation of —— ——'s letter as highly flattering and favourable, and, to the mode of conduct I ought to pursue—for, after all, what she has pointed out is the most prudent line of conduct for us both, at least till better days, which I think myself now entitled to suppose, she, as well as I myself, will look forward to with pleasure. If you were surprised at reading the important billet, you may guess how agreeably I was so at receiving it; for I had, to anticipate disappointment, —struggled to suppress every rising gleam of hope,—and it would be very difficult to describe the mixed feelings her letter occasioned, which, *entre nous*, terminated in a very hearty fit of crying. I read over her epistle about ten times a-day, and always with new admiration of her generosity and candour—and as often take shame to myself for the mean suspicions, which, after knowing her so long, I could listen to, while endeavouring to guess how she would conduct herself. To tell you the truth, I cannot but confess, that my *amour propre*, which one would expect should have been exalted, has suffered not a little upon this occasion, through a sense of my own *unworthiness*, pretty similar to that which afflicted Linton upon sitting down at Keir's table. I ought perhaps to tell you, what, indeed, you will perceive from her letter, that I was always attentive, while consulting with you upon the subject of my declaration, rather to under than over-rate the extent of our intimacy. By the way, I must not omit mentioning the respect in which I hold your knowledge of the fair sex, and your capacity of advising in these matters, since it certainly is to your encouragement that I owe the present situation of my affairs. I wish to God, that, since you have acted as so useful an auxiliary during my attack, which has succeeded in bringing the enemy to terms, you would next sit down before some fortress yourself, and were it as impregnable as the rock of Gibraltar, I should, notwithstanding, have the highest expectations of your final success. Not a line from poor Jack—What can he be doing? Moping, I suppose, about some watering-place, and deluging his guts with specifics of every kind—or lowering and snorting in one corner of a post-chaise, with Kennedy, as upright and cold as a poker, stuck into the other. As for Linton, and Crab,* I anticipate with pleasure their marvellous adventures, in the course of which Dr. Black's *self-denying ordinance* will run a shrewd chance of being neglected. They will be a source of fun for the winter evening conversations. Methinks I see the pair upon the mountains of Tipperary—John with a beard of three inches, united and blended with his shaggy black locks, an ellwand-looking cane, with a gilt head, in his hand, and a bundle in a handkerchief over his shoulder, exciting the cupidity of every Irish rapparee who passes him, by his resemblance to a Jew pedlar who has sent forward his pack—Linton, tired of trailing his long legs, exalted in state upon an Irish garron, without stirrups, and a halter on its head, tempting every one to ask,

'Who is that upon the pony,
So long, so lean, so raw, so bony?'†

—calculating, as he moves along, the expenses of the salt horse—and grinning a ghastly smile, when the hollow voice of his fellow-traveller observes, "God! Adam, if ye gang on at this rate, the eight shillings and sevenpence halfpenny will never carry us forward to my uncle's at Lisburn." Enough of a thorough Irish expedition.

"We have a great marriage towards here—Scott of Harden, and a daughter of Count Bruhl, the famous chess-player, a lady of sixteen quarters, half-sister to the Wyndhams. I wish they may come down soon, as we shall have fine racketting, of which I will, probably, get my share. I think of being in town some time next month, but whether for good and all, or only for a visit, I am not certain. O, for November! Our meeting will be a little embarrassing one. How will she look, &c. &c. &c., are the important subjects of my present conjectures—how different from what they were three weeks ago! I give you leave to laugh, when I tell you seriously, I had begun to 'swindle, peak, and pine,' upon the subject—but now, after the charge I have received, it were a shame to resemble Pharaoh's lean kine. If good living and plenty of exercise can avert that calamity, I am in little danger of disobedience, and so, to conclude classically,

Dicite Io pœan, et Io bis dicite pœan!—
Jubeo te bene valere,
GUALTERUS SCOTT."

I have had much hesitation about inserting the preceding letter, but could not make up my mind to

* *Crab* was the nickname of a friend who had accompanied Fergusson this summer on an Irish tour. Dr. Black, celebrated for his discoveries in chemistry, was Adam Fergusson's uncle; and had, it seems, given the young travellers a strong admonition touching the dangers of Irish hospitality.

† These lines are part of a song on the Parliamentary orator Littleton. They are quoted in Boswell's Life of Johnson, originally published in 1791.

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suit what seems to me a most exquisite revelation of the whole character of Scott at this critical period of his history, both literary and personal;—more especially of his habitual effort to suppress, as far as words were concerned, the more tender feelings, which were in no heart deeper than in his.

It must, I think, have been, while he was indulging his *vagabond* vein, during the autumn of 1794, that Miss Aikin (afterwards Mrs. Barbauld) paid her visit to Edinburgh, and entertained a party at Mr. Dugald Stewart's by reading Mr. William Taylor's then unpublished version of Bürger's Lenore. In the Essay on Imitation of Popular Poetry the reader has a full account of the interest with which Scott heard, some weeks afterwards, a friend's imperfect recollection of this performance; the anxiety with which he sought after a copy of the original German; the delight with which he at length perused it; and how, having just been reading the specimens of ballad poetry introduced into Lewis's romance of The Monk, he called to mind the early facility of versification which had lain so long in abeyance, and ventured to promise his friend a rhymed translation of "Lenore" from his own pen. The friend in question was Miss Cranstoun, afterwards Countess of Purgstall, the sister of his friend George Cranstoun, now Lord Corehouse. He began the task, he tells us, after supper, and did not retire to bed until he had finished it, having by that time worked himself into a state of excitement which set sleep at defiance.

Next morning, before breakfast, he carried his MS. to Miss Cranstoun, who was not only delighted but astonished at it; for I have seen a letter of hers to a mutual friend in the country, in which she says—"Upon my word, Walter Scott is going to turn out a poet—something of a cross I think between Burns and Gray." The same day he read it also to his friend Sir Alexander Wood, who retains a vivid recollection of the high strain of enthusiasm into which he had been exalted by dwelling on the wild unearthly imagery of the German bard. "He read it over to me," says Sir Alexander, "in a very slow and solemn tone, and after we had said a few words about its merits, continued to look at the fire silent and musing for some minutes, until he at length burst out with 'I wish to Heaven I could get a skull and two cross-bones.'" Wood said that if he would accompany him to the house of John Bell, the celebrated surgeon, he had no doubt this wish might be easily gratified. They went thither accordingly on the instant;—Mr. Bell (who was a great humourist) smiled on hearing the object of their visit, and pointing to a closet, at the corner of his library, bade Walter enter and choose. From a well-furnished museum of mortality, he selected forthwith what seemed to him the handsomest skull and pair of cross-bones it contained, and wrapping them in his handkerchief, carried the formidable bundle home to George's Square. The trophies were immediately mounted on the top of his little bookcase; and when Wood visited him, after many years of absence from this country, he found them in possession of a similar position in his dressingroom at Abbotsford.

All this occurred in the beginning of April, 1796. A few days afterwards, Scott went to pay a visit at a country house, where he expected to meet the "lady of his love." Jane Anne Cranstoun was in the secret of his attachment, and knew, that however doubtful might be Miss ———'s feeling on that subject, she had a high admiration of Scott's abilities, and often corresponded with him on literary matters; so, after he had left Edinburgh, it occurred to her that she might perhaps forward his views in this quarter, by presenting him in the character of a printed author. William Erskine being called into her counsels, a few copies of the ballad were forthwith thrown off in the most elegant style, and one richly bound and blazoned followed Scott in the course of a few days to the country. The verses were read and approved of, and Miss Cranstoun at least flattered herself that he had not made his first appearance in types to no purpose.*

I ought to have mentioned before, that in June, 1795, he was appointed one of the curators of the Advocate's Library, an office always reserved for those members of the faculty who have the reputation of superior zeal in literary affairs. He had for colleagues David Hume, the Professor of Scots Law, and Malcolm Laing, the historian; and his discharge of his functions must have given satisfaction, for I find him further nominated, in March, 1796, together with Mr. Robert Hodgson Cay, an accomplished gentleman, afterwards Judge of the Admiralty Court in Scotland, to "put the Faculty's cabinet of medals in proper arrangement."

On the 4th of June, 1796, (the birth-day of George III.) there seems to have been a formidable riot in Edinburgh, and Scott is found again in the front. On the 5th, he writes as follows to his aunt, Christian Rutherford, who was then in the north of Scotland, and had meant to visit, among other places, the residence of the "chère adorable."

"Edinburgh, 5th June, 1796.

"Ma Chère Amie,

"Nothing doubting that your curiosity will be upon the tenters to hear the wonderful events of the long-expected 4th of June, I take the pen to inform you that not one worth mentioning has taken place. Were I inclined to prolixity, I might, indeed, narrate at length *how* near a thousand gentlemen (myself among the number) offered their services to the magistrates to act as *constables* for the preservation of the peace—how their services were accepted—what fine speeches were made upon the occasion—*how* they were furnished with pretty painted brown *batons*—*how* they were assembled in the aisle of the New Church, and treated with claret and sweetmeats—*how* Sir John Whiteford was chased by the mob, and how Tom, Sandy Wood, and I, rescued him, and dispersed his tormentors *à beaux coups de batons*—*how* the Justice-Clerk's windows were broke by a few boys, and *how* a large body of constables and a pressgang of near two hundred men arrived, and were much disappointed at finding the coast entirely clear; with many other matters of equal importance, but of which you must be contented to remain in ignorance till you return to your castle. Seriously, every thing, with the exception of the very trifling circumstances above mentioned, was perfectly quiet—much more so than during any King's birth-day I can recollect. That very stillness, however, shows that something is brewing among our friends the Democrats, which they will take their own time of bringing forward. By the wise precautions of the magistrates, or rather of the provost, and the spirited conduct of the gentlemen, I hope their designs will be frustrated. Our association meets to-night, when we are to be divided into districts, according to the place of our abode, places of rendezvous, and captains named; so that, upon the hoisting of a flag on the Tron-steeple, and ringing out all the large bells, we can be on duty in less than five minutes. I am sorry to say that the complexion of the town seems to justify all precautions of this kind. I hope we shall demean ourselves as *quiet* and *peaceable* magistrates; and intend, for the purpose of learning the duties of my new office, to con diligently the instructions delivered to the watch by our brother Dogberry, of facetious memory. So much for information. By way of inquiry, pray let me know what is, when you find any idle hour—how you accomplished the perilous passage of her Majestie's Ferry without the assistance and escort of your preux-chevalier, and whether you will receive them on your return—how Miss R. and you are spending your time, whether stationary or otherwise—above all, whether you have been at "******," and all the &cs. &cs. which the question involves. Having made out a pretty long scratch, which, as Win Jenkins says, will take you some time to decipher, I shall only inform you farther that I shall tire excessively till you return to your shop. I beg to be remembered to Miss Kerr, and in particular to La Belle Jeanne. Best love to Miss Rutherford; and believe me ever, my dear Miss Christy, sincerely and affectionately your

WALTER SCOTT."

During the autumn of 1796, he visited again his favourite haunts in Perthshire and Forfarshire. It was in the course of this tour that he spent a day or two at Montrose with his old tutor Mitchell, and astonished and grieved that worthy Presbyterian

* This story was told by the Countess of Purgstall on her death bed to Captain Basil Hall. See his *Schloss Hainfeld*, p. 262.

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by his zeal about witches and fairies. The only letter of his written during this expedition, that I have recovered, was addressed to another of his clerical friends—one by no means of Mitchell's stamp—Mr. Walker, the minister of Dunnotar, and it is chiefly occupied with an account of his researches at a vitrified fort, in Kincardineshire, commonly called *Lady Fenella's Castle*, and, according to tradition, the scene of the murder of Kenneth II. by his mistress. While in the north, he visited also the residence of the lady who had now, for so many years, been the object of his attachment; and that his reception was not adequate to his expectations, may be gathered pretty clearly from some expressions in a letter addressed to him when at Montrose by his friend and confidante, Miss Cranstoun.

To Walter Scott, Esq., Post-Office, Montrose.

"Dear Scott,—

"Far be it from me to affirm that there are no diviners in the land. The voice of the people and the voice of God are loud in their testimony. Two years ago, when I was in the neighbourhood of Montrose, we had recourse for amusement one evening to chiromancy, or, as the vulgar say, having our fortunes read: and read mine were in such a sort, that either my letters must have been inspected, or the devil was by in his own proper person. I never mentioned the circumstance since, for obvious reasons; but now that you are on the spot, I feel it my bounden duty to conjure you not to put your shoes rashly from off your feet, for you are not standing on holy ground.

"I bless the gods for conducting your poor dear soul safely to Perth. When I consider the wilds, the forests, the lakes, the rocks—and the spirits in which you must have whispered to their startled echoes, it amazeth me how you escaped. Had you but dismissed your little squire and Earwig,* and spent a few days as Orlando would have done, all posterity might have profited by it; but to trot quietly away without so much as one stanza to despair—never talk to me of love again—never, never, never! I am dying for your collection of exploits. When will you return? In the mean time, Heaven speed you! Be sober, and hope to the end.

"William Taylor's translation of your ballad is published, and so inferior, that I wonder we could tolerate it. Dugald Stewart read yours to ********** the other day. When he came to the fetter dance,† he looked up, and poor ********** was sitting with his hands nailed to his knees, and the big tears rolling down his innocent nose in so piteous a manner, that Mr. Stewart could not help bursting out a laughing. An angry man was **********. I have seen another edition too, but it is below contempt. So many copies make the ballad famous, so that every day adds to your renown.

"This here place is very, very dull. Erskine is in London; my dear Thomson at Daily; Macfarlan hatching Kant—and George‡ Fountainhall.§ I have nothing more to tell you, but that I am most affectionately yours. Many an anxious thought I have about you. Farewell.

J. A. C."

The affair in which this romantic creature took so lively an interest, was now approaching its end. It was known, before this autumn closed, that the lady of his vows had finally promised her hand to his amiable rival; and, when the fact was announced, some of those who knew Scott the best, appear to have entertained very serious apprehensions as to the effect which the disappointment might have upon his feelings. For example, one of those brothers of *the Mountain* wrote as follows to another of them, on the 12th October, 1796:—"Mr. ——— marries Miss ———. This is not good news. I always dreaded there was some self-deception on the part of our romantic friend, and I now shudder at the violence of his most irritable and ungovernable mind. Who is it that says, 'Men have died, and worms have eaten them, but not for LOVE?' I hope sincerely it may be verified on this occasion."

Scott had, however, in all likelihood, digested his agony during the solitary ride in the Highlands, to which Miss Cranstoun's last letter alludes.

Talking of this story with Lord Kinedder, I once asked him whether Scott never made it the subject of verses at the period. His own confession, that, even during the time when he had laid aside the habit of versification, he did sometimes commit "a sonnet on a mistress's eyebrow," had not then appeared. Lord Kinedder answered, "O yes, he made many little stanzas about the lady, and he sometimes showed them to Cranstoun, Clerk, and myself—but we really thought them in general very poor. Two things of the kind, however, have been preserved—and one of them was done just after the conclusion of the business." He then took a volume of the English Minstrelsy, and pointed out to me some lines *on a violet*, which had not at that time been included in Scott's collected works. Lord Kinedder read them over in his usual impressive, though not quite unaffected, manner, and said, "I remember well that, when I first saw these, I told him they were his best; but he had touched them up afterwards."

"The violet in her greenwood bower,
Where birchen boughs with hazels mingle,
May boast itself the fairest flower
In glen or copse or forest dingle.

"Though fair her gems of azure hue
Beneath the dewdrop's weight reclining,
I've seen an eye of lovelier blue
More sweet through watery lustre shining.

"The summer sun that dew shall dry,
Ere yet the sun be past its morrow,
Nor longer in my false love's eye
Remained the tear of parting sorrow!"

In turning over a volume of MS. papers, I have found a copy of verses, which, from the hand, Scott had evidently written down within the last ten years of his life. They are headed, "To Time—by a Lady"—but certain *initials* on the back satisfy me, that the authoress was no other than the object of his first passion. I think I must be pardoned for transcribing the lines which had dwelt so long on his memory—leaving it to the reader's fancy to picture the mood of mind in which the fingers of a gray-haired man may have traced such a relic of his youthful dreams.

"Friend of the wretch oppress'd with grief,
Whose lenient hand, though slow, supplies
The balm that leads to care relief,
That wipes her tears—that checks her sighs!

"'Tis thine the wounded soul to heal
That hopeless bleeds for sorrow's smart,
From stern misfortune's shaft to steal
The barb that rankles in the heart.

"What though with thee the roses fly,
And jocund youth's gay reign is o'er;
Though dimm'd the lustre of the eye,
And hope's vain dreams enchant no more:

"Yet in thy train come soft-eyed peace,
Indifference with her heart of snow;
At her cold touch, lo! sorrows cease,
No thorns beneath her roses grow.

"O haste to grant the suppliant's prayer,
To me thy torpid calm impart;
Rend from my brow youth's garland fair,
But take the thorn that's in my heart.

"Ah, why do fabling poets tell,
That thy fleet wings outstrip the wind?
Why feign thy course of joy the knell,
And call they slowest pace unkind!

* A servant-boy and pony.

† "'Dost fear? dost fear?'—The moon shines clear;—
Dost fear to ride with me?
Hurrah! hurrah! the dead can ride!'—
'Oh, William, let them be!'

"'See there, see there! What yonder swings
And creaks 'mid whistling rain?'—
Gibbet and steel, the accursed wheel;
A murderer in his chain.

"'Hallo! thou felon, follow here,
To bridal bed we ride;
And thou shalt prance a fetter dance
Before me and my bride.'

"And hurry, hurry! clash, clash, clash!
The wasted form descends;
And fleet as wind, through hazle bush,
The wild career attends.

"Tramp, tramp! along the land they rode;
Splash, splash! along the sea;
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
The flashing pebbles flee."

‡ George Cranstoun, Lord Corehouse.

§ Decisions by Lord Fountainhall.

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"To me thy tasteless feeble race
Comes laden with the weight of years;
With sighs I view morn's blushing face,
And hail mild evening with my tears."

CHAPTER VIII.

PUBLICATION OF BALLADS AFTER BÜRGER—SCOTT QUARTER-MASTER OF THE EDINBURGH LIGHT-HORSE—EXCURSION TO CUMBERLAND—GILSLAND WELLS—MISS CARPENTER—MARRIAGE.—1796-1797.

Rebelling, as usual, against circumstances, Scott seems to have turned with renewed ardour to his literary pursuits; and in that same October, 1796, he was "prevailed on," as he playfully expresses it, "by the *request of friends*, to indulge his own vanity, by publishing the translation of Lenore, with that of the Wild Huntsman, also from Bürger, in a thin quarto." The little volume, which has no author's name on the titlepage, was printed for Manners and Miller of Edinburgh. The first named of these respectable publishers had been a fellow-student in the German class of Dr. Willich; and this circumstance probably suggested the negotiation. It was conducted by William Erskine, as appears from his postscript to a letter addressed to Scott by his sister, who, before it reached its destination, had become the wife of Mr. Campbell (Colquhoun) of Clathick (and Kellermont)—in after-days Lord-Advocate of Scotland. This was another of Scott's dearest female friends—the humble home which she shared with her brother during his early struggles at the bar, had been the scene of many of his happiest hours; and her letter affords such a pleasing idea of the warm affectionateness of the little circle, that I cannot forbear inserting it.

To Walter Scott, Esq. Rosebank, Kelso.

"Monday Evening.

"If it were not that etiquette and I were constantly at war, I should think myself very blameable in thus trespassing against one of its laws; but as it is long since I forewore its dominion, I have acquired a prescriptive right to act as I will—and I shall accordingly anticipate the station of a *matron* in addressing *a young man*.

"I can express but a very, very little, of what I feel, and shall ever feel, for your unintermitting friendship and attention. I have ever considered you as a brother, and shall *now* think myself entitled to make even larger claims on your confidence. Well do I remember the *dark* conference we lately held together! The intention of unfolding *my own* future fate was often at my lips.

"I cannot tell you my distress at leaving this house, wherein I have enjoyed so much real happiness, and giving up the service of so gentle a master, whose yoke was indeed easy. I will therefore only commend him to your care as the last bequest of Mary Anne Erskine, and conjure you to continue to each other through all your pilgrimage as you have commenced it. May every happiness attend you. Adieu!

"Your most sincere friend and sister,
M. A. E."

Mr. Erskine writes on the other page—"The poems are gorgeous, but I have made no bargain with any bookseller. I have told M. and M. that I won't be satisfied with indemnity, but an offer must be made. They will be out before the end of the week." On what terms the publication really took place, I know not.

It has already been mentioned, that Scott owed his copy of Bürger's works to the young lady of Harden, whose marriage occurred in the autumn of 1796. She was daughter of Count Brühl of Martkirchen, long Saxon ambassador at the court of St. James's, by his second wife the Countess-Dowager of Egremont; and though I believe she had never at this time been out of England, spoke her father's language perfectly, corresponded regularly with many of her relations on the Continent, and was very fond of the rising literature of the Germans. The young kinsman was introduced to her soon after her arrival at Mertoun, and his attachment to German studies excited her attention and interest. Mrs. Scott supplied him with many standard German books, besides Bürger; and the gift of an Adelung's dictionary from his old ally, George Constable, (Jonathan Oldbuck,) enabled him to master their contents sufficiently for the purposes of translation. The ballad of the Wild Huntsman appears to have been executed, under Mrs. Scott's eye, during the month that preceded his first publication; and he was thenceforth engaged in a succession of versions from the dramas of Meier and Iffland, several of which are still extant in his MS., marked 1796 and 1797. These are all in prose like their originals; but he also versified at the same time some lyrical fragments of Goethe, as, for example, the Morlachian Ballad,

"What yonder glimmers so white on the mountain,"

and the song from Claudina von Villa Bella. He consulted his friend at Mertoun on all these essays; and I have often heard him say, that among those many "obligations of a distant date which remained impressed on his memory, after a life spent in a constant interchange of friendship and kindness," he counted not as the least the lady's frankness in correcting his Scotticisms, and more especially his Scottish *rhymes*.

His obligations to this lady were indeed various—but I doubt, after all, whether these were the most important. He used to say, that she was the first *woman of real fashion* that *took him* up; that she used the privileges of her sex and station in the truest spirit of kindness; set him right as to a thousand little trifles, which no one else would have ventured to notice; and, in short, did for him what no one but an elegant woman can do for a young man, whose early days have been spent in narrow and provincial circles. "When I first saw Sir Walter," she writes to me, "he was about four or five-and-twenty, but looked much younger. He seemed bashful and awkward; but there were from the first such gleams of superior sense and spirit in his conversation, that I was hardly surprised when, after our acquaintance had ripened a little, I felt myself to be talking with a man of genius. He was most modest about himself, and showed his little pieces apparently without any consciousness that they could possess any claim on particular attention. Nothing so easy and good-humoured as the way in which he received any hints I might offer, when he seemed to be tampering with the King's English. I remember particularly how he laughed at himself when I made him take notice that 'the little two dogs,' in some of his lines, did not please an English ear accustomed to 'the two little dogs.'"

Nor was this the only person at Mertoun who took a lively interest in his pursuits. Harden entered into all the feelings of his beautiful bride on this subject; and his mother, the Lady Diana Scott, daughter of the last Earl of Marchmont, did so no less. She had conversed, in her early days, with the brightest ornaments of the cycle of Queen Anne, and preserved rich stores of anecdote, well calculated to gratify the curiosity and excite the ambition of a young enthusiast in literature. Lady Diana soon appreciated the minstrel of the clan; and, surviving to a remarkable age, she had the satisfaction of seeing him at the height of his eminence—the solitary person who could give the author of Marmion personal reminiscences of Pope.*

On turning to James Ballantyne's *Memorandum*, (already quoted,) I find an account of Scott's journey from Rosebank to Edinburgh, in the November after the Ballads from Bürger were published, which gives an interesting notion of his literary zeal and opening ambition at this remarkable epoch of his life. Mr. Ballantyne had settled in Kelso as a solicitor in 1795; but not immediately obtaining much professional practice, time hung heavy on his hands, and he willingly listened, in the summer of 1796, to a proposal of some of the neighbouring nobility and gentry respecting the establishment

* Mr. Scott of Harden's right to the peerage of Polwarth, as representing, through his mother, the line of Marchmont, was allowed by the House of Lords in 1830.

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of a weekly newspaper,* in opposition to one of a democratic tendency, then widely circulated in Roxburghshire and the other Border counties. He undertook the printing and editing of this new journal, and proceeded to London, in order to engage correspondents and make other necessary preparations. While thus for the first time in the metropolis, he happened to meet with two authors, whose reputations were then in full bloom—namely, Thomas Holcroft and William Godwin—the former a popular dramatist and novelist; the latter, a novelist of far greater merit, but "still more importantly distinguished," says the Memorandum before me, "by those moral, legal, political, and religious heterodoxies, which his talents enabled him to present to the world in a very captivating manner. His Caleb Williams had then just come out, and occupied as much public attention as any work has done before or since." "Both these eminent persons," Ballantyne continues, "I saw pretty frequently; and being anxious to hear whatever I could tell about the literary men in Scotland, they both treated me with remarkable freedom of communication. They were both distinguished by the clearness of their elocution, and very full of triumphant confidence in the truth of their systems. They were as willing to speak, therefore, as I could be to hear; and as I put my questions with all the fearlessness of a very young man, the result was, that I carried away copious and interesting stores of thought and information; that the greater part of what I heard was full of error, never entered into my contemplation. Holcroft at this time was a fine-looking, lively man, of green old age, somewhere about sixty. Godwin, some twenty years younger, was more shy and reserved. As to me, my delight and enthusiasm were boundless."

After returning home, Ballantyne made another journey to Glasgow for the purchase of types; and on entering the Kelso coach for this purpose—"It would not be easy," says he, "to express my joy on finding that Mr. Scott was to be one of my partners in the carriage, the only other passenger being a fine, stout, muscular old Quaker. A very few miles re-established us on our ancient footing. Travelling not being half so speedy then as it is now, there was plenty of leisure for talk, and Mr. Scott was exactly what is called the old man. He abounded, as in the days of boyhood, in legendary lore, and had now added to the stock, as his recitations showed, many of those fine ballads which afterwards composed the Minstrelsy. Indeed, I was more delighted with him than ever; and, by way of reprisal, I opened on him my London budget collected from Holcroft and Godwin. I doubt if Boswell ever showed himself a more skilful *Reporter* than I did on this occasion. Hour after hour passed away, and found my borrowed eloquence still flowing, and my companion still hanging on my lips with unwearied interest. It was customary in those days to break the journey (only forty miles) by dining on the road, the consequence of which was that we both became rather oblivious; and after we had re-entered the coach, the worthy Quaker felt quite vexed and disconcerted with the silence which had succeeded so much conversation. 'I wish,' said he, 'my young friends, that you would cheer up, and go on with your pleasant songs and tales as before: they entertained me much.' And so," says Ballantyne, "it went on again until the evening found us in Edinburgh; and from that day, until within a very short time of his death—a period of not less than five-and-thirty years—I may venture to say that our intercourse never flagged."

The reception of the two ballads had, in the mean time, been favourable, in his own circle at least. The many inaccuracies and awkwardnesses of rhyme and diction to which he alludes in republishing them towards the close of his life, did not prevent real lovers of poetry from seeing that no one but a poet could have transfused the daring imagery of the German in a style so free, bold, masculine, and full of life; but, wearied as all such readers had been with that succession of feeble, flimsy, lackadaisical trash which followed the appearance of the Reliques by Bishop Percy, the opening of such a new vein of popular poetry as these verses revealed would have been enough to produce lenient critics for far inferior translations. Many, as we have seen, sent forth copies of the Lenore about the same time; and some of these might be thought better than Scott's in particular passages; but, on the whole, it seems to have been felt and acknowledged by those best entitled to judge, that he deserved the palm. Meantime, we must not forget that Scotland had lost that very year the great poet Burns, her glory and her shame. It is at least to be hoped that a general sentiment of self-reproach, as well as of sorrow, had been excited by the premature extinction of such a light; and, at all events, it is agreeable to know that they who had watched his career with the most affectionate concern, were among the first to hail the promise of a more fortunate successor. Scott found on his table, when he reached Edinburgh, the following letters from two of Burns's kindest and wisest friends:—

To Walter Scott, Esq. Advocate, George's Square.

"My Dear Sir,

"I beg you will accept of my best thanks for the favour you have done me by sending me four copies of your beautiful translations. I shall retain two of them, as Mrs. Stewart and I both set a high value on them as gifts from the author. The other two I shall take the earliest opportunity of transmitting to a friend in England, who, I hope, may be instrumental in making their merits more generally known at the time of their first appearance. In a few weeks, I am fully persuaded, they will engage public attention to the utmost extent of your wishes, without the aid of any recommendation whatever. I ever am, Dear Sir, yours most truly,

"DUGALD STEWART.

"Canongate, Wednesday evening."

To the Same.

"Dear Sir,

"On my return from Cardross, where I had been for a week, I found yours of the 14th, which had surely loitered by the way. I thank you most cordially for your present. I meet with little poetry now-a-days that touches my heart; but your translations excite mingled emotions of pity and terror, insomuch, that I would not wish any person of weaker nerves to read *William and Helen* before going to bed. Great must be the original, if it equals the translation in energy and pathos. One would almost suspect you have used as much liberty with Bürger as Macpherson was suspected of doing with Ossian. It is, however, easier to *backspeir* you. Sober reason rejects the machinery as unnatural; it reminds me, however, of the magic of Shakspeare. Nothing has a finer effect than the repetition of certain words, that are echoes to the sense, as much as the celebrated lines in Homer about the rolling up and falling down of the stone:—*Tramp, tramp, splash, splash*, is to me perfectly new;—and much of the imagery is nature. I should consider this same muse of yours (if you carry the intrigue far) more likely to steal your heart from the law than even a wife. I am, Dear Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

"JO. RAMSAY.

"Ochtertyre, 30th Nov. 1796."

Among other literary persons at a distance, I may mention George Chalmers, the celebrated antiquary, with whom he had been in correspondence from the beginning of this year, supplying him with Border ballads for the illustration of his researches into Scotch history. This gentleman had been made acquainted with Scott's large collections in that way, by a mutual friend, Dr. Somerville, minister of Jedburgh, author of the History of Queen Anne,* and the numerous MS. copies communi-

* The Kelso Mail.

* Some extracts from this venerable person's unpublished Memoirs of his own Life, have been kindly sent to me by his son, the well-known physician of Chelsea College; from which it appears that the reverend doctor, and more particularly still his wife, a lady of remarkable talent and humour, had formed a high notion of Scott's future eminence at a very early period of his life. Dr. S. survived to a great old age, preserving his faculties quite entire, and I have spent many pleasant hours under his hospitable roof in company with Sir Walter Scott. We heard him preach an excellent circuit sermon when he was upwards of ninety-two, and at the Judges' dinner afterwards, he was among the gayest of the company.

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cated to him in consequence, were recalled in the course of 1799, when the plan of the "Minstrelsy" began to take shape. Chalmers writes in great transports about Scott's versions; but weightier encouragement came from Mr. Taylor of Norwich, himself the first translator of the Lenore.

"I need not tell you, sir," (he writes,) "with how much eagerness I opened your volume—with how much glow I followed *the Chase*—or with how much alarm I came to *William and Helen*. Of the latter I will say nothing; praise might seem hypocrisy—criticism envy. The ghost nowhere makes his appearance so well as with you, or his exit so well as with Mr. Spenser. I like very much the recurrence of

'The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
The flashing pebbles flee;'

but of *William and Helen* I had resolved to say nothing. Let me return to *the Chase*, of which the metric stanza style pleases me entirely—yet I think a few passages written in too elevated a strain for the general spirit of the poem. This age leans too much to the Darwin style. Mr. Percy's Lenore owes its coldness to the adoption of this; and it seems peculiarly incongruous in the ballad—where habit has taught us to expect simplicity. Among the passages too stately and pompous, I should reckon—

'The mountain echoes startling wake—
And for devotion's choral swell
Exchange the rude discordant noise—
Fell famine marks the maddening throng
With cold Despair's averted eye'—

and perhaps one or two more. In the twenty-first stanza I prefer Bürger's *trampling the corn into chaff and dust*, to your more metaphorical, and therefore less picturesque, 'destructive sweep the field along.' In the thirtieth, 'On whirlwind's pinions swiftly borne,' to me seems less striking than the still disapparition of the tumult and bustle—the earth has opened, and he is sinking with his evil genius to the nether world—as he approaches, *dumpf rauscht es wie ein ferner meer*—it should be rendered, therefore, not by 'Save what a distant torrent gave,' but by some sounds which shall necessarily excite the idea of being *hellesprung*—the sound of simmering seas of fire—pinings of goblins damned—or some analogous noise. The forty-seventh stanza is a very great improvement of the original. The profanest blasphemous speeches need not have been softened down, as in proportion to the impiety of the provocation increases the poetical probability of the final punishment. I should not have ventured upon these criticisms, if did not think it required a microscopic eye to make any, and if I did not on the whole consider *the Chase* as a most spirited and beautiful translation. I remain (to borrow in another sense a concluding phrase from the Spectator,) your constant admirer,

"W. TAYLOR, JUN.

"Norwich, 14th Dec. 1796."

The anticipations of these gentlemen, that Scott's versions would attract general attention in the south, were not fulfilled. He himself attributes this to the contemporaneous appearance of so many other translations from Lenore. "In a word," he says, "my adventure, where so many pushed off to sea, proved a dead loss, and a great part of the edition was condemned to the service of the trunk-maker. This failure did not operate in any unpleasant degree either on my feelings or spirits. I was coldly received by strangers, but my reputation began rather to increase among my own friends, and on the whole I was more bent to show the world that it had neglected something worth notice, than to be affronted by its indifference; or rather, to speak candidly, I found pleasure in the literary labours in which I had almost by accident become engaged, and laboured less in the hope of pleasing others, though certainly without despair of doing so, than in a pursuit of a new and agreeable amusement to myself."*

On the 12th of December, Scott had the curiosity to witness the trial of one James Mackean, a shoemaker, for the murder of Buchanan, a carrier, employed to convey money weekly from the Glasgow bank to a manufacturing establishment at Lanark. Mackean invited the carrier to spend the evening in his house; conducted family worship in a style of much seeming fervour; and then, while his friend was occupied, came behind him, and almost severed his head from his body by one stroke of a razor. I have heard Scott describe the sanctimonious air which the murderer maintained during his trial—preserving throughout the aspect of a devout person, who believed himself to have been hurried into his accumulation of crime by an uncontrollable exertion of diabolical influence; and on his copy of the "Life of James Mackean, executed 25th January, 1797," I find the following marginal note:—

"I went to see this wretched man when under sentence of death, along with my friend, Mr. William Clerk, advocate. His great anxiety was to convince us that his diabolical murder was committed from a sudden impulse of revengeful and violent passion, not from deliberate design of plunder. But the contrary was manifest from the accurate preparation of the deadly instrument, a razor strongly lashed to an iron bolt, and also from the evidence on the trial, from which it seems he had invited his victim to drink tea with him on the day he perpetrated the murder, and that this was a reiterated invitation. Mackean was a good-looking, elderly man, having a thin face and clear gray eye; such a man as may be ordinarily seen beside a collection-plate at a seceding meeting-house, a post which the said Mackean had occupied in his day. All Mackean's account of the murder is apocryphal. Buchanan was a powerful man, and Mackean slender. It appeared that the latter had engaged Buchanan in writing, then suddenly clapped one hand on his eyes, and struck the fatal blow with the other. The throat of the deceased was cut through his handkerchief to the back bone of the neck, against which the razor was hacked in several places."

In his pursuit of his German studies Scott acquired, about this time, a very important assistant in Mr. Skene of Rubislaw, in Aberdeenshire; a gentleman considerably his junior, who had just returned to Scotland from a residence of several years in Saxony, where he had obtained a thorough knowledge of the language, and accumulated a better collection of German books than any to which Scott had, as yet, found access. Shortly after Mr. Skene's arrival in Edinburgh, Scott requested to be introduced to him by a mutual friend, Mr. Edmonstone of Newton, and their fondness for the same literature, with Scott's eagerness to profit by his new acquaintance's superior attainment in it, thus opened an intercourse which general similarity of tastes, and I venture to add, in many of the most important features of character, soon ripened into the familiarity of a tender friendship—"An intimacy," Mr. Skene says, in a paper before me, "of which I shall ever think with so much pride—a friendship so pure and cordial as to have been able to withstand all the vicissitudes of nearly forty years, without ever having sustained even a casual chill from unkind thought or word." Mr. Skene adds: "During the whole progress of his varied life, to that eminent station which he could not but feel he at length held in the estimation, not of his countrymen alone, but of the whole world, I never could perceive the slightest shade of variance from that simplicity of character with which he impressed me on the first hour of our meeting."

Among the common tastes which served to knit these friends together, was their love of horsemanship, in which, as in all other manly exercises, Skene highly excelled; and the fears of a French invasion becoming every day more serious, their thoughts were turned with corresponding zeal to the project of organizing a force of mounted volunteers in Scotland. "The London Light-horse had set the example"—(says Mr. Skene)—"but in truth it was to Scott's ardour that this force in the North owed its origin. Unable, by reason of his lameness, to serve amongst his friends on foot, he had nothing for it but to rouse the spirit of the moss-trooper, with which he readily inspired all who possessed the means of substituting the sabre for the musket."

On the 14th February, 1797, these friends and many more met, and drew up an offer to serve as a body of volunteer cavalry in Scotland; which offer,

* Remarks on Popular Poetry. 1830.

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being transmitted through the Duke of Buccleuch, Lord-Lieutenant of Mid-Lothian, was accepted by government. The organization of the corps proceeded rapidly; they extended their offer to serve in any part of the island in case of actual invasion; and this also being accepted, the whole arrangement was shortly completed; when Charles Maitland, Esq. of Rankeillor, was elected Major-Commandant; (Sir) William Rae of St. Catharine's, Captain; James Gordon of Craig, and George Robinson of Clermiston, Lieutenants; (Sir) William Forbes of Pitsligo, and James Skene of Rubislaw, Cornets: Walter Scott, Paymaster, Quartermaster, and Secretary; John Adams, Adjutant. But the treble duties thus devolved on Scott were found to interfere too severely with his other avocations, and Colin Mackenzie of Portmore relieved him soon afterwards from those of paymaster.

"The part of quartermaster," says Mr. Skene, "was properly selected for him, that he might be spared the rough usage of the ranks; but, notwithstanding his infirmity, he had a remarkably firm seat on horseback, and in all situations a fearless one: no fatigue ever seemed too much for him, and his zeal and animation served to sustain the enthusiasm of the whole corps, while his ready 'mot à rire,' kept up, in all, a degree of good humour and relish for the service, without which, the toil and privations of long *daily* drills would not easily have been submitted to by such a body of gentlemen. At every interval of exercise, the order, *sit at ease*, was the signal for the quartermaster to lead the squadron to merriment; every eye was intuitively turned on 'Earl Walter,' as he was familiarly called by his associates of that date, and his ready joke seldom failed to raise the ready laugh. He took his full share in all the labours and duties of the corps, had the highest pride in its progress and proficiency, and was such a trooper himself, as only a very powerful frame of body and the warmest zeal in the cause could have enabled any one to be. But his habitual good humour was the great charm: and at the daily mess (for we all dined together when in quarters) that reigned supreme."

Earl Walter's first charger, by the way, was a tall and powerful animal named *Lenore*. These daily drills appear to have been persisted in during the spring and summer of 1797; the corps spending moreover some weeks in quarters at Musselburgh. The majority of the troop having professional duties to attend to, the ordinary hour for drill was five in the morning; and when we reflect, that after some hours of hard work in this way, Scott had to produce himself regularly in the Parliament House with gown and wig, for the space of four or five hours at least, while his chamber practice, though still humble, was on the increase—and that he had found a plentiful source of new social engagements in his troop connexions—it certainly could have excited no surprise had his literary studies been found suffering total intermission during this busy period. That such was not the case, however, his correspondence and note-books afford ample evidence.

He had no turn, at this time of his life, for early rising; so that the regular attendance at the morning drills was of itself a strong evidence of his military zeal; but he must have, in spite of them, and of all other circumstances, persisted in what was the usual custom of all his earlier life, namely, the devotion of the best hours of the night to solitary study. In general, both as a young man, and in more advanced age, his constitution required a good allowance of sleep, and he, on principle, indulged in it, saying, "he was but half a man if he had not full seven hours of utter unconsciousness;" but his whole mind and temperament were, at this period, in a state of most fervent exaltation, and spirit triumphed over matter. His translation of Steinberg's Otho of Wittelsbach, is marked "1796-7;" from which, I conclude, it was finished in the latter year. The volume containing that of Meier's "Wolfred of Dromberg, a drama of chivalry," is dated 1797; and I think the reader will presently see cause to suspect that though not alluded to in his imperfect note-book these tasks must have been accomplished in the very season of the daily drills.

The letters addressed to him in March, April, and June, by Kerr of Abbotrule, George Chalmers, and his uncle at Rosebank, indicate his unabated interest in the collection of coins and ballads; and I shall now make a few extracts from his private note-book, some of which will at all events amuse the survivors of the Edinburgh Light-Horse:

"*March* 15, 1797.—Read Stanfield's trial, and the conviction appears very doubtful indeed. Surely no one could seriously believe, in 1688, that the body of the murdered bleeds at the touch of the murderer, and I see little else that directly touches Philip Stanfield. He was a very bad character, however; and tradition says, that having insulted Welsh, the wild preacher, one day in his early life, the saint called from the pulpit that God had revealed to him that this blasphemous youth would die in the sight of as many as were then assembled. It was believed, at the time, that Lady Stanfield had a hand in the assassination, or was at least privy to her son's plans; but I see nothing inconsistent with the old gentleman's having committed suicide.* The ordeal of touching the corpse was observed in Germany. They call it *barrecht*.

"*March* 27.—

'The friers of Fail
Gat never owre hard eggs, or owre thin kale;
For they made their eggs thin wi' butter,
And their kale thick wi' bread.
And the friers of Fail they made gude kale
On Fridays when they fasted;
They never wanted gear enough
As lang as their neighbours' lasted.'

"Fairy-rings.—N. B. Delrius says, the same appearance occurs wherever the witches have held their Sabbath.

"For the ballad of 'Willie's Lady,' compare Apuleius, lib. i. p. 33. . . .

"*April* 20.—The portmanteau to contain the following articles: 2 shirts; 1 black handkerchief; 1 night-cap, woollen; 1 pair pantaloons, blue; 1 flannel shirt with sleeves; 1 pair flannel drawers; 1 waistcoat; 1 pair worsted stockings or socks.

"In the slip, in cover of portmanteau, a case with shaving-things, combs, and a knife, fork, and spoon; a German pipe and tobacco-bag, flint, and steel; pipe-clay and oil, with brush for laying it on; a shoe-brush; a pair of shoes or hussar boots; a horse-picker, and other loose articles.

"Belt with the flap and portmanteau, curry comb, brush, and mane-comb, with sponge.

"Over the portmanteau the blue overalls, and a spare jacket for stable; a small horse-sheet, to cover the horse's back with, and a spare girth or two.

"In the cartouche-box, screw-driver and picker for pistol, with three or four spare flints.

"The horse-sheet may be conveniently folded below the saddle, and will save the back in a long march or bad weather. Beside the holster, two fore-feet shoes.†

"*May* 22.—Apuleius, lib. ii. . . . . Anthony-a-Wood. . . . . Mr. Jenkinson's name (now Lord Liverpool) being proposed as a difficult one to rhyme to, a lady present hit off this verse extempore. N. B. Both father and son (Lord Hawkesbury) have a peculiarity of vision.

'Happy Mr. Jenkinson,
Happy Mr. Jenkinson,
I'm sure to you
Your lady's true,
For you have got a winking son.'

"23.—Delrius. . . .

"24.—'I, John Bell, of Brackenbrig, lies under this stane;
Four of my sons laid it on my wame.
I was man of my meat, and master of my wife,
And lived in my ain house without meikle strife.

* See particulars of Stanfield's case in Lord Fountainhall's Chronological Notes of Scottish Affairs, 1680-1701, edited by Sir Walter Scott. 4to, Edinburgh, 1822. Pp. 235-236.

† Some of Scott's most intimate friends at the Bar, partly, no doubt, from entertaining political opinions of another cast, were by no means disposed to sympathize with the demonstrations of his military enthusiasm at this period. For example, one of these gentlemen thus writes to another in April, 1797:—"By the way, Scott is become the merest trooper that ever was begotten by a drunken dragoon on his trull in a hay loft. Not an idea crosses his mind, or a word his lips, that has not an allusion to some d——d instrument or evolution of the Cavalry—'draw your swords—by single files to the right of front—to the left wheel—charge.' After all, he knows little more about wheels and charges than I do about the wheels of Ezekiel, or the King of Pelew about charges of horning on six days' date. I saw them charge on Leith Walk a few days ago, and I can assure you it was by no means orderly proceeded. Clerk and I are continually obliged to open a six-pounder upon him in self-defence, but in spite of a temporary confusion, he soon rallies and returns to the attack."

Gif thou be'st a better man in thy time than I was in mine,
Tak this stane off my wame, and lay it upon thine.'

"25.—Meric Casaubon on Spirits. . . . .

"31.—'There saw we learned Maroe's golden tombe;
The way he cut an English mile in length
Thorow a rock of stone in one night's space.'

"Christopher Marlowe's Tragicall History of Dr. Faustus—a very remarkable thing. Grand subject—and grand . . . . . Copied 'Prophecy of Merlin,' from Mr. Clerk's MS.

"7.—Read Everybody's Business is Nobody's Business, by Andrew Moreton. This was one of Defoe's many *aliases*—like his pen, in parts . . . . .

'To Cuthbert, Car, and Collingwood, to Shafto and to Hall;
To every gallant generous heart that for King James did fall.'

"28.— . . . . . Anthony-a-Wood. . . . . Plain Proof of the True Father and Mother of the Pretended Prince of Wales, by W. Fuller. This fellow was pilloried for a forgery some years later. . . . . Began *Nathan der Weise*.

"June 29.—Read Introduction to a Compendium on Brief Examination, by W. S.—viz. William Stafford—though it was for a time given to no less a W. S. than William Shakspeare. A curious treatise—the Political Economy of the Elizabethan Day—worth reprinting. . . . .

"July 1.—Read Discourse of Military Discipline, by Captain Barry—a very curious account of the famous Low Countries' armies—full of military hints worth note. . . . . *Anthony Wood* again.

"3.—*Nathan der Weise*. . . . . *Delirium*. . . . .

"5.—*Gentenberg's Brast* begun.

"6.—The Bride again. Delirium."

The note-book from which I have been copying is chiefly filled with extracts from Apuleius and Anthony-a-Wood—most of them bearing, in some way, on the subject of popular superstitions. It is a pity that many leaves have been torn out; for if unmutilated, the record would probably have enabled one to guess whether he had already planned his "Essay on Fairies."

I have mentioned his business at the bar as increasing at the same time. His *fee-book* is now before me, and it shows that he made by his first year's practice £24, 3s.; by the second, £57, 15s.; by the third, £84, 4s.; by the fourth, £90; and in his fifth year at the bar—that is, from November, 1796, to July, 1797—£144, 10s.; of which £50 were fees from his father's chamber.

His friend, Charles Kerr of Abbotsule, had been residing a good deal about this time in Cumberland: indeed, he was so enraptured with the scenery of the lakes, as to take a house in Keswick, with the intention of spending half of all future years there. His letters to Scott (March, April, 1797) abound in expressions of wonder that he should continue to devote so much of his vacations to the Highlands of Scotland, "with every crag and precipice of which," says he, "I should imagine you would be familiar by this time; nay, that the goats themselves might almost claim you for an acquaintance;" while another district lay so near him, at least as well qualified "to give a swell to the fancy."

After the rising of the Court of Session in July, Scott accordingly set out on a tour to the English lakes, accompanied by his brother John, and Adam Fergusson. Their first stage was Halyards, in Tweeddale, then inhabited by his friend's father, the philosopher and historian; and they staid there for a day or two, in the course of which Scott had his first and only interview with David Ritchie, the original of his Black Dwarf.* Proceeding southwards, the tourists visited Carlisle, Penrith,—the vale of the Eamont, including Mayburgh and Brougham Castle,—Ulswater and Windermere, and at length fixed their headquarters at the then peaceful and sequestered little watering place of Gilsland, making excursions from thence to the various scenes of romantic interest which are commemorated in The Bridal of Triermain, and otherwise leading very much the sort of life depicted among the loungers of St. Ronan's Well. Scott was, on his first arrival in Gilsland, not a little engaged with the beauty of one of the young ladies lodged under the same roof with him; and it was on occasion of a visit in her company to some part of the Roman Wall, that he indited his lines—

"Take these flowers, which, purple waving,
On the ruined rampart grew," &c.†

But this was only a passing glimpse of flirtation. A week or so afterwards commenced a more serious affair.

Riding one day with Fergusson, they met, some miles from Gilsland, a young lady taking the air on horseback, whom neither of them had previously remarked, and whose appearance instantly struck both so much, that they kept her in view until they had satisfied themselves that she also was one of the party at Gilsland. The same evening there was a ball, at which Captain Scott produced himself in his regimentals, and Fergusson also thought proper to be equipped in the uniform of the Edinburgh Volunteers. There was no little rivalry among the young travellers as to who should first get presented to the unknown beauty of the morning's ride; but though both the gentlemen in scarlet had the advantage of being dancing partners, their friend succeeded in handing the fair stranger to supper—and such was his first introduction to Charlotte Margaret Carpenter.

Without the features of a regular beauty, she was rich in personal attractions; "a form that was fashioned as light as a fay's;" a complexion of the clearest and lightest olive; eyes large, deep-set, and dazzling, of the finest Italian brown; and a profusion of silken tresses, black as the raven's wing—her address hovering between the reserve of a pretty young Englishwoman who has not mingled largely in general society, and a certain natural archness and gayety that suited well with the accompaniment of a French accent. A lovelier vision, as all who remember her in the bloom of her days have assured me, could hardly have been imagined; and from that hour the fate of the young poet was fixed.

She was the daughter of Jean Charpentier, of Lyons, a devoted royalist, who held an office under government,† and Charlotte Volere, his wife. She and her only brother, Charles Charpentier, had been educated in the Protestant religion of their mother; and when their father died, which occurred in the beginning of the Revolution, Madame Charpentier made her escape with her children, first to Paris, and then to England, where they found a warm friend and protector in the late Marquis of Downshire, who had, in the course of his travels in France, formed an intimate acquaintance with the family, and, indeed, spent some time under their roof. M. Charpentier had, in his first alarm as to the coming Revolution, invested £4000 in English securities—part in a mortgage upon Lord Downshire's estates. On the mother's death, which occurred soon after her arrival in London, this nobleman took on himself the character of sole guardian to her children; and Charles Charpentier received in due time, through his interest, an appointment in the service of the East India Company, in which he had by this time risen to the lucrative situation of commercial resident at Salem. His sister was now making a little excursion, under the care of the lady who had superintended her education, Miss Jane Nicolson, a daughter of Dr. Nicolson, Dean of Exeter, and granddaughter of William Nicolson, Bishop of Carlisle, well known as the editor of "The English Historical Library." To some connexions which the learned prelate's family had ever since his time kept up in the diocese of Carlisle, Miss Carpenter owed the direction of her summer tour.

Scott's father was now in a very feeble state of health, which accounts for his first announcement of this affair being made in a letter to his mother; it is undated;—but by this time the young lady had

* See the Introduction to this Novel in the edition of 1830.

* I owe this circumstance to the recollection of Mr. Claude Russel, accountant in Edinburgh, who was one of the party. Previously I had always supposed these verses to have been inspired by Miss Carpenter.

† In several deeds which I have seen, M. Charpentier is designed "Ecuyer du roi." What the post he held was I never heard.

lived in good repute and in *very good style*. I had the misfortune of losing my father before I could know the value of such a parent. At his death we were left to the care of Lord D., who was his very great friend, and very soon after I had the affliction of losing my mother. Our taking the name of Carpenter was on my brother's going to India, to prevent any little difficulties that might have occurred. I hope now you are pleased. Lord D. could have given you every information, as he has been acquainted with all my family. You say you almost love *him*, but until your *almost* comes to a *quite*, I cannot love *you*. Before I conclude this famous epistle, I will give you a little hint—that is, not to put so many *must* in your letters—it is beginning *rather too soon*; and another thing is, that I take the liberty not to mind them much, but I expect you to mind me. You *must* take care of yourself; you *must* think of me, and believe me yours sincerely.

C. C."

To the Same.

"Carlisle, Oct. 26.

"I have only a minute before the post goes, to assure you, my dear sir, of the welcome reception of the stranger.* The very great likeness to a friend of mine will endear him to me; he shall be my constant companion, but I wish he could give me an answer to a thousand questions I have to make—one in particular, what reason have you for so many fears as you express? Have your friends changed? Pray let me know the truth—they perhaps don't like me *being French*. Do write immediately—let it be in better spirits. Et croyez-moi toujours votre sincere

C. C."

To the Same.

"October 31st.

". . . . All your apprehensions about your friends make me very uneasy. At your father's age, prejudices are not easily overcome—old people have, you know, so much more wisdom and experience, that we must be guided by them. If he has an objection on my being *French*, I excuse him with all my heart, as I don't love them myself. O how all these things plague me—when will it end? And to complete the matter, you talk of going to the West Indies. I am certain your father and uncle say you are a hot *heady* young man, quite mad, and I assure you I join with them; and I must believe, that, when you have such an idea, you have then determined to think no more of me. I begin to repent of having accepted your picture. I will send it *back again*, if you ever think again about the West Indies. Your family then would *love me* very much—to forsake them for a *stranger*, a person who does not possess half the charms and good qualities that you *imagine*. I think I hear your uncle calling you a hot heady young man. I am certain of it, and I am *generally right* in my conjectures. What does your sister say about it? I suspect that she thinks on the matter as I should do, with fears and anxieties for the happiness of her brother. If it be proper, and you think it would be *acceptable*, present my best compliments to your mother; and to my old acquaintance Captain Scott I beg to be remembered. This evening is the first ball—don't you wish to be of our party? I guess your answer—it would give me infinite pleasure. En attendant le plaisir de vous revoir, je suis toujours votre constante

CHARLOTTE."

To the Same.

"The Castle, Hartford, October 29, 1797.

"Sir,

"I received the favour of your letter. It was so manly, honourable, candid, and so full of good sense, that I think Miss Carpenter's friends cannot in any way object to the union you propose. Its taking place, when or where, will depend upon herself, as I shall write to her by this night's post. Any provision that may be given to her by her brother, you will have settled upon her and her children; and I hope, with all my heart, that every earthly happiness may attend you both. I shall be always happy to hear it, and to subscribe myself your faithful friend and obedient humble servant,

DOWNSHIRE."

(On the same sheet.)

"Carlisle, Nov. 4.

"Last night I received the enclosed for you from Lord Downshire. If it has your approbation, I shall be very glad to see you as soon as will be convenient. I have a thousand things to tell you; but let me beg of you not to think for some time of a house. I am *sure* I can convince you of the propriety and prudence of *waiting* until your father will settle things more to your satisfaction, and until I have heard from my brother. You *must* be of my way of thinking.—Adieu.

C. C."

Scott obeyed this summons, and I suppose remained in Carlisle until the Court of Session met, which is always on the 12th of November.

To W. Scott, Esq., Advocate, Edinburgh.

"Carlisle, Nov. 14th.

"Your letter never could have come in a more favourable moment. Any thing you could have said would have been well received. You surprise me much at the regret you express you had of leaving Carlisle. Indeed I can't believe it was on my account, I was so uncommonly stupid. I don't know what could be the matter with me, I was so very low, and felt really ill: it was even a trouble to speak. The settling of our little plans—all looked so much in earnest—that I began reflecting more seriously than I generally do, or *approve of*. I don't think that very thoughtful people ever can be happy. As this is my maxim, adieu to all thoughts. I have made a determination of being pleased with every thing, and with every body in Edinburgh; a wise system for happiness, is it not? I enclose the lock. I have had almost all my hair cut off. Miss Nicolson has taken some, which she sends to London to be made to something, but this you are not to know of, as she intends to present it to you. * * * * I am happy to hear of your father's being better pleased as to money matters; it will come at last; don't let that trifle disturb you. Adieu, Monsieur, j'ai l'honneur d'etre votre très humble et très

Obeissante

C. C."

"Carlisle, Nov. 27th.

"You have made me very *triste* all day. Pray never more complain of being poor. Are you not ten times richer than I am? Depend on yourself and your profession. I have no doubt you will rise very high, and be a *great rich man*, but we should look down to be contented with our lot, and banish all disagreeable thoughts. We shall do very well. I am very sorry to hear you have such a *bad head*. I hope I shall nurse away all your aches. I think you write too much. When I am *mistress*, I shall not allow it. How very angry I should be with you if you were to part with *Lenore*. Do you really believe I should think it an *unnecessary expense*, where your health and pleasure can be concerned? I have a better opinion of you, and I am very glad you don't give up the cavalry, as I love any thing that is *stylish*. Don't forget to find a stand for the old carriage, as I shall like to keep it, in case we should have to go any journey; it is so much more convenient than the post chaises, and will do very well till we can keep *our carriage*. What an idea of yours was that to mention where you wish to have *your bones laid!* If you were married, I should think you were tired of me. A very pretty compliment *before marriage*. I hope sincerely that I shall not live to see that day. If you always have those cheerful thoughts, how very pleasant and gay you must be.

"Adieu, my dearest friend, take care of yourself if you love me, as I have *no wish* that you should *visit* that *beautiful* and *romantic* scene, the burying-place. Adieu, once more, and believe that you are loved very sincerely by

C. C."

"Dec. 10th.

"If I could but really believe that my letter gave you only half the pleasure you express, I should almost think, my dearest Scott, that I should get very fond of writing, merely for the pleasure to *indulge* you—that is saying a great deal. I hope you are sensible of the compliment I pay you, and don't expect I shall *always* be so pretty behaved. You may depend on me, my dearest friend, for fixing as *early* a day as I possibly can; and if it happens to be not quite so soon as you wish, you must not be angry with me. It is very unlucky you are such a bad housekeeper—as I am no better. I shall try. I hope to have very soon the pleasure of seeing you, and to tell you how much I love you; but I wish the first fortnight was over. With all my love, and those sort of pretty things—adieu.

CHARLOTTE.

"P. S. *Etudiez votre Francais.* Remember you are to teach me Italian in return, but I shall be but a stupid scholar. *Aimez Charlotte.*"

"Carlisle, Dec. 14th.

* * * * * "I heard last night from my friends in Lon-

* A miniature of Scott.

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don, and I shall certainly have the deed this week. I will send it to you directly; but not to lose so much time, as you have been reckoning, I will prevent any little delay that might happen by the post, by fixing already next Wednesday for your coming here, and on Thursday the 21st, Oh, my dear Scott—on that day I shall be yours for ever.

C. C.

"*P. S.*—Arrange it so that we shall see none of your family the night of our arrival. I shall be so tired, and such a fright, I should not be seen to advantage."

To these extracts I may add the following from the first leaf of an old black-letter Bible at Abbotsford:

"*Secundum morem majorum hæc de familiâ Gualteri Scott, Jurisconsulti Edinensis, in librum hunc sacrum manu suâ conscripta sunt.*

"*Gualterus Scott, filius Gualteri Scott et Annæ Rutherford, natus erat apud Edinam 15mo die Augusti, A. D.* 1771.

"*Socius Facultatis Juridicæ Edinensis receptus erat 11mo die Julii, A. D.* 1792

"*In ecclesiam Sanctæ Mariæ apud Carlisle, uxorem duxit Margaretam Charlottam Carpenter, filiam quondam Joannis Charpentier et Charlottæ Volere, Lugdunensem, 24to die Decembris,* 1797."

CHAPTER IX.

EARLY MARRIED LIFE—LASSWADE COTTAGE—MONK LEWIS—TRANSLATION OF GOETZ VON BERLICHINGEN, PUBLISHED—VISIT TO LONDON—HOUSE OF ASPEN—DEATH OF SCOTT'S FATHER—FIRST ORIGINAL BALLADS—GLENFINLAS, &C.—UNPUBLISHED FRAGMENTS—APPOINTMENT TO THE SHERIFFSHIP OF SELKIRKSHIRE—1798-1799.

SCOTT carried his bride to a lodging in George Street, Edinburgh; a house which he had taken in South Castle Street not being quite prepared for her reception. The first fortnight, to which she had looked with such anxiety, was, I believe, more than sufficient to convince her husband's family that, however rashly he had formed the connexion, she had the sterling qualities of a good wife. Notwithstanding the little leaning to the pomps and vanities of the world, which her letters have not concealed, she had made up her mind to find her happiness in better things; and so long as their circumstances continued narrow, no woman could have conformed herself to them with more of good feeling and good sense. Some habits, new in the quiet domestic circles of Edinburgh citizens, did not escape criticism; and in particular, I have heard herself, in her most prosperous days, laugh heartily at the remonstrances of her George Street landlady, when it was discovered that the *southron* lodger chose to sit usually, and not on high occasions merely, in her drawing-room,—on which subject the mother-in-law was disposed to take the thrifty old-fashioned dame's side.

I cannot fancy that Lady Scott's manners or ideas could ever have amalgamated very well with those of her husband's parents; but the feeble state of the old gentleman's health prevented her from seeing them constantly; and without any affectation of strict intimacy, they soon were, and always continued to be, very good friends. Anne Scott, the delicate sister to whom the Ashestiel Memoir alludes so tenderly, speedily formed a warm and sincere attachment for the stranger; but death, in a short time, carried off that interesting creature, who seems to have had much of her brother's imaginative and romantic temperament, without his power of controlling it.

Mrs. Scott's arrival was welcomed with unmingled delight by the brothers of *the Mountain*. The two ladies who had formerly given life and grace to their society were both recently married. We have seen Miss Erskine's letter of farewell; and I have before me another not less affectionate, written when Miss Cranstoun gave her hand (a few months later) to Godfrey Wenceslaus, Count of Purgstall, a nobleman of large possessions in Styria, who had been spending some time in Edinburgh. Scott's house in South Castle treet,—(soon after exchanged for one of the same sort in North Castle Street, which he purchased, and inhabited down to 1826)—became now to *the Mountain* what Cranstoun's and Erskine's had been while their accomplished sisters remained with them. The officers of the Light Horse, too, established a club among themselves, supping once a-week at each other's houses in rotation. The young lady thus found two somewhat different, but both highly agreeable, circles ready to receive her with cordial kindness; and the evening hours passed in a round of innocent gayety, all the arrangements being conducted in a simple and inexpensive fashion, suitable to young people whose days were mostly laborious, and very few of their purses heavy. Scott and Erskine had always been fond of the theatre; the pretty bride was passionately so—and I doubt if they ever spent a week in Edinburgh without indulging themselves in this amusement. But regular dinners and crowded assemblies were in those years quite unthought of. Perhaps nowhere could have been found a society on so small a scale, including more of vigorous intellect, varied information, elegant tastes, and real virtue, affection, and mutual confidence. How often have I heard its members, in the midst of the wealth and honours which most of them in due season attained, sigh over the recollection of those humbler days, when love and ambition were young and buoyant—and no difference of opinion was able to bring even a momentary chill over the warmth of friendship.

"You will imagine," writes the Countess Purgstall to Scott, from one of her Styrian castles, "how my heart burnt within me, my dear, dear friend, while I read your thrice welcome letter. Had all the gods and goddesses, from Saturn to La Liberté, laid their heads together, they could not have presented me with any thing that so accorded with my fondest wishes. To have a conviction that those I love are happy, and don't forget me—I have no way to express my feelings—they come in a flood and destroy me. Could my George but light on another Charlotte, there would be but one crook left in my lot—to wit, that Reggersburg does not serve as a vista for the Parliament Square.* Would some earthquake engulf the vile tract between, or the spirit of our rock introduce me to Jack the Giant Queller's shoemaker: Lord, Lord, how delightful! Could I choose, I should just for the present patronise the shoemaker, and then the moment I got you all snug in this old hall, steal the shoes and lock them away till the indignation of the Lord passes by poor Old England! Earl Walter would play the devil with me, but his Charlotte's smiles would speak thanks ineffable, and the angry clouds pass as before the sun in his strength. How divinely your spectre scenes would come in here. Surely there is no vanity in saying that earth has no mountains like ours. O, how delightful to see the lady that is blessed with Earl Walter's love, and that had mind enough to discover the blessing. Some kind post, I hope, will soon tell me that your happiness is enlarged, in the only way it can be enlarged, for you have no chance now I think of taking Buonaparte prisoner. What sort of a genius will he be is a very anxious speculation indeed; whether the philosopher, the lawyer, the antiquary, the poet, or the hero, will prevail—the spirit whispers unto me a happy *melange* of the two last—he will lisp in numbers and kick at *la Nourrice*. On his arrival present my fondest wishes to his honour, and don't, pray, give him a name out of your list of round-table knights, but some simple Christian appellation from the House of Harden. And is it then true, my God, that Earl Walter is a Benedick, and that I am in Styria? Well, bless us all, prays the separated from her brethren.

J. A. P."

"Hainfeld, July 20, 1798."

Another extract from the *Family Bible* may close this letter—"M. C. Scott puerum edidit 18to die Octobris, 1778, qui postero die obiit apud Edinam."

In the summer of this year Scott had hired a pretty cottage at Lasswade, on the Esk, about six miles from Edinburgh, and there, as the back of Madame

* The ancient castle of Reggersburg (if engravings may be trusted, one of the most magnificent in Germany) was the chief seat of the Purgstalls. In situation and extent it seems to resemble the castle of Stirling. The Countess writes thus, about the same time, to another of *the Mountain*:—"As for Scott and his sweet little wife, I consider them as a sort of papa and mamma to you all, and am happy the gods have ordered it so."

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de P.'s letter shows, he received it from the hands of Professor Stewart. It is a small house, but with one room of good dimensions, which Mrs. Scott's taste set off to advantage at very humble cost—a paddock or two—and a garden (commanding a most beautiful view) in which Scott delighted to train his flowers and creepers. Never, I have heard him say, was he prouder of his handywork than when he had completed the fashioning of a rustic archway, now overgrown with hoary ivy, by way of ornament to the entrance from the Edinburgh road. In this retreat they spent some happy summers, receiving the visits of their few chosen friends from the neighbouring city, and wandering at will amidst some of the most romantic scenery that Scotland can boast—Scott's dearest haunt in the days of his boyish ramblings. They had neighbours, too, who were not slow to cultivate their acquaintance. With the Clerks of Pennycuick, with Mackenzie, the Man of Feeling, who then occupied the charming villa of Auchendinny, and with Lord Woodhouselee, Scott had from an earlier date been familiar; and it was while at Lasswade that he formed intimacies, even more important in their results, with the noble families of Melville and Buccleuch, both of whom have castles in the same valley.

"Sweet are the paths, O passing sweet,
By Esk's fair streams that run,
O'er airy steep, thro' copsewood deep,
Impervious to the sun;

"From that fair dome where suit is paid
By blast of bugle free,*
To Auchendinny's hazel shade,
And haunted Woodhouslee.

"Who knows not Melville's beechy grove,
And Roslin's rocky glen;
Dalkeith, which all the virtues love,
And classic Hawthornden?"

Another verse reminds us that

'There the rapt poet's step may rove;"

and it was amidst these delicious solitudes that he did produce the pieces which laid the imperishable foundations of all his fame. It was here that when his warm heart was beating with young and happy love, and his whole mind and spirit were nerved by new motives for exertion; it was here, that in the ripened glow of manhood he seems to have first felt something of his real strength, and poured himself out in those splendid original ballads which were at once to fix his name.

I must, however, approach these more leisurely. When William Erskine was in London in the spring of this year, he happened to meet in society with Matthew Gregory Lewis, M. P. for Hindon, whose romance of "The Monk," with the ballads which it included, had made for him, in those barren days, a brilliant reputation. This good-natured fopling, the pet and plaything of certain fashionable circles, was then busy with that miscellany which at length came out in 1801, under the name of "Tales of Wonder," and was beating up in all quarters for contributions. Erskine showed Lewis Scott's versions of "Lenore" and the "Wild Huntsman;" and when he mentioned that this friend had other specimens of the German *diablerie* in his portfolio, the collector anxiously requested that Scott might be enlisted in his cause. The brushwood splendour of "The Monk's" fame,

"The false and foolish fire that's whiskt about
By popular air, and glares, and then goes out,"†

had a dazzling influence among the unknown aspirants of Edinburgh; and Scott, who was perhaps at all times rather disposed to hold popular favour as the surest test of literary merit, and who certainly continued through life to over-estimate all talents except his own, considered this invitation as a very flattering compliment. He immediately wrote to Lewis, placing whatever pieces he had translated and imitated from the German "*Volkslieder*" at his disposal. The following is the first of Lewis's letters to him that has been preserved—it is without date, but marked by Scott "1798."

To Walter Scott, Esq. Advocate, Edinburgh.

"Sir,

"I cannot delay expressing to you how much I feel obliged to you, both for the permission to publish the ballads I requested, and for the handsome manner in which that permission was granted. The plan I have proposed to myself is to collect all the *marvellous* ballads which I can lay hands upon. Ancient as well as modern will be comprised in my design; and I shall even allow a place to Sir Gawaine's Foul Ladye, and the Ghost that came to Margaret's door and tirled at the pin. But as a ghost or a witch is a *sine qua non* ingredient in all the dishes of which I mean to compose my hobgoblin repast, I am afraid the 'Lied von Treue' does not come within the plan. With regard to the romance in 'Claudina von Villa Bella,' if I am not mistaken, it is only a fragment in the original; but, should you have finished it, you will oblige me much by letting me have a copy of it, as well as of the other *marvellous* traditionary ballads you were so good as to offer me.

"Should you be in Edinburgh when I arrive there, I shall request Erskine to contrive an opportunity for my returning my personal thanks. Meanwhile, I beg you to believe me your most obedient and obliged

M. G. Lewis."

When Lewis reached Edinburgh, he met Scott accordingly, and the latter told Allan Cunningham, thirty years afterwards, that he thought he had never felt such elation as when the "Monk" invited him to dine with him for the first time at his hotel. Since he gazed on Burns in his seventeenth year, he had seen no one enjoying, by general consent, the fame of a poet; and Lewis, whatever Scott might, on maturer consideration, think of his title to such fame, had certainly done him no small service; for the ballads of "Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogine," and "Durandarte," had rekindled effectually in his breast the spark of poetical ambition. Lady Charlotte Campbell, (now Bury,) always distinguished by her passion for elegant letters, was ready, "in pride of rank, in beauty's bloom," to do the honours of Scotland to the "Lion of Mayfair;" and I believe Scott's first introduction to Lewis took place at one of her Ladyship's parties. But they met frequently, and, among other places, at Dalkeith—as witness one of Scott's marginal notes, written in 1825, on Lord Byron's Diary.—"Poor fellow," says Byron, "he died a martyr to his new riches—of a second visit to Jamaica

'I'd give the lands of Deloraine
Dark Musgrave were alive again;'

"that is,

'I would give many a sugar-cane
Monk Lewis were alive again.'"

To which Scott adds:—"I would pay my share! how few friends one has whose faults are only ridiculous. His visit was one of humanity to ameliorate the condition of his slaves. He did much good by stealth, and was a most generous creature . . . . Lewis was fonder of great people than he ought to have been, either as a man of talent or as a man of fashion. He had always dukes and duchesses in his mouth, and was pathetically fond of any one that had a title. You would have sworn he had been a *parvenu* of yesterday, yet he had lived all his life in good society . . . . Mat had queerish eyes—they projected like those of some insects, and were flattish on the orbit. His person was extremely small and boyish—he was indeed the least man I ever saw, to be strictly well and neatly made. I remember a picture of him by Saunders being handed round at Dalkeith House. The artist had ingeniously flung a dark folding-mantle around the form, under which was half-hid a dagger, a dark lantern, or some such cut-throat appurtenance; with all this the features were preserved and ennobled. It passed from hand to hand into that of Henry, Duke of Buccleuch, who, hearing the gene-

* Pennycuick. † Oldham.

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ral voice affirm that it was very like, said aloud, 'Like Mat Lewis! Why that picture's like A MAN!' He looked, and lo, Mat Lewis's head was at his elbow. This boyishness went through life with him. He was a child, and a spoiled child, but a child of high imagination; and so he wasted himself on ghost-stories and German romances. He had the finest ear for rhythm I ever met with—finer than Byron's."

During Lewis's stay in Scotland this year, he spent a day or two with Scott at Musselburgh, where the yeomanry corps were in quarters. Scott received him in his lodgings, under the roof of an ancient dame, who afforded him much amusement by her daily colloquies with the fishwomen—the *Mucklebackets* of the place. His delight in studying the dialect of these people is well remembered by the survivors of the cavalry, and must have astonished the stranger dandy. While walking about before dinner on one of these days, Mr. Skene's recitation of the German *Kriegslied*, "Der Abschied's Tag ist da," (the day of departure is come,) delighted both Lewis and Scott; and the latter produced next morning that spirited little piece in the same measure, which, embodying the volunteer ardour of the time, was forthwith adopted as the troop-song of the Edinburgh Light Horse.

In January, 1799, Mr. Lewis appears negotiating with a bookseller, named Bell, for the publication of Scott's version of Goethe's Tragedy, "Goetz von Berlichingen of the Iron Hand." Bell seems finally to have purchased the copyright for twenty-five guineas, and twenty-five more to be paid in case of a second edition—which was never called for until long after the copyright had expired. Lewis writes, "I have made him distinctly understand, that, if you accept so small a sum, it will be only because this is your first publication." The edition of "Lenore" and the "Yäger," in 1796, had been completely forgotten; and Lewis thought of those ballads exactly as if they had been MS. contributions to his own "Tales of Wonder," still lingering on the threshold of the press. The *Goetz* appeared accordingly, with Scott's name on the titlepage, in the following February.

In March, 1799, he carried his wife to London, this being the first time that he had seen the metropolis since the days of his infancy. The acquaintance of Lewis served to introduce him to some literary and fashionable society, with which he was much amused; but his great anxiety was to examine the antiquities of the Tower and Westminster Abbey, and to make some researches among the MSS. of the British Museum. He found his Goetz spoken of favourably, on the whole, by the critics of the time; but it does not appear to have attracted general attention. The truth is, that, to have given Goethe any thing like a fair chance with the English public, his first drama ought to have been translated at least ten years before. The imitators had been more fortunate than the masters, and this work, which constitutes one of the most important landmarks in the history of German literature, had not come even into Scott's hands, until he had familiarized himself with the ideas which it first opened, in the feeble and puny mimicries of writers already forgotten. He readily discovered the vast gulf which separated Goethe from the German dramatists on whom he had heretofore been employing himself; but the public in general drew no such distinctions, and the English Goetz was soon afterwards condemned to oblivion through the unsparing ridicule showered on whatever bore the name of *German play*, by the inimitable caricature of The Rovers.

The tragedy of Goethe, however, has in truth nothing in common with the wild absurdities against which Canning and Ellis had levelled the arrows of their wit. It is a broad, bold, free, and most picturesque delineation of real characters, manners, and events; the first fruits, in a word, of that passionate admiration for Shakspeare, to which all that is excellent in the recent imaginative literature of Germany must be traced. With what delight must Scott have found the scope and manner of our Elizabethan drama revived on a foreign stage at the call of a real master: with what double delight must he have seen Goethe seizing, for the noblest purposes of art, men and modes of life, scenes, incidents, and transactions, all claiming near kindred with those that had from boyhood formed the chosen theme of his own sympathy and reflection. In the baronial robbers of the Rhine, stern, bloody, and rapacious, but frank, generous, and, after their fashion, courteous; in their forays upon each other's domains, the besieged castles, the plundered herds, the captive knights, the browbeaten bishop, and the baffled liege-lord, who vainly strove to quell all these turbulences, Scott had before him a vivid image of the life of his own and the rival Border clans, familiarized to him by a hundred nameless minstrels. If it be doubtful whether, but for "Percy's Reliques," he would ever have thought of editing their ballads, I think it not less so whether, but for the Ironhanded Goetz, it would ever have flashed upon his mind, that in the wild traditions which these recorded, he had been unconsciously assembling materials for more works of high art than the longest life could serve him to elaborate.

As the version of the Goetz has at length been included in Scott's poetical works, I need not make it the subject of more detailed observation here. The reader who turns to it for the first time will be no less struck than I was under similar circumstances a dozen years ago, with the many points of resemblance between the tone and spirit of Goethe's delineation, and that afterwards adopted by the translator in some of the most remarkable of his original works. One example, however, may be forgiven.

"*A loud alarm, with shouts and firing*—SELBISS *is borne in wounded, by two Troopers.*

Selbiss. Leave me here, and hasten to Goetz.

1st Trooper. Let us stay—you need our aid.

Sel. Get one of you on the watch-tower, and tell me how it goes.

1st Troop. How shall I get up?

2d Troop. Get upon my shoulder; you can then reach the ruined part.

1st Troop. (*On the tower.*) Alas! Alas!

Sel. What seest thou?

Troop. Your cavaliers fly to the hill.

Sel. Hellish cowards! I would that they stood, and that I had a ball through my head! Ride one of you at full speed—Curse and thunder them back to the field! See'st thou Goetz?

Troop. I see the three black feathers in the midst of the tumult.

Sel. Swim, brave swimmer—I lie here.

Troop. A white plume! Whose is that?

Sel. The Captain.

Troop. Goetz gallops upon him—Crash—down he goes.

Sel. The Captain?

Troop. Yes.

Sel. Bravo!—bravo!

Troop. Alas! alas! I see Goetz no more.

Sel. Then die, Selbiss!

Troop. A dreadful tumult where he stood. George's blue plume vanishes too.

Sel. Climb higher—See'st thou Lerse?

Troop. No—every thing is in confusion.

Sel. No further—come down—tell me no more.

Troop. I cannot—bravo! I see Goetz.

Sel. On horseback?

Troop. Ay, ay—high on horseback—victory!—they fly!

Sel. The Imperialists?

Troop. Standard and all—Goetz behind them—he has it—he has it!"

The first hint of this (as of what not in poetry?) may be found in the Iliad—where Helen points out the persons of the Greek heroes in the fight raging below, to old Priam seated on the walls of Troy; and Shakspeare makes some use of the same idea in his Julius Cæsar. But who does not recognise in Goethe's drama the true original of the death-scene of Marmion, and the storm in Ivanhoe?

Scott executed about the same time his "House of Aspen," rather a *rifacimento* than a translation from one of the minor dramatists that had crowd-

ed to partake the popularity of Goetz of the Iron-hand. It also was sent to Lewis in London, where, having first been read and much recommended by the celebrated actress, Mrs. Easton, it was taken up by Kemble, and I believe actually put in rehearsal for the stage. If so, the trial did not encourage further preparation, and the notion was abandoned. Discovering the play thirty years after among his papers, Scott sent it to one of the literary almanacks (the Keepsake of 1829.) In the advertisement, he says, "he had lately chanced to look over these scenes with feelings very different from those of the adventurous period of his literary life during which they were written, and yet with such, perhaps, as a reformed libertine might regard the illegitimate production of an early amour." He adds, "there is something to be ashamed of certainly; but, after all, paternal vanity whispers that the child has some resemblance to the father." This piece being also now included in the general edition of his works, I shall not dwell upon it here. It owes its most effective scenes to the *Secret Tribunal*, which fountain of terror had first been disclosed by Goethe, and had by this time lost much of its effect through the "clumsy alacrity" of a hundred followers. Scott's scenes are interspersed with some lyrics, the numbers of which, at least, are worthy of attention. One has the metre—and not a little of the spirit—of the boat-song of Roderick Dhu and Clan Alpin.

"Joy to the victors, the sons of old Aspen,
Joy to the race of the battle and scar;
Glory's proud garland triumphantly grasping,
Generous in peace, and victorious in war.
Honour acquiring,
Valour inspiring,
Bursting resistless through foemen they go,
War axes wielding,
Broken ranks yielding,
Till from the battle proud Roderick retiring,
Yields in wild rout the fair palm to his foe."

Another is the first draft of "the Maid of Toro;" and perhaps he had forgotten the more perfect copy of that song when he sent the original to the Keepsake.

I incline to believe that the "House of Aspen" was written after Scott's return from London; but it has been mentioned in the same page with the "Goetz," to avoid any recurrence to either the German or the Germanized dramas. His return was accelerated by the domestic calamity which forms the subject of the following letter:—

To Mrs. Scott, George's Square, Edinburgh.

"London, 19th April, 1799.

"My dear Mother,

"I cannot express the feelings with which I sit down to the discharge of my present melancholy duty, nor how much I regret the accident which has removed me from Edinburgh, at a time, of all others, when I should have wished to administer to your distress all the consolation which sympathy and affection could have afforded. Your own principles of virtue and religion will, however, I well know, be your best support in this heaviest of human afflictions. The removal of my regretted parent from this earthly scene, is to him, doubtless, the happiest change, if the firmest integrity and the best spent life can entitle us to judge of the state of our departed friends. When we reflect upon this, we ought almost to suppress the selfish feelings of regret that he was not spared to us a little longer, especially when we consider that it was not the will of Heaven that he should share the most inestimable of its earthly blessings—such a portion of health as might have enabled him to enjoy his family. To my dear father, then, the putting off this mortal mask was happiness, and to us who remain, a lesson so to live that we also may have hope in our latter end; and with you, my dearest Mother, remain many blessings and some duties, a grateful recollection of which will, I am sure, contribute to calm the current of your affliction. The affection and attention which you have a right to expect from your children, and which I consider as the best tribute we can pay to the memory of the parent we have lost, will also, I am sure, contribute its full share to the alleviation of your distress. The situation of Charlotte's health, in its present delicate state, prevented me from setting off directly for Scotland, when I heard that immediate danger was apprehended. I am now glad I did not do so, as I could not with the utmost expedition have reached Edinburgh before the lamented event had taken place. The situation of my affairs must detain me here for a few days more; the instant I can, I will set off for Scotland. I need not tell you not even to attempt to answer this letter—such an exertion would be both unnecessary and improper. John or Tom will let me know how my sister and you do. I am, ever, dear Mother, your dutiful and affectionate son,

W. S."

"P. S.—Permit me, my dear Madam, to add a line to Scott's letter, to express to you how sincerely I feel for your loss, and how much I regret that I am not near you, to try by the most tender care to soften the pain that so great a misfortune must inflict on you, and on all those who had the happiness of being connected with him. I hope soon to have the pleasure of returning to you, and to convince you of the sincere affection of your daughter,

M. C. S."

The death of this worthy man, in his 70th year, after a long series of feeble health and suffering, was an event which could only be regarded as a great deliverance to himself. He had had a succession of paralytic attacks, under which, mind as well as body had by degrees been laid quite prostrate. When the first Chronicles of the Canongate appeared, a near relation of the family said to me—"I had been out of Scotland for some time, and did not know of my good friend's illness, until I reached Edinburgh, a few months before his death. Walter carried me to visit him, and warned me that I should see a great change. I saw the very scene that is here painted of the elder Croftangry's sickroom—not a feature different—poor Anne Scott, the gentlest of creatures, was treated by the fretful patient precisely like this niece." *

I have lived to see the curtain rise and fall once more on a like scene.

Mr. Thomas Scott continued to manage his father's business. He married early; he was in his circle of society extremely popular; and his prospects seemed fair in all things. The property left by the old gentleman was less than had been expected, but sufficient to make ample provision for his widow, and a not inconsiderable addition to the resources of those among whom the remainder was divided.

Scott's mother and sister, both much exhausted with their attendance on a protracted sickbed, and the latter already in the first stage of the malady which in two years more carried her also to her grave, spent the greater part of the following summer and autumn in his cottage at Lasswade.

There he was now again labouring assiduously in the service of Lewis's "hobgoblin repast," and the specimens of his friend's letters on his contributions, as they were successively forwarded to London, which were printed by way of appendix to his Essay on Popular Poetry, in 1830, may perhaps be sufficient for the reader's curiosity. The versions from Bürger were, in consequence of Lewis's remarks, somewhat corrected: and indeed, although Scott speaks of himself as having paid no attention, "*at the time*," to the lectures of his "martinet in rhymes and numbers"—("lectures which were," he adds, "severe enough, but useful eventually," as "forcing on a young and careless versifier criticisms absolutely necessary to his future success")—it is certain that his memory had in some degree deceived him when he used this language, for, of all the false rhymes and Scotticisms which Lewis had pointed out in these "lectures," hardly one appears in the printed copies of the ballads contributed by Scott to the Tales of Wonder.

As to his imperfect *rhymes* of this period, I have no doubt he owed them to his recent zeal about collecting the ballads of the Border. He had, in his familiarity with compositions so remarkable for merits of a higher order, ceased to be offended, as in the days of his devotion to Langhorne and Meikle

* See Chronicles, Waverley Novels, vol. xli., p. 12.

he would probably have been, with their loose and vague assonances, which are often, in fact, not rhymes at all; a license pardonable enough in real minstrelsy, meant to be chanted to moss-troopers with the accompanying tones of the warpipe, but certainly not worthy of imitation in verses written for the eye of a polished age. Of this carelessness as to rhyme, we see little or nothing in our few specimens of his boyish verse; and it does not occur, to any extent that has ever been thought worth notice, in his great works.

But Lewis's collection did not engross the leisure of this summer. It produced also what Scott justly calls his "first serious attempts in verse;" and of these the earliest appears to have been the Glenfinlas. Here the scene is laid in the most favourite district of his favourite Perthshire Highlands; and the Gælic tradition on which it is founded was far more likely to draw out the secret strength of his genius, as well as to arrest the feelings of his countrymen, than any subject with which the stores of German *diableries* could have supplied him. It has been alleged, however, that the poet makes a German use of his Scottish materials; that the legend, as briefly told in the simple prose of his preface, is more *affecting* than the lofty and sonorous stanzas themselves that the vague terror of the original dream loses, instead of gaining by the expanded elaboration of the detail. There may be something in these objections: but no man can pretend to be an impartial critic of the piece which first awoke his own childish ear to the power of poetry and the melody of verse.

The next of these compositions was, I believe, the Eve of St. John, in which Scott repeoples the tower of Smailholm, the awe-inspiring haunt of his infancy; and here he touches, for the first time, the one superstition which can still be appealed to with full and perfect effect; the only one which lingers in minds long since weaned from all sympathy with the machinery of witches and goblins. And surely this mystery was never touched with more thrilling skill than in that noble ballad. It is the first of his original pieces, too, in which he uses the measure of his own favourite Minstrels; a measure which the monotony of mediocrity had long and successfully been labouring to degrade, but in itself adequate to the expression of the highest thoughts as well as the gentlest emotions, and capable, in fit hands, of as rich a variety of music as any other of modern times. This was written at Mertoun-house in the autumn of 1799. Some dilapidations had taken place in the tower of Smailholm, and Harden, being informed of the fact, and entreated with needless earnestness by his kinsman to arrest the hand of the spoiler, requested playfully a ballad, of which Smailholm should be the scene, as the price of his assent. The stanza in which the groves of Mertoun are alluded to has been quoted in a preceding page.

Then came The Gray Brother, founded on another superstition, which seems to have been almost as ancient as the belief in ghosts; namely, that the holiest service of the altar cannot go on in the presence of an unclean person—a heinous sinner unconfessed and unabsolved. The fragmentary form of this poem greatly heightens the awfulness of its impression; and in construction and metre, the verses which really belong to the story appear to me the happiest that have ever been produced expressly in imitation of the ballad of the middle age. In the stanzas, previously quoted, on the scenery of the Esk, however beautiful in themselves, and however interesting now as marking the locality of the composition, he must be allowed to have lapsed into another strain, and produced a *pannus purpureus* which interferes with and mars the general texture.

He wrote at the same period the fine chivalrous ballad, entitled The Fire-King, in which there is more than enough to make us forgive the machinery. It was also in the course of this autumn that he first visited Bothwell Castle, the seat of Archibald Lord Douglas, who had married the Lady Frances Scott, sister to Henry, Duke of Buccleuch; a woman whose many amiable virtues were combined with extraordinary strength of mind, and who had, from the first introduction of the young poet at Dalkeith, formed high anticipations of his future career. Lady Douglas was one of his dearest friends through life; and now, under her roof, he met with one whose abilities and accomplishments not less qualified her to estimate him, and who still survives to lament the only event that could have interrupted their cordial confidence—the Lady Louisa Stuart, daughter of the celebrated John, Earl of Bute. These ladies, who were sisters in mind, feeling, and affection, he visited among scenes the nobles and most interesting that all Scotland can show—alike famous in history and romance; and he was not unwilling to make Bothwell and Blantyre the subject of another ballad. His purpose was never completed. I think, however, the reader will not complain of my introducing the fragment which I have found among his papers.

"When fruitful Clydesdale's apple-bowers
Are mellowing in the noon;
When sighs round Pembroke's ruin'd towers
The sultry breath of June;

"When Clyde, despite his sheltering wood,
Must leave his channel dry;
And vainly o'er the limpid flood
The angler guides his fly;

"If chance, by Bothwell's lovely braes
A wanderer thou hast been,
Or bid thee from the summer's blaze
In Blantyre's bowers of green,

"Full where the copsewood opens wild
Thy pilgrim step hath staid,
Where Bothwell's towers in ruin piled
O'erlook the verdant glade;

"And many a tale of love and fear
Hath mingled with the scene—
Of Bothwell's banks that bloom'd so dear,
And Bothwell's bonny Jean.

"O, if with rugged minstrel lays
Unsated be thy ear,
And thou of deeds of other days
Another tale wilt hear,

"Then all beneath the spreading beech
Flung careless on the lea,
The Gothic muse the tale shall teach
Of Bothwell's sisters three.

"Wight Wallace stood on Deckmont head,
He blew his bugle round,
Till the wild bull in Cadyow wood
Has started at the sound.

"St. George's cross, o'er Bothwell hung,
Was waving far and wide,
And from the lofty turret flung
Its crimson blaze on Clyde;

"And rising at the bugle blast
That mark'd the Scottish foe,
Old England's yeomen muster'd fast,
And bent the Norman bow.

"Tall in the midst Sir Aylmer rose,
Proud Pembroke's Earl was he—
While"—

One morning, during his visit to Bothwell, was spent on an excursion to the ruins of Craignethan Castle, the seat, in former days, of the great Evandale branch of the house of Hamilton, but now the property of Lord Douglas; and the poet expressed such rapture with the scenery, that his hosts urged him to accept, for his lifetime, the use of a small habitable house, enclosed within the circuit of the ancient walls. This offer was not at once declined; but circumstances occurred before the end of the year, which rendered it impossible for him to establish his summer residence in Lanarkshire. The castle of Craignethan is the original of his "Tillietudlem."

Another imperfect ballad, in which he had meant to blend together two legends familiar to every reader of Scottish history and romance, has been found in the same portfolio, and the handwriting proves it to be of the same early date. Though

long and very unfinished, it contains so many touches of his best manner that I cannot withhold

THE SHEPHERD'S TALE.

* * * * * * * *

And ne'er but once, my son, he says,
Was yon sad cavern trod,
In persecution's iron days,
When the land was left by God.

From Bewlie bog, with slaughter red,
A wanderer hither drew,
And oft he stopt and turned his head,
As by fits the night wind blew;

For trampling round by Cheviot edge
Were heard the troopers keen,
And frequent from the Whitelaw ridge
The death-shot flashed between.

The moonbeams through the misty shower
On you dark cavern fell;
Through the cloudy night, the snow gleamed white,
Which sunbeam ne'er could quell.

"Yon cavern dark is rough and rude,
And cold its jaws of snow;
But more rough and rude are the men of blood,
That hunt my life below;

"Yon spell-bound den, as the aged tell,
Was hewn by demon's hands;
But I had lourd* melle with the fiends of hell
Than with Clavers and his band."

He heard the deep-mouthed bloodhound bark,
He heard the horses neigh,
He plunged him in the cavern dark,
And downward sped his way.

Now faintly down the winding path
Came the cry of the faulting hound,
And the muttered oath of baulked wrath
Was lost in hollow sound.

He threw him on the flinted floor,
And held his breath for fear;
He rose, and bitter cursed his foes,
As the sounds died on his ear.

"O bare thine arm, thou battling Lord,
For Scotland's wandering band;
Dash from the oppressor's grasp the sword,
And sweep him from the land!

"Forget not thou thy people's groans
From dark Dunnotter's tower,
Mix'd with the seafowl's shrilly moans,
And ocean's bursting roar!

"O in fell Clavers' hour of pride,
Even in his mightiest day,
As bold he strides through conquest's tide,
O stretch him on the clay!

"His widow and his little ones,
O may their tower of trust
Remove its strong foundation stones,
And crush them in the dust!"—

"Sweet prayers to me," a voice replied,
"Thrice welcome, guest of mine!"—
And glimmering on the cavern side
A light was seen to shine.

An aged man, in amice brown,
Stood by the wanderer's side,
By powerful charm, a dead man's arm
The torch's light supplied.

From each stiff finger stretched upright,
Arose a ghastly flame,
That waved not in the blast of night
Which through the cavern came.

O deadly blue was that taper's hue,
That flamed the cavern o'er,
But more deadly blue was the ghastly hue
Of his eyes who the taper bore.

He laid on his head a hand like lead,
As heavy, pale, and cold:—
"Vengeance be thine, thou guest of mine,
If thy heart be firm and bold.

"But if faint thy heart, and caitiff fear
Thy recreant sinews know,
The mountain erne thy heart shall tear,
Thy nerves the hooded crow."

The wanderer raised him undismay'd:
"My soul, by dangers steeled,
Is stubborn as my border blade,
Which never knew to yield.

"And if thy power can speed the hour
Of vengeance on my foes,
Theirs be the fate, from bridge and gate
To feed the hooded crows."

The Brownie looked him in the face,
And his colour fled with speed—
"I fear me," quoth he, "uneath it will be
To match thy word and deed.

"In ancient days when English bands
Sore ravaged Scotland fair,
The sword and shield of Scottish land
Was valiant Halbert Kerr.

"A warlock loved the warrior well,
Sir Michael Scott by name,
And he sought for his sake a spell to make,
Should the Southern foemen tame;

"'Look thou,' he said, 'from Cessford head,
As the July sun sinks low,
And when glimmering white on Cheviot's height
Thou shalt spy a wreath of snow,

"'The spell is complete which shall bring to thy feet
The haughty Saxon foe.'
For many a year wrought the wizard here,
In Cheviot's bosom low,

"Till the spell was complete, and in July's heat
Appeared December's snow;
But Cessford's Halbert never came
The wondrous cause to know.

"For years before in Bowden aisle
The warrior's bones had lain,
And after short while, by female guile,
Sir Michael Scott was slain.

"But me and my brethren in this cell
His mighty charms retain,—
And he that can quell the powerful spell
Shall o'er broad Scotland reign."

He led him through an iron door
And up a winding stair,
And in wild amaze did the wanderer gaze
On the sight which opened there.

Through the gloomy night flashed ruddy light.—
A thousand torches' glow;
The cave rose high, like the vaulted sky,
O'er stalls in double row.

In every stall of that endless hall
Stood a steed in barbing bright;
At the foot of each steed, all armed save the head,
Lay stretched a stalwart knight.

In each mailed hand was a naked brand,
As they lay on the black bull's hide;
Each visage stern did upwards turn,
With eyeballs fixed and wide.

A launcegay strong, full twelve ells long,
By every warrior hung;
At each pommel there, for battle yare,
A Jedwood axe was slung.

The casque hung near each cavalier;
The plumes waved mournfully
At every tread which the wanderer made
Through the hall of Gramarye;

The ruddy beam of the torches' gleam
That glared the warriors on,
Reflected light from armour bright,
In noontide splendour shone.

And onward seen in lustre sheen,
Still lengthening on the sight,
Through the boundless hall, stood steeds in stall,
And by each lay a sable knight.

Still as the dead lay each horseman dread,
And moved nor limb nor tongue;
Each steed stood stiff as an earthfast cliff,
Nor hoof nor bridle rung.

No sounds through all the spacious hall
The deadly still divide,

* *Lourd*; i. e., liefer—rather.

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Save where echoes aloof from the vaulted roof
To the wanderer's step replied.

At length before his wondering eyes,
On an iron column borne,
Of antique shape, and giant size,
Appear'd a sword and horn.

"Now choose thee here," quoth his leader,
"Thy venturous fortune try;
Thy wo and weal, thy boot and bale,
In yon brand and bugle lie."

To the fatal brand he mounted his hand,
But his soul did quiver and quail;
The life-blood did start to his shuddering heart,
And left him wan and pale.

The brand he forsook, and the horn he took
To 'say a gentle sound;
But so wild a blast from the bugle brast,
That the Cheviot rock'd around.

From Forth to Tees, from seas to seas,
The awful bugle rung;
On Carlisle wall, and Berwick withal,
To arms the warders sprung.

With clank and clang the cavern rang,
The steeds did stamp and neigh;
And loud was the yell as each warrior fell
Sterte up with hoop and cry.

"Wo, wo," they cried, "thou caitiff coward,
That ever thou wert born!
Why drew ye not the knightly sword
Before ye blew the horn?"

The morning on the mountain shone,
And on the bloody ground
Hurled from the cave with shiver'd bone,
The mangled wretch was found.

And still beneath the cavern dread,
Among the glidders gray,
A shapeless stone with lichens spread
Marks where the wanderer lay.

* * * * * * *

The reader may be interested by comparing with this ballad the author's prose version of part of its legend, as given in one of the last works of his pen. He says, in the Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, 1830:—"Thomas of Ercildowne, during his retirement, has been supposed, from time to time, to be levying forces to take the field in some crisis of his country's fate. The story has often been told, of a daring horse-jockey having sold a black horse to a man of venerable and antique appearance, who appointed the remarkable hillock upon Eildon hills, called the Lucken-hare, as the place where, at twelve o'clock at night, he should receive the price. He came, his money was paid in ancient coin, and he was invited by his customer to view his residence. The trader in horses followed his guide in the deepest astonishment through several long ranges of stalls, in each of which a horse stood motionless, while an armed warrior lay equally still at the charger's feet. 'All these men,' said the wizard in a whisper, 'will awaken at the battle of Sheriffmuir.' At the extremity of this extraordinary depôt hung a sword and a horn, which the prophet pointed out to the horse-dealer as containing the means of dissolving the spell. The man in confusion took the horn and attempted to wind it. The horses instantly started in their stalls, stamped, and shook their bridles, the men arose and clashed their armour, and the mortal, terrified at the tumult he had excited, dropped the horn from his hand. A voice like that of a giant, louder even than the tumult around, pronounced these words:—

'Wo to the coward that ever he was born,
That did not draw the sword before he blew the horn.'

A whirlwind expelled the horse-dealer from the cavern, the entrance to which he could never again find. A moral might be perhaps extracted from the legend, namely, that it is best to be armed against danger before bidding it defiance."

One more fragment, in another style, and I shall have exhausted this budget. I am well aware that the introduction of such things will be considered by many as of questionable propriety; but on the whole, it appears to me the better course to omit nothing by which it is in my power to throw light on this experimental period.

* * * *

"Go sit old Cheviot's crest below,
And pensive mark the lingering snow
In all his scaurs abide,
And slow dissolving from the hill
In many a sightless soundless rill,
Feed sparkling Bowmont's tide.

"Fair shines the stream by bank and lea,
As wimpling to the eastern sea
She seeks Till's sullen bed,
Indenting deep the fatal plain,
Where Scotland's noblest, brave in vain,
Around their monarch bled.

"And westward hills on hills you see,
Even as old Ocean's mightiest sea
Heaves high her waves of foam,
Dark and snow-ridged from Cutsfeld's wold
To the proud foot of Cheviot roll'd,
Earth's mountain billows come."

* * * * *

Notwithstanding all these varied essays, and the charms of the distinguished society into which his reputation had already introduced him, Scott's friends do not appear to have as yet entertained the slightest notion that literature was to be the main business of his life. A letter of Kerr of Abbotrule congratulates him on his having had more to do at the autumnal assizes of Jedburgh this year than on any former occasion, which intelligence he seems himself to have communicated with no feeble expressions of satisfaction. "I greatly enjoy this," says Kerr; "go on; and with your strong sense and hourly ripening knowledge, that you must rise to the top of the tree in the Parliament House in due season, I hold as certain as that Murray died Lord Mansfield. But don't let many an Ovid,* or rather many a Burns, (which is better,) be lost in you. I rather think men of business have produced as good poetry in their by-hours as the professed regulars; and I don't see any sufficient reason why a Lord President Scott should not be a famous poet, (in the vacation time,) when we have seen a President Montesquieu step so nobly beyond the trammels in the *Esprit des Loix*. I suspect Dryden would have been a happier man had he had your profession. The reasoning talents visible in his verses, assure me that he would have ruled in Westminster Hall as easily as he did at Button's, and he might have found time enough besides for every thing that one really honours his memory for." This friend appears to have entertained, in October, 1799, the very opinion as to the *profession of literature* on which Scott acted through life.

Having again given a week to Liddisdale, in company with Mr. Shortreed, he spent a few days at Rosebank, and was preparing to return to Edinburgh for the winter, when James Ballantyne called on him one morning, and begged him to supply a few paragraphs on some legal question of the day for his newspaper. Scott complied; and carrying his article himself to the printing-office, took with him also some of his recent pieces, designed to appear in Lewis's collection. With these, especially, as his Memorandum says, the "Morlachian fragment after Goethe," Ballantyne was charmed, and he expressed his regret that Lewis's book was so long in appearing. Scott talked of Lewis with rapture; and after reciting some of his stanzas, said, "I ought to apologize to you for having troubled you with any thing of my own, when I had things like this for your ear."—"I felt at once," says Ballantyne, "that his own verses were far above what Lewis could ever do, and though, when I said this, he dissented, yet he seemed pleased with the warmth of my approbation." At parting, Scott threw out a casual observation, that he wondered his old friend did not try to get some little booksellers' work, "to keep his types in play during the rest of the week." Ballantyne answered, that such an idea had not before occurred to him—that he had no acquaintance with

* "How many an Ovid was in Murray lost."—Pope.

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the Edinburgh "trade;" but, if he had, his types were good, and he thought he could afford to work more cheaply than town-printers. Scott, "with his good-humoured smile," said, "You had better try what you can do. You have been praising my little ballads; suppose you print off a dozen copies or so of as many as will make a pamphlet, sufficient to let my Edinburgh acquaintances judge of your skill for themselves." Ballantyne assented; and I believe exactly twelve copies of William and Ellen, The Fire-King, The Chase, and a few more of those pieces, were thrown off accordingly, with the title (alluding to the long delay of Lewis's collection) of "Apology for Tales of Terror—1799." This first specimen of a press, afterwards so celebrated, pleased Scott; and he said to Ballantyne, "I have been for years collecting old border ballads, and I think I could with little trouble put together such a selection from them as might make a neat little volume, to sell for four or five shillings. I will talk to some of the booksellers about it when I get to Edinburgh, and if the thing goes on, you shall be the printer." Ballantyne highly relished the proposal; and the result of this little experiment changed wholly the course of his worldly fortunes, as well as of his friend's.

Shortly after the commencement of the Winter Session, the office of Sheriff-depute of Selkirkshire became vacant by the death of an early ally of Scott's; Andrew Plummer of Middlestead, a scholar and antiquary, who had entered with zeal into his ballad-researches, and whose name occurs accordingly more than once in the notes to the Border Minstrelsy. Perhaps the community of their tastes may have had some part in suggesting to the Duke of Buccleuch, that Scott might fitly succeed Mr. Plummer in the magistrature. Be that as it might, his Grace's influence was used with the late Lord Melville, who, in those days, had the general control of the crown patronage in Scotland, and his Lordship was prepared to look favourably on Scott's pretensions to some office of this description. Though neither the Duke nor this able minister were at all addicted to literature, they had both seen Scott frequently under their own roofs, and been pleased with his manners and conversation; and he had by this time come to be on terms of affectionate intimacy with some of the younger members of either family. The Earl of Dalkeith, (afterwards Duke Charles of Buccleuch,) and his brother Lord James Scott, (now Lord Montagu,) had been participating, with kindred ardour, in the military patriotism of the period, and had been thrown into Scott's society under circumstances well qualified to ripen acquaintance into confidence. The Honourable Robert Dundas, eldest son of the statesman whose title he has inherited, had been one of Scott's companions in the High School; and, he, too, had been of late a lively partaker in the business of the yeomanry cavalry; and, last, not least, Scott always remembered with gratitude the strong intercession on this occasion of Lord Melville's nephew, the Right Honourable William Dundas, then Secretary to the Board of Control, and now Lord Clerk Register for Scotland.

His appointment to the *Sheriffship* bears date 16th December, 1799. It secured him an annual salary of £300; an addition to his resources which at once relieved his mind from whatever degree of anxiety he might have felt in considering the prospect of an increasing family, along with the ever precarious chances of a profession, in the daily drudgery of which it is impossible to suppose that he ever could have found much pleasure.* The duties of the office were far from heavy; the district, small, peaceful, and pastoral, was in great part the property of the Duke of Buccleuch; and he turned with redoubled zeal to his project of editing the ballads, many of the best of which belonged to this very district of his favourite Border—those "tales," which, as the dedication of the Minstrelsy expresses it, had "in elder times celebrated the prowess and cheered the halls" of his noble patron's ancestors.

* "My profession and I came to stand nearly upon the footing which honest Slender consoled himself on having 'established with Mistress Anne Page: 'There was no great love between us at the beginning, and it pleased heaven to decrease in on further acquaintance.'"—*Introduction to the Lay of the Last Minstrel.* 1830.

CHAPTER X.

THE BORDER MINSTRELSY IN PREPARATION—RICHARD HEBER—JOHN LEYDEN—WILLIAM LAIDLAW—JAMES HOGG—CORRESPONDENCE WITH GEORGE ELLIS—PUBLICATION OF THE TWO FIRST VOLUMES OF THE BORDER MINSTRELSY.—1800-1802.

James Ballantyne, in his *Memorandum*, after mentioning his ready acceptance of Scott's proposal to print the Minstrelsy, adds—"I do not believe that even at this time, he seriously contemplated giving himself much to literature." I confess, however, that a letter of his, addressed to Ballantyne in the spring of 1800, inclines me to question the accuracy of this impression. After alluding to an intention which he had entertained, in consequence of the delay of Lewis's collection, to *publish* an edition of the ballads contained in his own little volume, entitled "Apology for Tales of Terror," he goes on to detail plans for the future direction of his printer's career, which were, no doubt, primarily suggested by the friendly interest he took in Ballantyne's fortunes; but there are some hints which, considering what afterwards did take place, lead me to suspect that even thus early the writer contemplated the possibility at least of being himself very intimately connected with the result of these airdrawn schemes. The letter is as follows:

To Mr. J. Ballantyne, Kelso Mail Office, Kelso.

"Castle Street, 22d April, 1800.

"Dear Sir,

"I have your favour, since the receipt of which some things have occurred which induce me to postpone my intention of publishing my ballads, particularly a letter from a friend, assuring me that 'The Tales of Wonder' are actually in the printer's hand. In this situation I endeavour to strengthen my small stock of patience, which has been nearly exhausted by the delay of this work, to which (though for that reason alone) I almost regret having promised assistance. I am still resolved to have recourse to your press for the Ballads of the Border, which are in some forwardness.

"I have now to request your forgiveness for mentioning a plan which your friend Gillon and I have talked over together, with a view as well to the public advantage as to your individual interest. It is nothing short of a migration from Kelso to this place, which I think might be effected upon a prospect of a very flattering nature.

"Three branches of printing are quite open in Edinburgh, all of which I am well convinced you have both the ability and inclination to unite in your person. The first is that of an editor of a newspaper, which shall contain something of an uniform historical deduction of events, distinct from the farrago of detached and unconnected plagiarisms from the London paragraphs of 'The Sun.' Perhaps it might be possible (and Gillon has promised to make inquiry about it) to treat with the proprietors of some established paper—suppose the Caledonian Mercury—and we would all struggle to obtain for it some celebrity. To this might be added a 'Monthly Magazine,' and 'Caledonian Annual Register,' if you will; for both of which, with the excellent literary assistance which Edinburgh at present affords, there is a fair opening. The next object would naturally be, the execution of Session papers, the best paid work which a printer undertakes, and of which, I dare say, you would soon have a considerable share; for as you make it your business to superintend the proofs yourself, your education and abilities would insure your employers against the gross and provoking blunders which the poor composers are often obliged to submit to. The publication of works, either ancient or modern, opens a third fair field for ambition. The only gentleman who attempts any thing in that way is in very bad health; nor can I, at any rate, compliment either the accuracy or the execution of his press. I believe it is well understood, that with equal attention an Edinburgh press would have superior advantages even to those of the metropolis; and though I would not advise launching into that line at once, yet it would be easy to feel your way by occupying your press in this manner on vacant days only.

"It appears to me that such a plan, judiciously adopted

and diligently pursued, opens a fair road to an ample fortune. In the mean while, the 'Kelso Mail' might be so arranged as to be still a source of some advantage to you; and I dare say, if wanted, pecuniary assistance might be procured to assist you at the outset, either upon terms of a share or otherwise; but I refer you for particulars to Joseph, in whose room I am now assuming the pen, for reasons too distressing to be declared, but at which you will readily guess. I hope, at all events, you will impute my interference to any thing rather than an impertinent intermeddling with your concerns, on the part of, dear sir, your obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

The Joseph Gillon here named was a Writer to the Signet of some eminence; a man of strong abilities and genuine wit and humour, for whom Scott, as well as Ballantyne, had a warm regard.* The intemperate habits alluded to at the close of Scott's letter gradually undermined his business, his health, and his character; and he was glad, on leaving Edinburgh, which became quite necessary some years afterwards, to obtain the situation of a doorkeeper in the House of Lords—in which he died. The answer of Ballantyne has not been preserved.

To return to the "Minstrelsy."—Scott found able assistants in the completion of his design. Richard Heber (long Member of Parliament for the University of Oxford) happened to spend this winter in Edinburgh, and was welcomed, as his talents and accomplishments entitled him to be, by the cultivated society of the place. With Scott, his multifarious learning, particularly his profound knowledge of the literary monuments of the middle ages, soon drew him into habits of close alliance; the stores of his library, even then extensive, were freely laid open, and his own oral commentaries were not less valuable. But through him Scott made acquaintance with a person still more qualified to give him effectual aid in this undertaking—a native of the Border—from infancy, like himself, an enthusiastic lover of its legends, and who had already saturated his mind with every species of lore that could throw light upon these relics.

Few who read these pages can be unacquainted with the leading facts in the history of John Leyden. Few can need to be reminded that this extraordinary man, born in a shepherd's cottage in one of the wildest valleys of Roxburghshire, and of course almost entirely self-educated, had, before he attained his nineteenth year, confounded the doctors of Edinburgh by the portentous mass of his acquisitions in almost every department of learning. He had set the extremest penury at utter defiance, or rather he had never been conscious that it could operate as a bar; for bread and water, and access to books and lectures, comprised all within the bound of his wishes; and thus he toiled and battled at the gates of science after science, until his unconquerable perseverance carried every thing before it; and yet, with his monastic abstemiousness and iron hardness of will, perplexing those about him by manners and habits in which it was hard to say whether the moss-trooper or the schoolman of former days most prevailed, he was at heart a poet.

Archibald Constable, in after life one of the most eminent of British publishers, was at this period the keeper of a small book-shop, into which few, but the poor students of Leyden's order, had hitherto found their way. Heber, in the course of his bibliomaniacal prowlings, discovered that it contained some of

"The small old volumes dark with tarnish'd gold,"

which were already the Delilahs of his imagination; and, moreover, that the young bookseller had himself a strong taste for such charmers. Frequenting the place accordingly, he observed with some curiosity the barbarous aspect and gestures of another daily visitant, who came not to purchase evidently, but to pore over the more recondite articles of the collection—often balanced for hours on a ladder with a folio in his hand, like Dominie Sampson. The English virtuoso was on the look-out for any books or MSS. that might be of use to the editor of the projected "Minstrelsy," and some casual colloquy led to the discovery that this unshorn stranger was, amidst the endless labyrinth of his lore, a master of legend and tradition—an enthusiastic collector and most skilful expounder of these very Border ballads in particular. Scott heard with much interest Heber's account of his odd acquaintance, and found, when introduced, the person whose initials, affixed to a series of pieces in verse, chiefly translations from Greek, Latin, and the northern languages, scattered, during the last three or four years, over the pages of the "Edinburgh Magazine," had often much excited his curiosity, as various indications pointed out the Scotch Border for the native district of this unknown "J. L."

These new friendships led to a great change in Leyden's position, purposes, and prospects. He was presently received into the best society of Edinburgh, where his strange, wild uncouthness of demeanour does not seem to have at all interfered with the general appreciation of his genius, his gigantic endowments, and really amiable virtues. Fixing his ambition on the East, where he hoped to rival the achievements of Sir William Jones, he at length, about the beginning of 1802, obtained the promise of some literary appointment in the East India Company's service; but when the time drew near, it was discovered that the patronage of the season had been exhausted, with the exception of one *surgeon-assistant's* commission—which had been with difficulty secured for him by Mr. William Dundas; who, moreover, was obliged to inform him that, if he accepted it, he must be qualified to pass his medical trials within six months. This news, which would have crushed any other man's hopes to the dust, was only a welcome fillip to the ardour of Leyden. He that same hour grappled with a new science, in full confidence that whatever ordinary men could do in three or four years, his energy could accomplish in as many months; took his degree accordingly in the beginning of 1803, having just before published his beautiful poem, the "Scenes of Infancy;" sailed to India; raised for himself, within seven short years, the reputation of the most marvellous of Orientalists; and died, in the midst of the proudest hopes, at the same age with Burns and Byron, in 1811.

But to return:—Leyden was enlisted by Scott in the service of Lewis, and immediately contributed a ballad, called The Elf-King, to the Tales of Terror. Those highly spirited pieces, The Cout of Keildar, Lord Soulis, and The Mermaid, were furnished for the original department of Scott's own collection; and the Dissertation on Fairies, prefixed to its second volume, "although arranged and digested by the editor, abounds with instances of such curious reading as Leyden only had read, and was originally compiled by him; but not the least of his labours was in the collection of the old ballads themselves. When he first conversed with Ballantyne on the subject of the proposed work, and the printer signified his belief that a single volume of moderate size would be sufficient for the materials, Leyden exclaimed, "Dash it, does Mr. Scott mean another thin thing like Goetz of Berlichingen? I have more than that in my head myself: we shall turn out three or four such volumes at least." He went to work stoutly in the realization of these wider views. "In this labour," says Scott, "he was equally interested by friendship for the editor, and by his own patriotic zeal for the honour of the Scottish borders; and both may be judged of from the following circumstance. An interesting fragment had been obtained of an ancient historical ballad; but the remainder, to the great disturbance of the editor and his coadjutor, was not to be recovered. Two days afterwards, while the editor was sitting with some company after dinner, a sound was heard at a distance like that of the whistling of a tempest through the torn rigging of the vessel which scuds before it. The sounds increased as

*Calling on him one day in his writing office, Scott said, "Why, Joseph, this place is as hot as an oven." "Well," quoth Gillon, "and isn't it here that I make my bread?"

they approached more near; and Leyden (to the great astonishment of such of the guests as did not know him) burst into the room, chanting the desiderated ballad with the most enthusiastic gesture, and all the energy of what he used to call the *sastones* of his voice. It turned out that he walked between forty and fifty miles, and back again, for the sole purpose of visiting an old person who possessed this precious remnant of antiquity."*

Various allusions to the progress of Leyden's fortunes will occur in letters to be quoted hereafter. I may refer the reader, for further particulars, to the biographical sketch by Scott, from which the preceding anecdote is taken. Many tributes to his memory are scattered over his friend's other works, both prose and verse; and above all, Scott did not forget him when exploring, three years after his death, the scenery of his "Mermaid;"—

"Scarba's isle, whose tortured shore
Still rings to Corrievrekan's roar,
And lonely Colonsay;—
Scenes sung by him who sings no more:
His bright and brief career is o'er,
And mute his tuneful strains;
Quench'd is his lamp of varied lore,
That loved the light of song to pour;
A distant and a deadly shore
Has Leyden's cold remains!"†

During the years 1800 and 1801, the Minstrelsy formed its editor's chief occupation—a labour of love truly, if ever such there was; but neither this nor his sheriffship interfered with his regular attendance at the bar, the abandonment of which was all this while as far as it ever had been from his imagination, or that of any of his friends. He continued to have his summer headquarters at Lasswade; and Mr. (now Sir John) Stoddart, who visited him there in the course of his Scottish tour,‡ dwells on "the simple unostentatious elegance of the cottage, and the domestic picture which he there contemplated—a man of native kindness and cultivated talent, passing the intervals of a learned profession amidst scenes highly favourable to his poetic inspirations, not in churlish and rustic solitude, but in the daily exercise of the most precious sympathies as a husband, a father, and a friend." His means of hospitality were now much enlarged, and the cottage, on a Saturday and Sunday at least, was seldom without visitors.

Among other indications of greater ease in his circumstances, which I find in his letter-book, he writes to Heber, after his return to London in May, 1800, to request his good offices on behalf of Mrs. Scott, who had "set her heart on a phæton, at once strong, and low, and handsome, and not to cost more than thirty guineas;" which combination of advantages Heber seems to have found by no means easy of attainment. The phæton was, however, discovered; and its springs must soon have been put to a sufficient trial, for this was "the first wheeled carriage that ever penetrated into Liddesdale"—namely, in August, 1800. The friendship of the Buccleuch family now placed better means of research at his disposal, and Lord Dalkeith had taken special care that there should be a band of pioneers in waiting for his orders when he reached Hermitage.

Though he had not given up Lasswade, his sheriffship now made it necessary for him that he should be frequently in Ettrick Forest. On such occasions he took up his lodgings in the little inn at Clovenford, a favourite fishing station on the road from Edinburgh to Selkirk. From this place he could ride to the county town whenever business required his presence, and he was also within a few miles of the vales of Yarrow and Ettrick, where he obtained large accessions to his store of ballads. It was in one of these excursions that, penetrating beyond St. Mary's lake, he found a hospitable reception at the farm of *Blackhouse*, situated on the Douglas-burn, then tenanted by a remarkable family, to which I have already made allusion—that of William Laidlaw. He was then a very young man, but the extent of his acquirements was already as noticeable as the vigour and originality of his mind; and their correspondence, where "Sir" passes, at a few bounds, through "Dear Sir," and "Dear Mr. Laidlaw," to "Dear Willie," shows how speedily this new acquaintance had warmed into a very tender affection. Laidlaw's zeal about the ballads was repaid by Scott's anxious endeavours to get him removed from a sphere for which, he writes, "it is no flattery to say that you are much too good." It was then, and always continued to be, his opinion, that his friend was particularly qualified for entering with advantage on the study of the medical profession; but such designs, if Laidlaw himself ever took them up seriously, were not ultimately persevered in; and I question whether any worldly success could, after all, have overbalanced the retrospect of an honourable life spent happily in the open air of nature, amidst scenes the most captivating to the eye of genius, and in the intimate confidence of, perhaps, the greatest of contemporary minds.

James Hogg had spent ten years of his life in the service of Mr. Laidlaw's father, but although his own various accounts of his early days are not to be reconciled with each other as to minute particulars of date and locality, he seems to have passed into that of another sheep-farmer in a neighbouring valley, before Scott first visited Blackhouse. Be that as it may, William Laidlaw and Hogg had been for years the most intimate of friends, and the former took care that Scott should see, without delay, one whose enthusiasm about the minstrelsy of the Forest was equal to his own, and whose mother, then an aged woman, though she lived many years afterwards, was celebrated for having by heart several ballads in a more perfect form than any other inhabitant of the vale of Ettrick. The personal history of James Hogg must have interested Scott even more than any acquisition of that sort which he owed to this acquaintance with, perhaps, the most remarkable man that ever wore the *maud* of a shepherd. But I need not here repeat a tale which his own language will convey to the latest posterity. Under the garb, aspect, and bearing of a rude peasant—and rude enough he was in most of these things, even after no inconsiderable experience of society—Scott found a brother poet, a true son of nature and genius, hardly conscious of his powers. He had taught himself to write by copying the letters of a printed book as he lay watching his flock on the hill-side, and had probably reached the utmost pitch of his ambition when he first found that his artless rhymes could touch the heart of the ewe-milker who partook the shelter of his mantle during the passing storm. As yet his naturally kind and simple character had not been exposed to any of the dangerous flatteries of the world; his heart was pure—his enthusiasm buoyant as that of a happy child; and well as Scott knew that reflection, sagacity, wit, and wisdom were scattered abundantly among the humblest rangers of these pastoral solitudes, there was here a depth and a brightness that filled him with wonder, combined with a quaintness of humour, and a thousand little touches of absurdity, which afforded him more entertainment, as I have often heard him say, than the best comedy that ever set the pit in a roar.

Scott opened in the same year a correspondence with the venerable Bishop of Dromore, who seems, however, to have done little more than express a warm interest in an undertaking so nearly resembling that which will ever keep his own name in remembrance. He had more success in his applications to a more unpromising quarter—namely, with Joseph Ritson, the ancient and virulent assailant of Bishop Percy's editorial character. This narrow-minded, sour, and dogmatical little word-catcher, had hated the very name of a Scotsman, and was utterly incapable of sympathizing with any of the higher views of his new correspondent. Yet

* Essay on the Life of Leyden—Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. iv., p. 165.
† Lord of the Isles, Canto iv. st. 11.
‡ The account of this Tour was published in 1801.

the bland courtesy of Scott disarmed even this half-crusty pedant; and he communicated the stores of his really valuable learning in a manner that seems to have greatly surprised all who had hitherto held any intercourse with him on antiquarian topics. It astonished, above all, the late amiable and elegant George Ellis, whose acquaintance was about the same time opened to Scott through their common friend Heber. Mr. Ellis was now busily engaged in collecting the materials for his charming works, entitled Specimens of Ancient English Poetry, and Specimens of Ancient English Romance. The correspondence between him and Scott soon came to be constant. They met personally, not long after the correspondence had commenced, conceived for each other a cordial respect and affection, and continued on a footing of almost brotherly intimacy ever after. To this valuable alliance Scott owed, among other advantages, his early and ready admission to the acquaintance and familiarity of Ellis's bosom friend, his coadjutor in the Antijacobin, and the confidant of all his literary schemes, the late illustrious statesman, Mr. Canning.

The first letter of Scott to Ellis is dated March 27, 1801, and begins thus:—"Sir, as I feel myself highly flattered by your inquiries, I lose no time in answering them to the best of my ability. Your eminence in the literary world, and the warm praises of our mutual friend Heber, had made me long wish for an opportunity of being known to you. I enclose the first sheet of Sir Tristrem, that you may not so much rely upon my opinion, as upon that which a specimen of the style and versification may enable your better judgment to form for itself. . . . These pages are transcribed by Leyden, an excellent young man, of uncommon talents, patronised by Heber, and who is of the utmost assistance to my literary undertakings."

As Scott's edition of Sir Tristrem did not appear until May, 1804, and he and Leyden were busy with the Border Minstrelsy when his correspondence with Ellis commenced, this early indication of his labours on the former work may require explanation. The truth is, that both Scott and Leyden, having eagerly arrived at the belief, from which neither of them ever permitted himself to falter, that the "Sir Tristrem" of the Auchinleck MS., was virtually, if not literally, the production of Thomas the Rhymer, laird of Ercildoune, in Berwickshire, who flourished at the close of the thirteenth century—the original intention had been to give it, not only a place, but a very prominent one, in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border."* The doubts and difficulties which Ellis suggested, however, though they did not shake Scott in his opinion as to the parentage of the romance, induced researches which occupied so much time, and gave birth to notes so bulky, that he eventually found it expedient first to pass it over in the two volumes of the Minstrelsy, which appeared in 1802, and then even in the third, which followed a year later; thus reserving Tristrem for a separate publication, which did not take place until after Leyden had sailed for India.

I must not swell these pages by transcribing the entire correspondence of Scott and Ellis, the greater part of which consists of minute antiquarian discussion which could hardly interest the general reader; but I shall give such extracts as seem to throw light on Scott's personal history during this period.

To George Ellis, Esq.

"Lasswade Cottage, 20th April, 1801.

"My dear Sir,

"I should long ago have acknowledged your instructive letter, but I have been wandering about in the wilds of Liddesdale and Ettrick Forest, in search of additional materials for the Border Minstrelsy. I cannot, however, boast much of my success. One of our best reciters has turned religious in his latter days, and finds out that old songs are unlawful. If so, then, as Falstaff says, is many an acquaintance of mine damned. I now send you an accurate analysis of Sir Tristrem. Philo-Tomas, whoever he was, must surely have been an Englishman; when his hero joins battle with Morraunt, he exclaims,

'God help Tristrem the Knight,
He fought for Ingland.'

This strain of national attachment would hardly have proceeded from a Scottish author, even though he had laid his scene in the sister country. In other respects the language appears to be Scottish, and certainly contains the essence of Tomas's work. . . . . You shall have Sir Ouel in a week or two, and I shall be happy to compare your Romance of Merlin with our *Arthur and Merlin*, which is a very good poem, and may supply you with some valuable additions. . . . . I would very fain lend your elephant "*a lift*, but I fear I can be of little use to you. I have been rather an observer of detached facts respecting antiquities, than a regular student. At the same time, I may mention one or two circumstances, were it but to place your elephant upon a tortoise. From Selkirkshire to Cumberland, we have a ditch and bulwark of great strength, called the Catrail, running north and south, and obviously calculated to defend the western side of the island against the inhabitants of the eastern half. Within this bulwark, at Drummelzier, near Peebles, we find the grave of Merlin, the account of whose madness and death you will find in Fordun. The same author says, he was seized with his madness during a dreadful battle on the Liddle, which divides Cumberland from Scotland. All this seems to favour your ingenious hypothesis, that the sway of the British Champion [Arthur] extended over Cumberland and Strathcluyd, as well as Wales. Ercildoune is hardly five miles from the Catrail. . . . . .

"Leyden has taken up a most absurd resolution to go to Africa on a journey of discovery. Will you have the goodness to beg Heber to write to him seriously on so ridiculous a plan, which can promise nothing either pleasant or profitable. I am certain he would get a church in Scotland with a little patience and prudence, and it gives me great pain to see a valuable young man, of uncommon genius and squirements, fairly throw himself away. Yours truly,

W. Scott."

To the Same.

"Musselburgh, 11th May, 1801.

. . . . "I congratulate you upon the health of your elephants—as an additional mouthful of provender for them, pray observe, that the tale of Sir Gawain's Foul Ladie, in Percy's Reliques, is originally Scaldic, as you will see in the history of Hrolfe Kraka, edited by Torfæus from the ancient Sagas regarding that prince. I think I could give you some more crumbs of information were I at home; but I am at present discharging the duties of quartermaster to a regiment of volunteer cavalry—an office altogether inconsistent with romance; for where do you read that Sir Tristrem weighed out hay and corn; that Sir Launcelot du Lac distributed billets; or that any Knight of the Round Table condescended to higgle about a truss of straw? Such things were left for our degenerate days, when no warder sounds his horn from the barbican as the *preux chevalier* approaches to claim hospitality. Bugles indeed we have; but it is only to scream us out of bed at five in the morning—hospitality such as the seneschals of Don Quixote's castles were wont to offer him—and all to troopers, to whom, for valour eke and courtesy, Major Sturgeon himself might yield the palm. In the midst of this scene of motley confusion, I long, like the hart for water-brooks, for the arrival of your *grande opus*. The nature of your researches animates me to proceed in mine, (though of a much more limited and local nature,) even as iron sharpeneth iron. I am in utter despair about some of the hunting terms in 'Sir Tristrem.' There is no copy of Lady Juliana Berners' work in Scotland, and I would move heaven and earth to get a sight of it. But as I fear this is utterly impossible, I must have recourse to your friendly assistance, and communicate a set of doubts and queries, which, if any man in England can satisfy, I am well assured it must be you. You may therefore expect, in a few days, another epistle. Mean time I must invoke the spirit of Nimrod."

"Edinburgh, 10th June, 1801.

"My dear Sir,

"A heavy family misfortune, the loss of an only sister in the prime of life, has prevented, for some time, my proposed communication regarding the hunting terms of 'Sir Tristrem.' I now enclose the passage, accu-

* I believe it was Mr. Canning that had, on some occasion, when Ellis talked of his antiquarian hobby-horse, exclaimed, "Hobby, truly! yours is an elephant."

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rately copied, with such explanations as occur to myself, subject always to your correction and better judgment. . . . . I have as yet had only a glance of *The Specimens*. Thomson, to whom Heber intrusted them, had left them to follow him from London in a certain trunk, which has never yet arrived. I should have quarrelled with him excessively for making so little allowance for my impatience, had it not been that a violent epidemic fever, to which I owe the loss already mentioned, has threatened also to deprive me, in his person, of one of my dearest friends, and the Scottish literary world of one of its most promising members.

"Some prospect seems to open for getting Leyden out to India, under the patronage of Mackintosh, who goes as chief of the intended academical establishment at Calcutta. That he is highly qualified for acting a distinguished part in any literary undertaking will be readily granted; nor do I think Mr. Mackintosh will meet with many half so likely to be useful in the proposed institution. The extent and versatility of his talents would soon raise him to his level, even although he were at first to go out in a subordinate department. If it be in your power to second his application, I rely upon Heber's interest with you to induce you to do so."

"Edinburgh, 13th July, 1801.

. . . "I am infinitely obliged to you, indeed, for your interference in behalf of our Leyden, who, I am sure, will do credit to your patronage, and may be of essential service to the proposed mission. What a difference from broiling himself, or getting himself literally broiled, in Africa. 'Que diable vouloit-il faire dans cette galère?' . . . His brother is a fine lad, and is likely to enjoy some advantages which he wanted—I mean by being more early introduced into society. I have intermitted his transcript of 'Merlin,' and set him to work on 'Otuel,' of which I send a specimen." . . .

"Edinburgh, 7th December, 1801.

. . . . . "My literary amusements have of late been much retarded and interrupted, partly by professional avocations, and partly by removing to a house newly furnished, where it will be some time before I can get my few books put into order, or clear the premises of painters and workmen; not to mention that these worthies do not now-a-days proceed upon the plan of Solomon's architects, whose saws and hammers were not heard, but rather upon the more ancient system of the builders of Babel. To augment this confusion, my wife has fixed upon this time as proper to present me with a fine chopping boy, whose pipe, being of the shrillest, is heard amid the storm, like a boatswain's whistle in a gale of wind. These various causes of confusion have also interrupted the labours of young Leyden on your behalf; but he has again resumed the task of transcribing 'Arthour,' of which I once again transmit a part. I have to acknowledge, with the deepest sense of gratitude, the beautiful analysis of Mr. Douce's Fragments, which throws great light upon the romance of Sir Tristrem. In arranging that, I have anticipated your judicious hint, by dividing it into three parts, where the story seems naturally to pause, and prefixing an accurate argument, referring to the stanzas as numbered.

"I am glad that Mrs. Ellis and you have derived any amusement from the House of Aspen. It is a very hurried dramatic sketch; and the fifth act, as you remark, would require a total revisal previous to representation or publication. At one time I certainly thought, with my friends, that it might have ranked well enough by the side of the Castle Spectre, Bluebeard, and the other drum and trumpet exhibitions of the day; but the 'Plays of the Passions'* have put me entirely out of conceit with my Germanized brat; and should I ever again attempt dramatic composition, I would endeavour after the genuine old English model . . . . . The publication of 'The Complaynt'† is delayed. It is a work of multifarious lore. I am truly anxious about Leyden's Indian journey, which seems to hang fire. Mr. William Dundas was so good as to promise me his interest to get him appointed secretary to the Institution‡; but whether he has succeeded or not, I have not yet learned. The various kinds of distress under which literary men, I mean such as have no other profession than letters, must labour, in a commercial country, is a great disgrace to society. I own to you I always tremble for the fate of genius when left to its own exertions, which, however powerful, are usually, by some bizarre dispensation of nature, useful to every one but themselves. If Heber could learn by Mackintosh, whether any thing could be done to fix Leyden's situation, and what sort of interest would be most likely to succeed, his friends here might unite every exertion in his favour. . . . . Direct Castle Street, as usual; my new house being in the same street with my old dwelling."

"Edinburgh, 8th January, 1802.

. . . "Your favour arrived just as I was sitting down to write to you, with a sheet or two of 'King Arthur.' I fear, from a letter which I have received from Mr. William Dundas, that the Indian establishment is tottering, and will probably fall. Leyden has therefore been induced to turn his mind to some other mode of making his way to the East; and proposes taking his degree as a physician and surgeon, with the hope of getting an appointment in the Company's service as surgeon. If the Institution goes forward, his having secured this step will not prevent his being attached to it; at the same time that it will afford him a provision independent of what seems to be a very precarious establishment. Mr. Dundas has promised to exert himself . . . . I have just returned from the hospitable halls of Hamilton, where I have spent the Christmas." . . . . .

"14th February, 1802.

"I have been silent but not idle. The Transcript of King Arthur is at length finished, being a fragment of about 7000 lines. Let me know how I shall transmit a parcel containing it, with the *Complaynt* and the Border Ballads, of which I expect every day to receive some copies. I think you will be disappointed in the Ballads. I have as yet touched very little on the more *remote* antiquities of the Border, which, indeed, my songs, all comparatively modern, did not lead me to discuss. Some scattered herbage, however, the elephants may perhaps find. By the way, you will not forget to notice the *mountain* called *Arthur's Seat*, which overhangs this city. When I was at school, the tradition ran that King Arthur occupied as his throne a huge rock upon its summit, and that he beheld from thence some naval engagement upon the Frith of Forth. I am pleasantly interrupted by the post; he brings me a letter from William Dundas, fixing Leyden's appointment as an assistant surgeon to one of the India settlements—which is not yet determined; and another from my printer, a very ingenious young man, telling me, that he means to escort the 'Minstrelsy' up to London in person. I shall, therefore, direct him to transmit my parcel to Mr. Nicol."

"2d March, 1802.

"I *hope* that long ere this you have received the Ballads, and that they have afforded you some amusement; I hope, also, that the *threatened* third volume will be more interesting to Mrs. Ellis than the dry antiquarian detail of the two first could prove. I hope, moreover, that I shall have the pleasure of seeing you soon, as some circumstances seem not so much to call me to London, as to furnish me with a decent apology for coming up sometime this spring; and I long particularly to say, that I know my friend Mr. Ellis *by sight* as well as *intimately*. I am glad you have seen the Marquess of Lorn, whom I have met frequently at the house of his charming sister, Lady Charlotte Campbell, whom, I am sure, if you are acquainted with her, you must admire as much as I do. Her Grace of Gordon, a great admirer of yours, spent some days here lately, and, like Lord Lorn, was highly entertained with an account of our friendship *à la distance*. I do not, nor did I ever, intend to fob you off with twenty or thirty lines of the second part of Sir Guy. Young Leyden has been much engaged with his studies, otherwise you would have long since received what I now send, namely, the combat between Guy and Colbronde, which I take to be the cream of the romance. . . . . If I do not come to London this spring, I will find a safe opportunity of returning Lady Juliana Berners, with my very best thanks for the use of her reverence's work."

The preceding extracts are picked out of letter, mostly very long ones, in which Scott discusses questions of antiquarian interest, suggested sometimes by Ellis, and sometimes by the course of his own researches among the MSS. of the Advocates' Library. The passages which I have transcribed appear sufficient to give the reader a distinct notion of the tenour of Scott's life while his first considerable work was in progress through the press. In fact, they place before us in a vivid light the chief features of a character which, by this time, was completely formed and settled—which had passed

* The first volume of Joanna Baillie's "Plays of the Passions" appeared in 1798. Vol. II. followed in 1802.

† "The Complaynt of Scotland, written in 1548; with a Preliminary Dissertation and Glossary, by John Leyden," was published by Constable in January, 1802.

‡ A proposed Institution for purposes of Education at Calcutta.

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unmoved through the first blandishments of worldly applause, and which no subsequent trials of that sort could ever shake from its early balance:—His calm delight in his own pursuits—the patriotic enthusiasm which mingled with all the best of his literary efforts; his modesty as to his own general merits, combined with a certain dogged resolution to maintain his own first view of a subject, however assailed; his readiness to interrupt his own tasks by any drudgery by which he could assist those of a friend; his steady and determined watchfulness over the struggling fortunes of young genius and worth.

The reader has seen that he spent the Christmas of 1801 at Hamilton Palace, in Lanarkshire. To Lady Anne Hamilton he had been introduced by his half-sister, Lady Charlotte Campbell, and both the late and the present Dukes of Hamilton appear to have partaken of Lady Anne's admiration for Glenfinlas, and the Eve of St. John. A morning's ramble to the majestic ruins of the old baronial castle on the precipitous banks of the Evan, and among the adjoining remains of the primeval Caledonian forest, suggested to him a ballad, not inferior in execution to any that he had hitherto produced, and especially interesting as the first in which he grapples with the world of picturesque incident unfolded in the authentic annals of Scotland. With the magnificent localities before him, he skilfully interwove the daring assassination of the Regent Murray by one of the clansmen of "the princely Hamilton." Had the subject been taken up in after years, we might have had another Marmion, or Heart of Mid-Lothian; for in Cadyow Castle we have the materials and outline of more than one of the noblest of ballads.

Not long before this piece began to be handed about in Edinburgh, Thomas Campbell had made his appearance there, and at once seized a high place in the literary world by his 'Pleasures of Hope.' Among the most eager to welcome him had been Scott; and I find the brother-bard thus expressing himself concerning the MS. of Cadyow:—

"The verses of Cadyow Castle are perpetually ringing in my imagination—

> 'Where mightiest of the beasts of chase
> That roam in woody Caledon,
> Crashing the forest in his race,
> The mountain bull comes thundering on—'

and the arrival of Hamilton, when

> 'Reeking from the recent deed,
> He dashed his carbine on the ground.'

I have repeated these lines so often on the North Bridge, that the whole fraternity of coachmen know me by tongue as I pass. To be sure, to a mind in sober, serious street-walking humour, it must bear an appearance of lunacy, when one stamps with the hurried pace and fervent shake of the head, which strong, pithy poetry excites."

Scott finished his Cadyow Castle before the last sheets of the second volume of his "Minstrelsy" had passed through the press; but "the two volumes," as Ballantyne says, "were already full to overflowing;" so it was reserved for the "threatened third." The two volumes appeared in the course of January, 1802, from the respectable house of Cadell and Davies, in the Strand; and, owing to the cold reception of Lewis's "Tales of Wonder," which had come forth a year earlier, these may be said to have first introduced Scott as an original writer to the English public.

In his Remarks on the Imitation of Popular Poetry, he says: "Owing to the failure of the vehicle I had chosen, my first effort to present myself before the public as an original writer, proved as vain as those by which I had previously endeavoured to distinguish myself as a translator. Like Lord Home, however, at the Battle of Flodden, I did so far well, that I was able to stand and save myself; and amidst the general depreciation of the 'Tales of Wonder,' my small share of the obnoxious publication was dismissed without censure, and in some cases obtained praise from the critics. The consequences of my escape made me naturally more daring, and I attempted, in my own name, a collection of ballads of various kinds, both ancient and modern, to be connected by the common tie of relation to the Border districts in which I had collected them. The edition was curious, as being the first example of a work printed by my friend and schoolfellow, Mr. James Ballantyne, who at that period was editor of a provincial paper. When the book came out, the imprint, Kelso, was read with wonder by amateurs of typography, who had never heard of such a place, and were astonished at the example of handsome printing which so obscure a town had produced. As for the editorial part of the task, my attempt to imitate the plan and style of Bishop Percy, observing only more strict fidelity concerning my originals, was favourably received by the public."

The first edition of volumes I. and II. of the Minstrelsy consisted of eight hundred copies, fifty of which were on large paper. One of the embellishments was a view of Hermitage castle, the history of which is rather curious. Scott executed a rough sketch of it during the last of his "Liddesdale raids" with Shortreed, standing for that purpose for an hour or more up to his middle in the snow. Nothing can be ruder than the performance, which I have now before me; but his friend William Clerk made a better drawing from it, and from his a third and further improved copy was done by Hugh Williams, the elegant artist, afterwards known as "Greek Williams." Scott used to say the oddest thing of all was, that the engraving, founded on the labours of three draughtsmen, one of whom could not draw a straight line, and the two others had never seen the place meant to be represented, was nevertheless pronounced by the natives of Liddesdale to give a very fair notion of the ruins of Hermitage.

The edition was exhausted in the course of the year, and the terms of publication having been that Scott should have half the clear profits, his share was exactly £78 10s.—a sum which certainly could not have repaid him for the actual expenditure incurred in the collection of his materials. Messrs. Cadell and Davies, however, complained, and probably with good reason, that a premature advertisement of a "second and improved edition" had rendered some copies of the first unsaleable.

I shall transcribe the letter in which Mr. George Ellis acknowledges the receipt of his copy of the book.

To Walter Scott, Esq. Advocate, Castle Street, Edinburgh.

"Sunning Hill, March 5, 1802.

"My dear Sir,

"The volumes are arrived, and I have been devouring them, not as a pig does a parcel of grains, (by which simile you will judge that I must be brewing, as indeed I am,) putting in its snout, shutting its eyes, and swallowing as fast as it can without consideration—but as a schoolboy does a piece of gingerbread; nibbling a little bit here, and a little bit there, smacking his lips, surveying the number of square inches which still remain for his gratification, endeavouring to look it into larger dimensions, and making at every mouthful a tacit vow to protract his enjoyment by restraining his appetite. Now, therefore—but no! I must first assure you on the part of Mrs. E., that if you cannot, or will not come to England soon, she must gratify her curiosity and gratitude, by setting off for Scotland, though at the risk of being tempted to pull caps with Mrs. Scott when she arrives at the end of her journey. Next, I must request you to convey to Mr. Leyden my very sincere acknowledgment for his part of the precious parcel. How truly vexatious that such a man should embark, not for the 'fines Atticæ,' but for those of Asia; that the Genius of Scotland, instead of a poor *Complaint*, and an address in the style of 'Navis, quæ tibi creditum debes Virgilium—reddas incolumem, precor,' should not interfere to prevent his loss. I wish to hope that we should, as Sterne says, 'manage these matters better' in England; but now, as regret is unavailing, to the main point of my letter.

"You will not, of course, expect that I should as yet give you any thing like an opinion, *as a critic*, of your volumes; first, because you have thrown into my throat a cate of such magnitude that Cerberus, who had three throats, could not have swallowed a third part of it with-

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out shutting his eyes; and secondly, because, although I have gone a little farther than George Nicol the bookseller, who cannot cease exclaiming, 'What a beautiful book!' and is distracted with jealousy of your Kelso Bulmer, yet, as I said before, I have not been able yet to *digest* a great deal of your 'Border Minstrelsy.' I have, however, taken such a survey as satisfies me that your plan is neither too comprehensive nor too contracted; that the parts are properly distinct; and that they are (to preserve the painter's metaphor) *made out* just as they ought to be. Your introductory chapter is, I think, particularly good; and I was much pleased, although a little surprised, at finding that it was made to serve as a *recueil des pièces justificatives* to your view of the state of manners among your Borderers, which I venture to say will be more thumbed than any part of the volume.

"You will easily believe that I cast many an anxious look for the annunciation of 'Sir Tristrem,' and will not be surprised that I was at first rather disappointed at not finding any thing like a solemn engagement to produce him to the world within some fixed and limited period. Upon reflection, however, I really think you have judged wisely, and that you have best promoted the interests of literature, by sending, as the *harbinger* of the 'Knight of Leonais,' a collection which must form a parlour window book in every house in Britain which contains a parlour and a window. I am happy to find my *old favourites* in their natural situation—indeed in the only situation which can enable a Southern reader to estimate their merits. You remember what somebody said of the Prince de Condé's army during the wars of the Fronde, viz.—"that it would be a very fine army whenever it came of age." Of the Murrays and Armstrongs of your Border Ballads, it might be said that they might grow, when the age of good taste should arrive, to a Glenfinlas or an Eve of St. John. Leyden's additional poems are also very beautiful. I meant, at setting out, a few simple words of thanks, and behold I have written a letter, but no matter; I shall return to the charge after a more attentive perusal. Ever yours very faithfully,

G. Ellis."

I might fill many pages by transcribing similar letters from persons of acknowledged discernment in this branch of literature; John, Duke of Roxburgh, is among the number, and he conveys also a complimentary message from the late Earl Spencer; Pinkerton issues his decree of approbation as *ex cathedrâ*; Chalmers overflows with heartier praise; and even Joseph Ritson extols his presentation copy as "the most valuable literary treasure in his possession." There follows enough of female admiration to have been dangerous for another man; a score of find ladies contend who shall be the most extravagant in encomium—and as many professed blue stockings come after; among, or rather above the rest, Anna Seward, "the Swan of Lichfield," who laments that her "bright luminary," Darwin, does not survive to partake her raptures;—observes, that "in the Border Ballads the first strong rays of the Delphic orb illuminate Jellon Graeme;" and concludes with a fact indisputable, but strangely expressed, viz. that "the Lady Anne Bothwell's Lament, Cowdenknowes, &c. &c., *climatically* preceded the treasures of Burns, and the consummate Glenfinlas and Eve of St. John." Scott felt as acutely as any malevolent critic the pedantic affectations of Miss Seward's epistolary style, but in her case sound sense as well as vigorous ability had unfortunately condescended to an absurd disguise; he looked below it, and was far from confounding her honest praise with the flat superlatives either of worldly parrots or weak enthusiasts.

CHAPTER XI.

PREPARATION OF VOLUME III. OF THE MINSTRELSY—AND OF SIR TRISTREM—CORRESPONDENCE WITH MISS SEWARD AND MR. ELLIS—BALLAD OF THE REIVER'S WEDDING—COMMENCEMENT OF THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL—VISIT TO LONDON AND OXFORD—COMPLETION OF THE MINSTRELSY OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER—1802-1803.

The approbation with which the first two volumes of the Minstrelsy were received, stimulated Scott to fresh diligence in the preparation of a third; while "Sir Tristrem"—it being now settled that this romance should form a separate volume—was transmitted, without delay, to the printer at Kelso. As early as March 30th, 1802, Ballantyne, who had just returned from London, writes thus:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Castle Street, Edinburgh.

"Dear Sir,

"By to-morrow's Fly I shall send the remaining materials for Minstrelsy, together with three sheets of Sir Tristrem. . . . I shall ever think the printing the Scottish Minstrelsy one of the most fortunate circumstances of my life. I have gained, not lost by it, in a pecuniary light; and the prospects it has been the means of opening to me, may advantageously influence my future destiny. I can never be sufficiently grateful for the interest you unceasingly take in my welfare. Your query respecting *Edinburgh*, I am *yet* at a loss to answer. To say truth, the expenses I have incurred in my resolution to acquire a character for elegant printing, whatever might be the result, cramp considerably my present exertions. A short time, I trust, will make me easier, and I shall then contemplate the road before me with a steady eye. One thing alone is clear—that Kelso cannot be my abiding place for aye; sooner or later emigrate I must and will; but, at all events, I must wait till my plumes are grown. I am, dear sir, your faithful and obliged,

J. B."

On learning that a third volume of the Minstrelsy was in progress, Miss Seward forwarded to the Editor "Rich Auld Willie's Farewell," a Scotch ballad of her own manufacture, meaning, no doubt, to place it at his disposal, for the section of "Imitations." His answer, (dated Edinburgh, June 29, 1802,) after many compliments to the *Auld Willie*, of which he made the use that had been intended, proceeds as follows:—

"I have some thoughts of attempting a Border ballad in the comic manner; but I almost despair of bringing it well out. A certain Sir William Scott, from whom I am descended, was ill-advised enough to plunder the estate of Sir Gideon Murray of Elibank, ancestor to the present Lord Elibank. The marauder was defeated, seized, and brought in fetters to the castle of Elibank, upon the Tweed. The Lady Murray (agreeable to the custom of all ladies in ancient tales) was seated on the battlements, and descried the return of her husband with his prisoners. She immediately inquired what he meant to do with the young Knight of Harden, which was the *petit titre* of Sir William Scott. 'Hang the robber, assuredly,' was the answer of Sir Gideon. 'What!' answered the lady, 'hang the handsome young knight of Harden, when I have three ill-favoured daughters unmarried! No, no, Sir Gideon, we'll force him to marry our Meg.' Now tradition says, that Meg Murray was the ugliest woman in the four counties, and that she was called, in the homely dialect of the time, *meikle-mouthed Meg* (I will not affront you by an explanation.*) Sir Gideon, like a good husband and tender father, entered into his wife's sentiments, and preferred to Sir William the alternative of becoming his son-in-law, or decorating with his carcase the *kindly* gallows of Elibank. The lady was so very ugly, that Sir William, the handsomest man of his time, positively refused the honour of her hand. Three days were allowed him to make up his mind; and it was not until he found one end of a rope made fast to his neck, and the other knitted to a sturdy oak bough, that his resolution gave way, and he preferred an ugly wife to the literal noose. It is said, they were afterwards a very happy couple. She had a curious hand at pickling the beef which he stole; and, marauder as he was, he had little reason to dread being twitted by the pawky gowk. This, either by its being perpetually told to me when young, or by a perverted taste for such anecdotes, has always struck me as a good subject for a comic ballad, and how happy should I be were Miss Seward to agree in opinion with me.

"This little tale may serve for an introduction to some observations I have to offer upon our popular poetry. It will at least so far disclose your correspondent's weak side, as to induce you to make allowance for my mode of arguing. Much of its peculiar charm is indeed, I believe, to be attributed solely to its *locality*. A very common-place and obvious epithet, when applied to a scene which we have been accustomed to view with pleasure, recalls to us not merely the local scenery, but a thousand little nameless associations, which we are unable to separate or to define. In some verses of that eccentric but admirable poet, Coleridge, he talks of

'An old rude tale that suited well
The ruins wild and hoary.'

* It is commonly said that all Meg's descendants have inherited something of her characteristic feature. The poet certainly was no exception to the rule.

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I think there are few who have not been in some degree touched with this local sympathy. Tell a peasant an ordinary tale of robbery and murder, and perhaps you may fail to interest him; but to excite his terrors, you assure him it happened on the very heath he usually crosses, or to a man whose family he has known, and you rarely meet such a mere image of Humanity as remains entirely unmoved. I suspect it is pretty much the same with myself, and many of my countrymen, who are charmed by the effect of local description, and sometimes impute that effect to the poet which is produced by the recollections and associations which his verses excite. Why else did Sir Philip Sydney feel that the tale of Percy and Douglas moved him like the sound of a trumpet? or why is it that a Swiss sickens at hearing the famous Ranz des Vaches, to which the native of any other country would have listened for a hundred days, without any other sensation than ennui? I fear our poetical taste is in general much more linked with our prejudices of birth, of education, and of habitual thinking, than our vanity will allow us to suppose; and that, let the point of the poet's dart be as sharp as that of Cupid, it is the wings lent it by the fancy and prepossessions of the gentle reader which carry it to the mark. It may appear like great egotism to pretend to illustrate my position from the reception which the productions of so mere a ballad-monger as myself have met with from the public; but I cannot help observing that all Scotchmen prefer the Eve of St. John to Glenfinlas, and most of my English friends entertain precisely an opposite opinion. . . . I have been writing this letter by a paragraph at a time for about a month, this being the season when we are most devoted to the

'Drowsy bench and babbling hall.'

I have the honour," &c. &c. . . . . .

Miss Seward, in her next letter, offers an apology for not having sooner begged Scott to place her name among the *subscribers* to his third volume. His answer is in these words:—

"Lasswade, July, 1802.

"I am very sorry to have left you under a mistake about my third volume. The truth is, that highly as I should feel myself flattered by the encouragement of Miss Seward's name, I cannot, in the present instance, avail myself of it, as the Ballads are not published by subscription. Providence having, I suppose, foreseen that my literary qualifications, like those of many more distinguished persons, might not, *par hasard*, support me exactly as I would like, allotted me a small patrimony, which, joined to my professional income, and my appointments in the characteristic office of Sheriff of Ettrick Forest, serves to render my literary pursuits more a matter of amusement than an object of emolument. With this explanation, I hope you will honour me by accepting the third volume as soon as published, which will be in the beginning of next year, and I also hope, that under the circumstances, you will hold me acquitted of the silly vanity of wishing to be thought a *gentleman*-author.

"The ballad of The Reiver's Wedding is not yet written, but I have finished one of a tragic cast, founded upon the death of Regent Murray, who was shot in Linlithgow, by James Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh. The following verses contain the catastrophe, as told by Hamilton himself to his chief and his kinsmen:—

'With haakbut bent,' &c. &c.

* * * * * * *
* * * * * * *

"This Bothwellhaugh has occupied such an unwarrantable portion of my letter, that I have hardly time to tell you how much I join in your admiration of Tam o' Shanter, which I verily believe to be inimitable, both in the serious and ludicrous parts, as well as the singularly happy combination of both. I request Miss Seward to believe," &c.

The "Reiver's Wedding" never was completed, but I have found two copies of its commencement, and I shall make no apologies for inserting here what seems to have been the second one. It will be seen that he had meant to mingle with Sir William's capture, Auld Wat's Foray of the Bassened Bull, and the Feast of Spurs; and that, I know not for what reason, Lochwood, the ancient fortress of the Johnstones in Annandale, has been substituted for the real locality of his ancestor's Drumhead Wedding Contract:—

"THE REIVER'S WEDDING.

"O will ye hear a mirthful bourd?
Or will ye hear of courtesie?
Or will ye hear how a gallant lord
Was wedded to a gay ladye?

'Ca' out the kye,' quo' the village herd,
As he stood on the knowe,
'Ca' this ane's nine, and that ane's ten,
And bauld Lord William's cow.'

'Ah! by my sooth,' quoth William then,
'And stands it that way now,
When the knave and churl have nine and ten,
That the Lord has but his cow?

'I swear by the light of the Michaelmas moon
And the might of Mary high,
And by the edge of my braidsword brown,
They shall soon say Harden's kye.'

He took a bugle frae his side,
With names carved o'er and o'er—
Full many a chief of meikle pride,
That Border bugle bore—*

He blew a note baith sharp and bie,
Till rock and water rang around—
Three score of mosstroopers and three
Have mounted at that bugle sound.

The Michaelmas moon had entered then,
And ere she wan the full,
Ye might see by her light in Harden glen
A bow o' kye and a baseened bull.

And loud, and loud, in Harden tower
The quaigh gaed round wi' meikle glee;
For the English beef was brought in bower,
And the English ale flowed merrille.

And mony a guest from Teviotside
And Yarrow's Braes were there;
Was never a lord in Scotland wide
That made more dainty fare.

They ate, they laugh'd, they sang and quaff'd,
Till nought on board was seen,
When knight and squire were boune to dine,
But a spur of silver sheen.

Lord William has ta'en his berry brown steed—
A sore shent man was he:
'Wait ye, my guest, a little speed—
Weel feasted ye shall be.'

He rode him down by Falsehope burn,
His cousin dear to see,
With him to take a riding turn—
Wat-draw-the-sword was he.

And when he came to Falsehope glen,
Beneath the trysting tree,
On the smooth green was carved plain,†
'To Lochwood bound are we.'

'O if they be gane to dark Lochwood
To drive the Warden's gear,
Betwixt our names, I ween, there's feud;
I'll go and have my share:

'For little reck I for Johnstone's feud,
The Warden though he be.'
So Lord William is away to dark Lochwood,
With riders barely three.

The Warden's daughters in Lochwood sate,
Were all both fair and gay,
All save the Lady Margaret,
And she was wan and wae.

The sister, Jean, had a full fair skin,
And Grace was bauld and braw;
But the leal-fast heart her breast within
It weel was worth them a'.

Her father's planked her sisters twa
With meikle joy and pride;
But Margaret maun seek Dundrennan's wa'—
She ne'er can be a bride.

On spear and casque by gallants gent
Her sisters' scarfs were borne,
But never at tilt or tournament
Were Margaret's colours worn.

* This celebrated horn is still in the possession of Lord Polwarth.

† "At Linton, in Roxburghshire, there is a circle of stones surrounding a smooth plot of turf, called the *Tryst*, or place of appointment, which tradition avers to have been the rendezvous of the neighbouring warriors. The name of the leader was cut in the turf, and the arrangement of the letters announced to his followers the course which he had taken."—*Introduction to the Minstrelsy*, p. 186.

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Her sisters rode to Thirlstane bower,
But she was left at hame
To wander round the gloomy tower,
And sigh young Harden's fame.

'Of all the knights, the knight most fair,
From Yarrow to the Tyne,'
Soft sigh'd the maid, 'is Harden's heir,
But ne'er can he be mine;

'Of all the maids, the foulest maid
From Teviot to the Dee,
Ah!' sighing sad, that lady said,
'Can ne'er young Harden's be'—

She looked up the briery glen,
And up the mossy brae,
And she saw a score of her father's men
Yclad in the Johnstone gray.

O fast and fast they downwards sped
The moss and briers among,
And in the midst the troopers led
A shackled knight along."

* * * * * * *

As soon as the autumn vacation set Scott at liberty, he proceeded to the Borders with Leyden. "We have just concluded," he tells Ellis, on his return to Edinburgh, "an excursion of two or three weeks through my jurisdiction of Selkirkshire, where, in defiance of mountains, rivers, and bogs damp and dry, we have penetrated the very recesses of Ettrick Forest, to which district, if I ever have the happiness of welcoming you, you will be convinced that I am truly the sheriff of the 'cairn and the scaur.' In the course of our grand tour, besides the risks of swamping and breaking our necks, we encountered the formidable hardships of sleeping upon peat-stacks, and eating mutton slain by no common butcher, but deprived of life by the judgment of God, as a coroner's inquest would express themselves. I have, however, not only escaped safe 'per varios casus per tot discrimina rerum,' but returned *loaded* with the treasures of oral tradition. The principal result of our inquiries has been a complete and perfect copy of 'Maitland with his Auld Berd Graie,' referred to by Douglas in his 'Palice of Honour,' along with John the Reef and other popular characters, and celebrated also in the poems from the Maitland MS. You may guess the surprise of Leyden and myself when this was presented to us, copied down from the recitation of an old shepherd, by a country farmer, and with no greater corruptions than might be supposed to be introduced by the lapse of time, and the ignorance of reciters. I don't suppose it was originally composed later than the days of Blind Harry. Many of the old words are retained, which neither the reciter nor the copier understood. Such are the military engines *sowies*, *springwalls*, (springalds,) and many others. Though the poetical merit of this curiosity is not striking, yet it has an odd energy and dramatic effect."

A few weeks later, he thus answers Ellis's inquiries as to the progress of the Sir Tristrem:—"The worthy knight is still in embryo, though the whole poetry is printed. The fact is, that a second edition of the Minstrelsy has been demanded more suddenly than I expected, and has occupied my immediate attention. I have also my third volume to compile and arrange; for the Minstrelsy is now to be completed altogether independent of the *preux chevalier*, who might hang heavy upon its skirts. I assure you my *Continuation* is mere doggrel, not poetry—it is *argued in the same division* with Thomas's own production, and therefore not worth sending. However, you may depend on having the whole long before publication. I have derived much information from Turner: he combines the knowledge of the Welsh and northern authorities, and, in despite of a most detestable *Gibbonism*, his book is interesting.* I intend to study the Welsh triads before I finally commit myself on the subject of Border poetry. . . . . As for Mister Ritson, he and I still continue on decent terms; and in truth, he makes *pate de velours*; but I dread I shall see 'a whisker first and then a claw' stretched out against my unfortunate lucubrations. Ballantyne, the Kelso printer, who has a book of his in hand, groans in spirit over the peculiarities of his orthography, which, sooth to say, hath seldom been equalled since the days of Elphinstone, the ingenious author of the mode of spelling according to the pronunciation, which he aptly termed, "Propriety ascertained in her Picture." I fear the remark of Festus to St. Paul might be more justly applied to this curious investigator of antiquity, and it is a pity such research should be rendered useless by the infirmities of his temper. I have lately had from him *a copie* of 'Ye litel wee Mon,' of which I think I can make some use. In return, I have sent him a sight of Auld Maitland, the original MS. If you are curious, I dare say you may easily see it. Indeed, I might easily send you a transcribed copy,—but I wish him to see it *in puris naturalibus*."

Ritson had visited Lasswade in the course of this autumn, and his conduct had been such as to render the precaution here alluded to very proper, in the case of one who, like Scott, was resolved to steer clear of the feuds and heartburnings that gave rise to such scandalous scenes among the other antiquaries of the day. Leyden met Ritson at the cottage, and, far from imitating his host's forbearance, took a pleasure of tormenting the half-mad pedant by every means in his power. Among other circumstances, Scott delighted to detail the scene that occurred when his two uncouth allies first met at dinner. Well knowing Ritson's holy horror of all animal food, Leyden complained that the joint on the table was overdone. "Indeed, for that matter," cried he, "meat can never be too little done, and raw is best of all." He sent to the kitchen accordingly for a plate of literally raw beef, and manfully eat it up, with no sauce but the exquisite ruefulness of the Pythagorean's glances.

Mr. Robert Pierce Gillies, a gentleman of the Scotch bar, well known, among other things, for some excellent translations from the German, was present at the cottage another day, when Ritson was in Scotland. He has described the whole scene in the second section of his "Recollections of Sir Walter Scott,"—a set of papers in which many inaccurate statements occur, but which convey, on the whole, a lively impression of the persons introduced.* "In approaching the cottage," he says, "I was struck with the exceeding air of neatness that prevailed around. The hand of tasteful cultivation had been there, and all methods employed to convert an ordinary thatched cottage into a handsome and comfortable abode. The doorway was in an angle formed by the original old cabin and the additional rooms which had been built to it. In a moment I had passed through the lobby, and found myself in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Scott, and Mr. William Erskine. At this early period, Scott was more like the portrait, by Saxon, engraved for the first edition of 'The Lady of the Lake,' than to any subsequent picture. He retained in features and form an impress of that elasticity and youthful vivacity, which he used to complain wore off after he was forty, and by *his own* account was exchanged for the plodding heaviness of an operose student. He had now, indeed, somewhat of a boyish gayety of look, and in person was tall, slim, and extremely active. On my entrance, he was seated at a table near the window, and occupied in transcribing from an old MS. volume into his commonplace book. As to costume, he was carelessly attired in a widely-made shooting-dress, with a coloured handkerchief round his neck; the very antithesis of style usually adopted either by student or barrister. 'Hah!' he exclaimed, 'welcome, thrice welcome! for we are just proposing to have lunch, and then a long, long walk through wood and wold, in which I am sure you will join us. But no man can thoroughly appreciate the pleasure of such a life who has not

* The first part of Mr. Sharon Turner's History of the Anglo-Saxons was published in 1799; the second in 1801.

* These papers appeared in Fraser's Magazine for September, November, and December, 1835, and January, 1836.

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known what it is to rise spiritless in a morning, and *daidle* out half the day in the Parliament House, where we must all *compear* within another fortnight; then to spend the rest of one's time in applying proofs to *condescendences*, and hauling out papers to bamboozle judges, most of whom are *daized* enough already. What say you, Counsellor Erskine? Come—*alla guerra*—rouse, and say whether you are for a walk to-day.'—'Certainly, in such fine weather I don't see what we can propose better. It is the last I shall see of the country this vacation.'—'Nay, say not so, man; we shall all be merry twice and once yet before the evil days arrive.'—'I'll tell you what I have thought of this half-hour: it is a plan of mine to rent a cottage and a cabbage-garden—not here, but somewhere farther out of town, and never again, after this one session, to enter the Parliament House.'—'And you'll ask Ritson, perhaps,' said Scott, 'to stay with you, and help to consume the cabbages. Rest assured we shall both sit on the bench one day; but, heigho! we shall both have become very old and philosophical by that time.'—'Did you not expect Lewis here this morning?'—'Lewis, I venture to say, is not up yet, for he dined at Dalkeith yesterday, and of course found the wine very good. Besides, you know, I have intrusted him with *Finella* till his own steed gets well of a sprain, and he could not join our walking excursion.—I see you are admiring that broken sword,' he added, addressing me, 'and your interest would increase if you knew how much labour was required to bring it into my possession. In order to grasp that mouldering weapon, I was obliged to drain the well at the Castle of Dunnottar. But it is time to set out; and here is one *friend*' (addressing himself to a large dog) 'who is very impatient to be in the field. He tells me he knows where to find a hare in the woods of Mavisbank. And here is another,' (caressing a terrier,) 'who longs to have a battle with the weazels and water-rats, and the foumart that *wone* near the caves of Gorthy: so let us be off.'"

Mr. Gillies tells us, that in the course of their walk to Rosslyn, Scott's foot slipped, as he was scrambling towards a cave on the edge of a precipitous bank, and that, "had there been no trees in the way, he must have been killed, but midway he was stopped by a large root of hazel, when, instead of struggling, which would have made matters greatly worse, he seemed perfectly resigned to his fate, and slipped through the tangled thicket till he lay flat on the river's brink. He rose in an instant from his recumbent attitude, and with a hearty laugh called out, 'Now, let me see who else will do the like.' He scrambled up the cliff with alacrity, and entered the cave, where we had a long dialogue."

Even after he was an old and hoary man, he continually encountered such risks with the same recklessness. The extraordinary strength of his hands and arms was his great reliance in all such difficulties, and if he could see any thing to lay hold of, he was afraid of no leap, or rather hop, that came in his way. Mr. Gillies says, that when they drew near the famous chapel of Rosslyn, Erskine expressed a hope that they might, as habitual visitors, escape hearing the usual endless story of the silly old woman that showed the ruins; but Scott answered, "There is a pleasure in the song which none but the songstress knows, and by telling her we know it all already, we should make the poor devil unhappy."

On their return to the cottage, Scott inquired for *the learned cabbage-eater*, meaning Ritson, who had been expected to dinner. "Indeed," answered his wife, "you may be happy he is not here, he is so very disagreeable. Mr. Leyden, I believe, frightened him away." It turned out that it was even so. When Ritson appeared, a round of cold beef was on the luncheon-table, and Mrs. Scott, forgetting his peculiar creed, offered him a slice. The antiquary, in his indignation, expressed himself in such outrageous terms to the lady, that Leyden first tried to correct him by ridicule, and then, on the madman growing more violent, became angry in his turn, till at last he threatened, that if he were not silent, he would *thraw his neck*. Scott shook his head at this recital, which Leyden observing, grew vehement in his own justification. Scott said not a word in reply, but took up a large bunch of feathers fastened to a stick, denominated *a duster*, and shook it about the student's ears till he laughed—then changed the subject."

All this is very characteristic of the parties. Scott's playful aversion to dispute was a trait in his mind and manners, that could alone have enabled him to make use at one and the same time, and for the same purpose, of two such persons as Ritson and Leyden.

To return to Ellis. In answer to Scott's letter last quoted, he urged him to make Sir Tristrem *volume fourth* of the Minstrelsy. "As to his hanging heavy on hand," (says he,) "I admit, that as a separate publication he may do so, but the Minstrelsy is now established as a library book, and in this bibliomaniac age, no one would think it perfect without the *preux chevalier*, if you avow the said chevalier as your adopted son. Let him, at least, be printed in the same size and paper, and then I am persuaded our booksellers will do the rest fast enough, upon the credit of your reputation." Scott replies, (November,) that it is now too late to alter the fate of Sir Tristrem. "Longman, of Paternoster Row, has been down here in summer, and purchased the copyright of the Minstrelsy. Sir Tristrem is a separate property, but will be on the same scale in point of size."

The next letter introduces to Ellis's personal acquaintance Leyden, who had by this time completed his medical studies, and taken his degree as a physician. In it Scott says: "At length I write to you per favour of John Leyden. I presume Heber has made you sufficiently acquainted with this original, (for he is a true one,) and therefore I will trust to your own kindness, should an opportunity occur of doing him any service in furthering his Indian plans. You will readily judge, from conversing with him, that with a very uncommon stock of acquired knowledge, he wants a good deal of another sort of knowledge, which is only to be gleaned from an early intercourse with polished society. But he dances his bear with a good confidence, and the bear itself is a very good-natured and well-conditioned animal. All his friends are much interested about him, as the qualities both of his heart and head are very uncommon." He adds: "My third volume will appear as soon after the others as the despatch of the printers will admit. Some parts will, I think, interest you; particularly the preservation of the entire 'Auld Maitland' by oral tradition, probably from the reign of Edward II. or III. As I have never met with such an instance, I must request you to inquire all about it of Leyden, who was with me when I received my first copy. In the third volume I intend to publish *Cadyow Castle*, a historical sort of a ballad upon the death of the Regent Murray, and besides this, a long poem of my own. It will be a kind of romance of Border chivalry, in a light-horseman sort of stanza."

He appears to have sent a copy of *Cadyow Castle* by Leyden, whose reception at Mr. Ellis's villa, near Windsor, is thus described in the next letter of the correspondence. "Let me thank you," says Ellis, "for your poem, which Mrs. E. has *not* received, and which, indeed, I could not help feeling glad, in the first instance, (though we now begin to grow very impatient for it,) that she did not receive. Leyden would not have been your Leyden if he had arrived like a careful citizen, with all his packages carefully docketed in his portmanteau. If on the point of leaving for many years, perhaps for ever, his country and the friends of his youth, he had not deferred to the last, and till it was too late, all that could be easily done, and that stupid people find time to do—if he had not arrived with all his ideas perfectly bewildered—and tired to death, and sick—and without any settled plans for futurity, or any accurate recollection of the past—we should have felt much more disappointed than we were by the

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non-arrival of your poem, which he assured us he remembered to have left somewhere or other, and therefore felt very confident of recovering. In short, his whole air and countenance told us, 'I am come to be one of your friends,' and we immediately took him at his word."

By the "romance of Border Chivalry," which was designed to form part of the third volume of the Minstrelsy, the reader is to understand the first draught of The Lay of the Last Minstrel; and the author's description of it as being "in a light-horseman sort of stanza," was probably suggested by the circumstances under which the greater part of that original draught was composed. He has told us, in his Introduction of 1830, that the poem originated in a request of the young and lovely Countess of Dalkeith, that he would write a ballad on the legend of Gilpin Horner: that he began it at Lasswade, and read the opening stanzas, as soon as they were written, to his friends, Erskine and Cranstoun: that their reception of these was apparently so cold as to discourage him, and disgust him with what he had done; but that finding, a few days afterwards, that the stanzas had nevertheless excited their curiosity, and haunted their memory, he was encouraged to resume the undertaking. The scene and date of this resumption I owe to the recollection of the then Cornet of the Edinburgh light-horse. While the troop were on permanent duty at Musselburgh, in the autumnal recess of 1802, the quartermaster, during a charge on Portobello sands, received a kick of a horse, which confined him for three days to his lodgings. Mr. Skene found him busy with his pen; and he produced before these three days expired the first canto of the Lay, very nearly, if his friend's memory may be trusted, in the state in which it was ultimately published. That the whole poem was sketched and filled in with extraordinary rapidity, there can be no difficulty in believing. He himself says, (in the Introduction of 1830,) that after he had once got fairly into the vein, it proceeded at the rate of about a canto in a week. The Lay, however, like the Tristrem, soon outgrew the dimensions which he had originally contemplated; the design of including it in the third volume of the Minstrelsy was of course abandoned; and it did not appear until nearly three years after that fortunate mishap on the beach of Portobello.

To return to Scott's correspondence:—it shows that Ellis had, although involved at the time in serious family afflictions, exerted himself strenuously and effectively in behalf of Leyden; a service which Scott acknowledges most warmly. His friend writes, too, at great length about the completion of the Minstrelsy, urging, in particular, the propriety of prefixing to it a good map of the Scottish Border—"for, in truth," he says, "I have never been able to find even *Ercildoune* on any map in my possession." The poet answers (January 30, 1803:) "The idea of a map pleases me much, but there are two strong objections to its being prefixed to this edition. *First*, we shall be out in a month, within which time it would be difficult, I apprehend, for Mr. Arrowsmith, labouring under the disadvantages which I am about to mention, to complete the map. *Secondly*, you are to know that I am an utter stranger to geometry, surveying, and all such *inflammatory* branches of study, as Mrs. Malaprop calls them. My education was unfortunately interrupted by a long indisposition, which occasioned my residing for about two years in the country with a good maiden aunt, who permitted and encouraged me to run about the fields as wild as any buck that ever fled from the face of man. Hence my geographical knowledge is merely practical, and though I think that in the *South country* 'I could be a guide worth ony twa, that may in Liddesdale be found,' yet I believe Hobby Noble, or Kinmont Willie, would beat me at laying down a map. I have, however, sense enough to see that our mode of executing maps in general is any thing but perfect. The country is most inaccurately defined, and had your General (Wade) marched through Scotland by the assistance of Ainslie's map, his flying artillery would soon have stuck fast among our morasses, and his horse broke their knees among our cairns. Your system of a bird's eye view is certainly the true principle." He goes on to mention some better maps than Ellis seemed to have consulted, and to inform him where he may discover Ercildoune, under its modern form of Earlston, upon the river Leader; and concludes, "the map then must be deferred until the *third* edition, about which, I suppose, Longman thinks courageously." He then adds: "I am almost glad Cadyow Castle is miscarried, as I have rather lost conceit of it at present, being engaged on what I think will be a more generally interesting legend. I have called it the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' and put it in the mouth of an old bard, who is supposed to have survived all his brethren, and to have lived down to 1690. The thing itself will be very long, but I would willingly have sent you the *Introduction*, had you been still in possession of your senatorial privilege;—but double postage would be a strange innovation on the established price of ballads, which have always sold at the easy rate of one halfpenny."

I must now give part of a letter in which Leyden recurs to the kindness, and sketches the person and manners of George Ellis, in a highly characteristic fashion. He says to Scott, (January 25, 1803,) "You were, no doubt, surprised, my dear sir, that I gave you so little information about my movements; but it is only this day I have been able to speak of them with any precision. Such is the tardiness in every thing connected with the India House, that a person who is present in the character of spectator is quite amazed; but if we consider it as the centre of a vast commercial concern, in comparison of which Tyre and Sidon, and the Great Carthage itself, must inevitably dwindle into huckster shops, we are induced to think of them with more patience. Even yet I cannot answer you exactly—being very uncertain whether I am to sail on the 18th of next month, or the 28th.

1.

"Now shal I telen to ye, I wis,
Of that kiad Squeyere Ellis,
That wonnen in this cité;
Courteas he is, by God almizt!
That he nis nought ymaked knizt
It is the more pitie.

2.

"He konnen better eche giewe
Than I konnen to ye shewe,
Baith maist and least.
So wel he wirketh in eche thewe,
That where he commen, I tel ye trewe,
He is ane welcome guest.

3.

"His eyen graye as glas ben,
And his looks ben alto kene,
Loveliche to paramour.
Brown as acorn ben his faxe,
His face is thin as bettel axe
That dealeth dintis doure.

4.

"His wit ben both keene and sharpe,
To knizt or dame that carll can carpe
Either in hall or bower;
And had I not this squeyere yfonde,
I had been at the se-gronde,
Which had been great doloure.

5.

"In him Ich finden non other euil,
Save that his nostril so doth snivel,
It is not myche my choice.
But than his wit ben so perquire,
That thatwho can his carpynge here
Thal thynke not of his voice.

6.

"To speake not of his gentel dame
Ich wis it war bothe sin and shame
Lede is not to layne;
She is a ladye of sich pryce,
To leven in that dame's service
Meni wer ful fain.

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7.

"Hir wit is ful kene and queynt,
And hir stature smale and gent,
Semeleche to be seene;
Armes, hondes, and fingres smale,
Of pearl beth eche fingre nale;
She mist be ferys Quene.

8.

"That lady she wil giv a scarf
To him that would ykillen a dwarf
Churl of paynim kinde;
That dwarf he is so fell of mode
Tho ye shold drynk his hert blode,
Gode wold ze never finde.

9.

"That dwarf he ben beardless and bare
And weazelblowen ben al his hair,
Sike an ympe or elfe;
And in this world beth al and hale
Ben nothynge that he loveth an dele
Safe his owen selfe." . . . .

The fourth of these verses refers to the loss of the Hindostan, in which ship Leyden, but for Mr. Ellis's interference, must have sailed, and which foundered in the Channel. The dwarf is, of course, Ritson.

After various letters of the same kind, I find one, dated Isle of Wight, April the 1st, (1803,) the morning before Leyden finally sailed. "I have been two days on board," he writes, "and you may conceive what an excellent change I made from the politest society of London to the British skippers of Portsmouth. Our crew consists of a very motley party; but there are some of them very ingenious, and Robert Smith, Sidney's brother, is himself a host. He is almost the most powerful man I have met with. My money concerns I shall consider you as trustee of; and all remittances, as well as dividends, from Longman, will be to your direction. These, I hope, we shall soon be able to adjust very accurately. Money may be paid, but kindness never. Assure your excellent Charlotte, whom I shall ever recollect with affection and esteem, how much I regret that I did not see her before my departure, and say a thousand pretty things, for which my mind is too much agitated, being in the situation of Coleridge's devil and his grannam, 'expecting and hoping the trumpet to blow.' And now, my dear Scott, adieu. Think of me with indulgence, and be certain, that wherever, and in whatever situation, John Leyden is, his heart is unchanged by place, and his soul by time."

This letter was received by Scott, not in Edinburgh, but in London. He had hurried up to town as soon as the Court of Session rose for the spring vacation, in hopes of seeing his friend once more before he left England; but he came too late. He had, however, done his part: he had sent Leyden £50, through Messrs. Longman, a week before; and on the back of that bill there is the following memorandum:—"Dr. Leyden's total debt to me £50; he also owes £50 to my uncle."

He thus writes to Ballantyne, on the 21st April, 1803:—

"I have to thank you for the accuracy with which the Minstrelsy is thrown off. Longman and Rees are delighted with the printing. Be so good as to disperse the following presentation copies, with 'From the Editor' on each:—

James Hogg, Ettrick House, care of Mr. Oliver, Hawick—by the carrier—a complete set.
Thomas Scott (my brother,) ditto.
Colin Mackenzie, Esq., Prince's Street, third volume only.
Mrs. Scott, George Street, ditto.
Dr. Rutherford, York Place, ditto.
Captain Scott, Rosebank, ditto.

I mean all these to be ordinary paper. Send one set fine paper to Dalkeith House, addressed to the Duchess; another, by the Inverary carrier, to Lady Charlotte Campbell; the remaining *ten*, fine paper, with any of Vol. III., which may be on fine paper, to be sent to me by sea. I think they will give you some *eclat* here, where printing is so much valued. I have settled about printing an edition of the Lay, 8vo, with vignettes, provided I can get a draughtsman whom I think well of. We may throw off a few superb in quarto. To the Minstrelsy I mean this note to be added, by way of advertisement:—'In the press, and will speedily be published, The Lay of the Last Minstrel, by Walter Scott, Esq., Editor of The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border. Also, Sir Tristrem, a Metrical Romance, by Thomas of Ercildoune, called the Rhymer, edited from an ancient MS., with an Introduction and Notes, by Walter Scott, Esq.' Will you cause such a thing to be appended in your own way and fashion?"

This letter is dated "No. 15, Piccadilly West,"—he and Mrs. Scott being there domesticated under the roof of the late M. Charles Dumergue, a man of very superior abilities and of excellent education, well known as surgeon-dentist to the royal family, who had been intimately acquainted with the Charpentiers in his own early life in France, and had warmly befriended Mrs. Scott's mother on her first arrival in England. M. Dumergue's house was, throughout the whole period of the emigration, liberally opened to the exiles of his native country; nor did some of the noblest of those unfortunate refugees scruple to make the freest use of his purse, as well as of his hospitality. Here Scott met much highly interesting French society, and until a child of his own was established in London, he never thought of taking up his abode any where else, as often as he had occasion to be in town.

The letter is addressed to "Mr. James Ballantyne, printer, Abbey-hill, Edinburgh;" which shows, that before the third volume of the Minstrelsy passed through the press, the migration recommended two years earlier had at length taken place. "It was about the end of 1802," says Ballantyne in his Memorandum, "that I closed with a plan so congenial to my wishes. I removed, bag and baggage, to Edinburgh, finding accommodation for two presses, and a proof one, in the precincts of Holyrood-house, then deriving new lustre and interest from the recent arrival of the royal exiles of France. In these obscure premises some of the most beautiful productions of what we called *The Border Press* were printed." The Memorandum states, that Scott having renewed his hint as to pecuniary assistance, so soon as the printer found his finances straitened, "a liberal loan was advanced accordingly." Of course Scott's interest was constantly exerted in procuring employment, both legal and literary, for his friend's types;—and the concern grew and prospered.

Heber, and Mackintosh then at the height of his reputation as a conversationist, and daily advancing also at the Bar, had been ready to welcome Scott in town as old friends; and Rogers, William Stewart Rose, and several other men of literary eminence, were at the same time added to the list of his acquaintance. His principal object, however—having missed Leyden—was to peruse and make extracts from some MSS. in the library of John, Duke of Roxburghe, for the illustration of the Tristrem; and he derived no small assistance in other researches of the like kind from the collections which the indefatigable and obliging Douce placed at his disposal. Having completed these labours, he and Mrs. Scott went, with Heber and Douce, to Sunninghill, where they spent a happy week, and Mr. and Mrs. Ellis heard the first two or three cantos of the Lay of the Last Minstrel read under an old oak in Windsor Forest.

I should not omit to say, that Scott was attended on this trip by a very large and fine bull-terrier, by name Camp, and that Camp's master, and mistress too, were delighted by finding that the Ellises cordially sympathized in their fondness for this animal, and indeed for all his race. At parting, Scott promised to send one of Camp's progeny, in the course of the season, to Sunninghill.

From thence they proceeded to Oxford, accompanied by Heber; and it was on this occasion, as I believe, that Scott first saw his friend's brother, Reginald, in afterdays the apostolic Bishop of Calcutta. He had just been declared the successful competitor for that year's poetical prize, and read to Scott at breakfast, in Brazen Nose College, the MS. of his "Palestine." Scott observed that, in the verses on Solomon's Temple, one striking circum-

stance had escaped him, namely, that no tools were used in its erection. Reginald retired for a few minutes to the corner of the room, and returned with the beautiful lines,—

> "No hammer fell, no ponderous axes rung,
> Like some tall palm the mystic fabric sprung.
> Majestic silence," &c.*

After inspecting the University and Blenheim, under the guidance of the Hebers, Scott returned to London, as appears from the following letter to Miss Seward, who had been writing to him on the subject of her projected biography of Dr. Darwin. The conclusion and date are lost.

"I have been for about a fortnight in this huge and bustling metropolis, when I am agreeably surprised by a packet from Edinburgh, containing Miss Seward's letter. I am truly happy at the information it communicates respecting the life of Dr. Darwin, who could not have wished his fame and character intrusted to a pen more capable of doing them ample, and, above all, discriminating justice. Biography, the most interesting perhaps of every species of composition, loses all its interest with me, when the shades and lights of the principal character are not accurately and faithfully detailed; nor have I much patience with such exaggerated daubing as Mr. Hayley has bestowed upon poor Cowper. I can no more sympathize with a mere eulogist than I can with a ranting hero upon the stage; and it unfortunately happens that some of our disrespect is apt, rather unjustly, to be transferred to the subject of the panegyric in the one case and to poor Cato in the other. Unapprehensive that even friendship can bias Miss Seward's duty to the public, I shall wait most anxiously for the volume her kindness has promised me.

"As for my third volume, it was very nearly printed when I left Edinburgh, and must, I think, be ready for publication in about a fortnight, when it will have the honour of travelling to Lichfield. I doubt you will find but little amusement in it, as there are a good many old ballads, particularly those of 'the Covenanters,' which, in point of composition, are mere drivelling trash. They are, however, curious in an historical point of view, and have enabled me to slide in a number of notes about that dark and bloody period of Scottish history. There is a vast convenience to an editor in a tale upon which, without the formality of adapting the notes very precisely to the shape and form of the ballad, he may hang on a set like a herald's coat without sleeves, saving himself the trouble of taking measure, and sending forth the tale of ancient time, ready equipped from the Monmouth Street warehouse of a commonplace book. Cadyow Castle is to appear in volume third.

"I proceeded thus far about three weeks ago, and shame to tell, have left my epistle unfinished ever since; yet I have not been wholly idle, about a fortnight of that period having been employed as much to my satisfaction as any similar space of time during my life. I was, the first week of that fortnight, with my invaluable friend George Ellis, and spent the second week at Oxford, which I visited for the first time. I was peculiarly fortunate in having, for my patron at Oxford, Mr. Heber, a particular friend of mine, who is intimately acquainted with all, both animate and inanimate, that is worth knowing at Oxford. The time, though as much as I could possibly spare, has, I find, been too short to convey to me separate and distinct ideas of all the variety of wonders which I saw. My memory only at present furnishes a grand but indistinct picture of towers, and chapels, and oriels, and vaulted halls, and libraries, and paintings. I hope, in a little time, my ideas will develope themselves a little more distinctly, otherwise I shall have profited little by my tour. I was much flattered by the kind reception and notice I met with from some of the most distinguished inhabitants of the halls of Isis, which was more than such a truant to the classic page as myself was entitled to expect at the source of classic learning.

"On my return, I find an apologetic letter from my printer, saying the third volume will be despatched in a day or two. There has been, it seems, a meeting among the printers' devils; also among the paper-makers. I never heard of authors *striking work*, as the mechanics call it, until their masters the booksellers should increase their pay; but if such a combination could take place, the revolt would now be general in all branches of literary labour. How much sincere satisfaction would it give me could I conclude this letter (as I once hoped) by saying I should visit Lichfield, and pay my personal respects to my invaluable correspondent, in my way northwards; but as circumstances render this impossible, I shall depute the poetry of the olden time in the editor's stead. My 'Romance' is not yet finished. I prefer it much to anything I have done of the kind." . . . .

He was in Edinburgh by the middle of May; and thus returns to his view of Oxford in a letter to his friend at Sunninghill:—

To George Ellis, Esq., &c. &c.

"Edinburgh, 25th May, 1803.

"My dear Ellis,

". . . . I was equally delighted with that venerable seat of learning, and flattered by the polite attention of Heber's friends. I should have been enchanted to have spent a couple of months among the curious libraries. What stores must be reserved for some painful student to bring forward to the public! Under the guidance and patronage of our good Heber, I saw many of the literary men of his Alma Mater, and found matters infinitely more active in every department than I had the least previous idea of. Since I returned home, my time has been chiefly occupied in professional labours; my truant days spent in London having thrown me a little behind; but now, I hope, I shall find spare moments to resume Sir Tristrem—and the Lay, which has acquired additional value in my estimation from its pleasing you. How often do Charlotte and I think of the little paradise at Sunninghill, and its kind inhabitants; and how do we regret, like Dives, the gulf which is placed betwixt us and friends, with whom it would give us such pleasure to spend much of our time. It is one of the vilest attributes of the best of all possible worlds, that it contrives to split and separate, and subdivide every thing like congenial pursuits and habits, for the paltry purpose, one would think, of diversifying every little spot with a share of its various productions. I don't know why the human and vegetable departments should differ so excessively. Oaks and beeches, and ashes and elms, not to mention cabbages and turnips, are usually arrayed *en masse;* but where do we meet a town of antiquaries, a village of poets, or a hamlet of philosophers? But, instead of fruitless lamentations, we sincerely hope Mrs. Ellis and you will unrivet yourselves from your forest, and see how the hardy blasts of our mountains will suit you for a change of climate. . . . . The new edition of 'Minstrelsy' is published here, but not in London as yet, owing to the embargo on our shipping. An invasion is expected from Flushing, and no measures of any kind taken to prevent or repel it. Yours ever faithfully,

W. Scott."

The letter enclosed a sheet of extracts from Fordun, in Scott's handwriting; the subject being the traditional marriage of one of the old Counts of Anjou with a female demon, by which the Scotch chronicler accounts for all the crimes and misfortunes of the English Plantagenets.

Messrs. Longman's new edition of the first two volumes of the Minstrelsy consisted of 1000 copies—of volume third there were 1500. A complete edition of 1250 copies followed in 1806; a fourth, also of 1250, in 1810; a fifth of 1500 in 1812; a sixth of 500 in 1820; and since then it has been incorporated in various successive editions of Scott's Collected Poetry—to the extent of at least 15,000 copies more. Of the Continental and American editions, I can say nothing, except that they have been very numerous. The book was soon translated into German, Danish, and Swedish; and the structure of those languages being very favourable to the undertaking, the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border has thus become widely naturalized among nations themselves rich in similar treasures of legendary lore. Of the extraordinary accuracy and felicity of the German version of Schubart, Scott has given some specimens in the last edition which he himself superintended—that of 1830.

He speaks in the Essay to which I have referred, as if the first reception of the Minstrelsy on the south of the Tweed had been cold. "The curiosity of the English," he says, "was not much awakened by poems in the rude garb of antiquity, accompanied with notes referring to the obscure feuds of barbarous clans, of whose very names civilized history was ignorant." In writing those beautiful Introductions of 1830, however, Scott, as I have already had occasion to hint, trusted entirely to his recollection of days long since gone by, and he has accordingly let fall many statements, which we must take with some allowance. His impressions as to

* See "Life of Bishop Heber, by his Widow," edition 1830 vol. i. p. 90.

the reception of the Minstrelsy were different, when, writing to his brother-in-law, Charles Carpenter, on the 3d March, 1803, for the purpose of introducing Leyden, he said, "I have contrived to turn a very slender portion of literary talents to some account, by a publication of the poetical antiquities of the Border, where the old people had preserved many ballads descriptive of the manners of the country during the wars with England. This trifling collection was so well received by a *discerning public*, that, after receiving about £100 profit for the first edition, which my vanity cannot omit informing you went off in six months, I have sold the copyright for £500 more." This is not the language of disappointment; and though the edition of 1803 did not move off quite so rapidly as the first, and the work did not perhaps attract much notice beyond the more cultivated students of literature, until the editor's own genius blazed out in full splendour in the Lay, and thus lent general interest to whatever was connected with his name, I suspect there never was much ground for accusing the English public of regarding the Minstrelsy with more coldness than the Scotch—the population of the Border districts themselves being, of course, excepted. Had the sale of the original edition been chiefly Scotch, I doubt whether Messrs. Longman would have so readily offered £500, in those days of the trade a large sum, for the second. Scott had become habituated, long before 1830, to a scale of bookselling transactions measured by which the largest editions and copymonies of his own early days appeared insignificant; but the evidence seems complete that he was well contented at the time.

He certainly had every reason to be so as to the impression which the Minstrelsy made on the minds of those entitled to think for themselves upon such a subject. The ancient ballads in his collection, which had never been printed at all before, were in number forty-three; and of the others—most of which were in fact all but new to the modern reader—it is little to say that his editions were superior in all respects to those that had preceded them. He had, I firmly believe, interpolated hardly a line or even an epithet of his own; but his diligent zeal had put him in possession of a variety of copies in different stages of preservation; and to the task of selecting a standard text among such a diversity of materials, he brought a knowledge of old manners and phraseology, and a manly simplicity of taste, such as had never before been united in the person of a poetical antiquary. From among a hundred corruptions he seized, with instinctive tact, the primitive diction and imagery; and produced strains in which the unbroken energy of half-civilized ages, their stern and deep passions, their daring adventures and cruel tragedies, and even their rude wild humour, are reflected with almost the brightness of a Homeric mirror, interrupted by hardly a blot of what deserves to be called vulgarity, and totally free from any admixture of artificial sentimentalism. As a picture of manners, the Scottish Minstrelsy is not surpassed, if equalled, by any similar body of poetry preserved in any other country; and it unquestionably owes its superiority in this respect over Percy's Reliques, to the Editor's conscientious fidelity, on the one hand, which prevented the introduction of any thing new — to his pure taste, on the other, on the balancing of discordant recitations. His introductory essays and notes teemed with curious knowledge, not hastily grasped for the occasion, but gradually gleaned and sifted by the patient labour of years, and presented with an easy, unaffected propriety and elegance of arrangement and expression, which it may be doubted if he ever materially surpassed in the happiest of his imaginative narrations. I well remember, when Waverley was a new book, and all the world were puzzling themselves about its authorship, to have heard the Poet of "the Isle of Palms" exclaim impatiently: "I wonder what all these people are perplexing themselves with: have they forgotten the prose of the Minstrelsy?" Even had the Editor inserted none of his own verse, the work would have contained enough, and more than enough, to found a lasting and graceful reputation.

It is not to be denied, however, that The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border has derived a very large accession of interest from the subsequent career of its Editor. One of the critics of that day said, that the book contained "the elements of a hundred historical romances;"—and this critic was a prophetic one. No person who has not gone through its volumes for the express purpose of comparing their contents with his great original works, can have formed a conception of the endless variety of incidents and images now expanded and emblazoned by his mature art, of which the first hints may be found either in the text of those primitive ballads, or in the notes, which the happy rambles of his youth had gathered together for their illustration. In the edition of the Minstrelsy published since his death, not a few such instances are pointed out; but the list might have been extended far beyond the limits which such an edition allowed. The taste and fancy of Scott appear to have been formed as early as his moral character; and he had, before he passed the threshold of authorship, assembled about him, in the uncalculating delight of native enthusiasm, almost all the materials on which his genius was destined to be employed for the gratification and instruction of the world.

CHAPTER XII.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EDINBURGH REVIEW—PROGRESS OF THE TRISTREM—AND OF THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL—VISIT OF WORDSWORTH—PUBLICATION OF "SIR TRISTREM."—1803-1804.

Shortly after the complete "Minstrelsy" issued from the press, Scott made his first appearance as a reviewer. The Edinburgh Review had been commenced in October, 1802, under the superintendence of the Rev. Sidney Smith, with whom, during his short residence in Scotland, he had lived on terms of great kindness and familiarity. Mr. Smith soon resigned the editorship to Mr. Jeffrey, who had by this time been for several years among the most valued of Scott's friends and companions at the bar; and, the new journal being far from committing itself to violent politics at the outset, he appreciated the brilliant talents regularly engaged in it far too highly, not to be well pleased with the opportunity of occasionally exercising his pen in its service. His first contribution was, I believe, an article on Southey's Amadis of Gaul, included in the number for October, 1803. Another, on Sibbald's Chronicle of Scottish Poetry, appeared in the same number;—a third, on Godwin's Life of Chaucer; a fourth, on Ellis's Specimens of Ancient English Poetry; and a fifth, on the Life and Works of Chatterton, followed in the course of 1804.*

During the summer of 1803, however, his chief literary labour was still on the "Tristrem;" and I shall presently give some further extracts from his letters to Ellis, which will amply illustrate the spirit in which he continued his researches about the Seer of Ercildoune, and the interruptions which these owed to the prevalent alarm of French invasion. Both as Quartermaster of the Edinburgh Light-horse, and as Sheriff of The Forest, he had a full share of responsibility in the warlike arrangements to which the authorities of Scotland had at length been roused; nor were the duties of his two offices considered as strictly compatible by Francis, Lord Napier, then Lord-Lieutenant of Selkirkshire; for I find several letters in which his Lordship complains, that the incessant drills and musters of Musselburgh and Portobello, prevented the Sheriff from attending county meetings held at Selkirk in the course of this summer and autumn, for the purpose of organizing the trained bands of the Forest, on a scale hitherto unattempted. Lord Napier strongly urges the propriety of his resigning his connexion

* Scott's contributions to our periodical literature have been, with some trivial exceptions, included in the recent collection of his Miscellaneous Prose Writings.

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with the Edinburgh troop, and fixing his summer residence somewhere within the limits of his proper jurisdiction; nay, he goes so far as to hint, that if these suggestions should be neglected, it must be his duty to state the case to the Government. Scott could not be induced, (least of all by a threat,) while the fears of invasion still prevailed, to resign his place among his old companions of "the voluntary band;" but he seems to have presently acquiesced in the propriety of the Lord-Lieutenant's advice respecting a removal from Lasswade to Ettrick Forest.

The following extract is from a letter written at Musselburgh, during this summer or autumn:—

"Miss Seward's acceptable favour reaches me in a place, and at a time, of great bustle, as the corps of voluntary cavalry to which I belong is quartered for a short time in this village, for the sake of drilling and discipline. Nevertheless, had your letter announced the name of the gentleman who took the trouble of forwarding it, I would have made it my business to find him out, and to prevail on him, if possible, to spend a day or two with us in quarters. We are here assuming a very military appearance. Three regiments of militia, with a formidable park of artillery, are encamped just by us. The Edinburgh troop, to which I have the honour to be quartermaster, consists entirely of young gentlemen of family, and is, of course, admirably well mounted and armed. There are other four troops in the regiment, consisting of yeomanry, whose iron faces and muscular forms announce the hardness of the climate against which they wrestle, and the powers which nature has given them to contend with and subdue it. These corps have been easily raised in Scotland, the farmers being in general a high-spirited race of men, fond of active exercises, and patient of hardship and fatigue. For myself, I must own that to one who has, like myself, *la tête un peu exaltée*, the pomp and circumstance of war gives, for a time, a very poignant and pleasing sensation. The imposing appearance of cavalry, in particular, and the rush which marks their onset, appear to me to partake highly of the sublime. Perhaps I am the more attached to this sort of sport of swords, because my health requires much active exercise, and a lameness contracted in childhood renders it inconvenient for me to take it otherwise than on horseback. I have, too, a hereditary attachment to the animal—not, I flatter myself, of the common jockey cast, but because I regard him as the kindest and most generous of the subordinate tribes. I hardly even except the dogs; at least they are usually so much better treated, that compassion for the steed should be thrown into the scale when we weigh their comparative merits. My wife (a foreigner) never sees a horse ill-used without asking what that poor horse has done in his state of pre-existence? I would fain hope they have been carters or hackney-coachmen, and are only experiencing a retort of the ill-usage they have formerly inflicted. What think you?"

It appears that Miss Seward had sent Scott some obscure magazine criticism on his "Minstrelsy," in which the censor had condemned some phrase as naturally suggesting a low idea. The lady's letter not having been preserved, I cannot explain farther the sequel of that from which I have been quoting. Scott says, however:

"I am infinitely amused with your sagacious critic. God wot I have often admired the vulgar subtlety of such minds as can, with a depraved ingenuity, attach a mean or disgusting sense to an epithet capable of being otherwise understood, and more frequently, perhaps, used to express an elevated idea. In many parts of Scotland the word *virtue* is limited entirely to *industry*; and a young divine who preached upon the moral beauties of virtue, was considerably surprised at learning that the whole discourse was supposed to be a panegyric upon a particular damsel who could spin fourteen spindles of yarn in the course of a week. This was natural; but your literary critic has the merit of going very far a-field to fetch home his degrading association."

To return to the correspondence with Ellis—Scott writes thus to him in July:

"I cannot pretend immediately to enter upon the serious discussion which you propose respecting the age of 'Sir Tristrem;' but yet, as it seems likely to strip Thomas the Prophet of the honours due to the author of the English 'Tristrem,' I cannot help hesitating before I can agree to your theory;—and here my doubt lies. Thomas of Ercildoune, called the Rhymer, is a character mentioned by almost every Scottish historian, and the date of whose existence is almost as well known as if we had the parish register. Now, his great reputation, and his designation of *Rymour*, could only be derived from his poetical performances; and in what did these consist excepting in the romance of 'Sir Tristrem,' mentioned by Robert de Brunne? I hardly think, therefore, we shall be justified in assuming the existence of an earlier *Thomas*, who would be, in fact, merely the creature of our system. I own I am not prepared to take this step, if I can escape otherwise from you and M. de la Ravaillere—and thus I will try it. M. de la R. barely informs us that the history of Sir Tristrem was known to Chretien de Troyes in the end of the twelfth century, and to the King of Navarre in the beginning of the thirteenth. Thus far his evidence goes, and I think not one inch farther—for it does not establish the existence either of the metrical romance, as you suppose, or of the prose romance, as M. de la R. much more erroneously supposes, at that very early period. If the *story* of 'Sir Tristrem' was founded in fact, and if, which I have all along thought, a person of this name really swallowed a dose of cantharides intended to stimulate the exertions of his uncle, a petty monarch of Cornwall, and involved himself of course in an intrigue with his aunt, these facts must have taken place during a very early period of English history, perhaps about the time of the Heptarchy. Now, if this be once admitted, it is clear that the raw material from which Thomas wove his web must have been current long before his day, and I am inclined to think that Chretien and the King of Navarre refer not to the special metrical romance contained in Mr. Douce's fragments, but to the general story of 'Sir Tristrem,' whose love and misfortunes were handed down by tradition as a historical fact. There is no difficulty in supposing a tale of this kind to have passed from the Armoricans, or otherwise, into the mouths of the French, as, on the other hand, it seems to have been preserved among the Celtic tribes of the Border, from whom, in all probability, it was taken by their neighbour, Thomas of Ercildoune. If we suppose, therefore, that Chretien and the King allude only to the general and well-known *story* of Tristrem, and not to the particular edition of which Mr. Douce has some fragments—(and I see no evidence that any such special allusion to these fragments is made)—it will follow that *they* may be as late as the end of the thirteenth century, and that the Thomas mentioned in them may be *the* Thomas of whose existence we have historical evidence. In short, the question is, shall Thomas be considered as a landmark by which to ascertain the antiquity of the fragments, or shall the *supposed* antiquity of the fragments be held a sufficient reason for *supposing* an earlier Thomas? For aught yet seen, I incline to my former opinion, that those fragments are coeval with the *ipsissimus Thomas*. I acknowledge the internal evidence, of which you are so accurate a judge, weighs more with me than the reference to the King of Navarre; but after all, the extreme difficulty of judging of style, so as to bring us within sixty or seventy years, must be fully considered. Take notice, I have never pleaded the matter so high as to say, that the Auchinleck MS. contains the very words devised by Thomas the Rhymer. On the contrary, I have always thought it one of the spurious copies in *queint Inglis*, of which Robert de Brunne so heavily complains. But this will take little from the curiosity, perhaps little from the antiquity, of the romance. Enough of Sir T. for the present.—How happy it will make us if you can fulfil the expectation you hold out of a northern expedition. Whether in the cottage or at Edinburgh, we will be equally happy to receive you, and show you all the lions of our vicinity. Charlotte is hunting out music for Mrs. E., but I intend to add *Johnson's* collection, which, though the tunes are simple, and often bad sets, contains much more original Scotch music than any other."

About this time, Mr. and Mrs. Ellis, and their friend Douce, were preparing for a tour into the North of England; and Scott was invited and strongly tempted to join them at various points of their progress, particularly at the Grange, near Rotherham, in Yorkshire, a seat of the Earl of Effingham. But he found it impossible to escape again from Scotland, owing to the agitated state of the country.—On returning to the Cottage from an excursion to his Sheriffship, he thus resumes:—

To George Ellis, Esq.

"Lasswade, August 27, 1803.

"Dear Ellis,

"My conscience has been thumping me as hard as if

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it had studied under Mendoza, for letting your kind favour remain so long unanswered. Nevertheless, in this it is like Launcelot Gobbo's, but a hard kind of conscience, as it must know how much I have been occupied with Armies of Reserve, and Militia, and Pikemen, and Sharpshooters, who are to descend from Ettrick Forest to the confusion of all invaders. The truth is, that this country has for once experienced that the pressure of external danger may possibly produce internal unanimity; and so great is the present military zeal, that I really wish our rulers would devise some way of calling it into action, were it only on the economical principle of saving so much good courage from idle evaporation.—I am interrupted by an extraordinary accident, nothing less than a volley of small shot fired through the window, at which my wife was five minutes before arranging her flowers. By Camp's assistance, who run the culprit's foot like a Liddesdale bloodhound, we detected an unlucky sportsman, whose awkwardness and rashness might have occasioned very serious mischief—so much for interruption. —To return to Sir Tristrem. As for Thomas's *name*, respecting which you state some doubts,* I request you to attend to the following particulars:—In the first place, surnames were of very late introduction into Scotland, and it would be difficult to show that they became in general a hereditary distinction, until after the time of Thomas the Rhymer; previously they were mere personal distinctions peculiar to the person by whom they were borne, and dying along with him. This the children of *Alan Durward* were not called *Durward*, because they were not *Ostiarii*, the circumstance from which he derived the name. When the surname was derived from property, it became naturally hereditary at a more early period, because the distinction applied equally to the father and the son. The same happened with *patronymics*, both because the name of the father is usually given to the son; so that Walter Fitzwalter would have been my son's name in those times as well as my own; and also because a clan often takes a sort of general patronymic from one common ancestor, as Macdonald, &c. &c. But though these classes of surnames become hereditary at an early period, yet, in the natural course of things, epithets merely personal are much longer of becoming a family distinction.† But I do not trust, by any means, to this general argument; because the charter quoted in the Minstrelsy contains written evidence, that the epithet of *Rymour* was peculiar to our Thomas, and was dropped by his son, who designs himself simply, *Thomas of Erceldoune, son of Thomas the Rymour of Erceldoune;* which I think is conclusive upon the subject. In all this discussion, I have scorned to avail myself of the tradition of the country, as well as the suspicious testimony of Boece, Dempster, &c., grounded probably upon that tradition, which uniformly affirms the name of Thomas to have been Learmont or Leirmont, and that of the Rhymer a personal epithet. This circumstance may induce us, however, to conclude that some of his descendants had taken that name—certain it is that his castle is called Leirmont's Tower, and that he is as well known to the country people by that name, as by the appellation of the Rhymer.

"Having cleared up this matter, as I think, to every one's satisfaction, unless to those resembling not Thomas himself, but his namesake the Apostle, I have, secondly, to show that my Thomas is the *Tomas* of Douce's MS. Here I must again refer to the high and general reverence in which Thomas appears to have been held, as is proved by Robert de Brunne; but above all, as you observe, to the extreme similarity betwixt the French and English poems, with this strong circumstance, that the *mode* of telling the story approved by the French minstrel, under the authority of his Tomas, is the very mode in which my Thomas has told it. Would you desire better sympathy?

"I lately met by accident a Cornish gentleman, who had taken up his abode in Selkirkshire for the sake of fishing—and what should his name be but *Caerlion?* You will not doubt that this interested me very much. He tells me that there is but one family of the name in Cornwall, or as far as ever he heard any where else, and that they are of great antiquity. Does not this circumstance seem to prove that there existed in Cornwall a place called Caerlion, giving name to that family? Caerlion would probably be *Castrum Leonense*, the chief town of Lionesse, which in every romance is stated to have been Tristrem's country, and from which he derived his surname of Tristrem *de Lionesse*. This district, as you notice in the notes on the *Fabliaux*, was swallowed up by the sea. I need not remind you that all this tends to illustrate the *Caerlioun* mentioned by Tomas, which I always suspected to be a very different place from Caerlion on Usk—which is no seaport. How I regret the number of leagues which prevented my joining you and the sapient Douce, and how much ancient lore I have lost. Where I have been, the people talked more of the praises of Ryno and Fillan (not Ossian's heroes, but two Forest greyhounds which I got in a present) than, I verily believe, they would have done of the prowesses of Sir Tristrem, or of Esplandian, had either of them appeared to lead on the levy *en masse*. Yours ever,

W. Scott."

Ellis says in reply:—

"My dear Scott, I must begin by congratulating you on Mrs. Scott's escape; Camp, if he had no previous title to immortality, would deserve it, for his zeal and address in detecting the stupid marksman, who, while he took aim at a bird on a tree, was so near shooting your fair 'bird in bower.' If there were many such shooters, it would become then a sufficient excuse for the reluctance of government to furnish arms indifferently to all volunteers. In the next place, I am glad to hear that you are disposed to adopt my channel for transmitting the tale of Tristrem to Chretien de Troye. The more I have thought on the subject, the more I am convinced that the Normans, long before the Conquest, had acquired from the Britons of Armorica a considerable knowledge of our old British fables, and that this led them, after the Conquest, to inquire after such accounts as were to be found in the country where the events are supposed to have taken place. I am satisfied, from the internal evidence of Geoffrey of Monmouth's History, that it must have been fabricated in Bretagne, and that he did, as he asserts, only *translate* it. Now, as *Marie*, who lived about a century later, *certainly* translated also from the Breton a series of lays relating to Arthur and his knights, it will follow that the first poets who wrote *in France*, such as Chretien, &c., must have acquired their knowledge of our traditions from Bretagne. Observe, that the pseudo-Turpin, who is supposed to have been anterior to Geoffry, and who, on that supposition, cannot have borrowed from him, mentions, among Charlemagne's heroes, Hoel, (the hero of Geoffrey also,) 'de quo canitur cantilena usque ad hodiernum diem.' Now, if Thomas was able to establish his story as the most *authentic*, even by the avowal of the French themselves, and if the *sketch* of that story was previously known, it must have been because he wrote in the country which his hero was supposed to have inhabited; and on the same grounds the Norman minstrels here, and even their English successors, were allowed to fill up with as many circumstances as they thought proper the tales of which the Armorican Bretons probably furnished the first imperfect outline

"What you tell me about your Cornish fisherman is very curious; and I think with you that little reliance is to be placed on our Welsh geography—and that Caerlion on Usk is by no means *the* Caerlion of Tristrem. Few writers or readers have hitherto considered sufficiently that from the moment when Hengist first obtained a settlement in the Isle of Thanet, that settlement became *England*, and all the rest of the country became *Wales;* that these divisions continued to represent different proportions of the island at different periods; but that Wales, during the whole Heptarchy, and for a long time after, comprehended the whole western coast very nearly from Cornwall to Dunbretton; and that this whole tract, of which the eastern frontier may be easily traced for each particular period, preserved most probably to the age of Thomas, a community of language, of manners, and traditions.

"As your last volume announces your *Lay*, as well as *Sir Tristrem*, as *in the* press, I begin, in common with all your friends, to be uneasy about the future disposal of your time. Having nothing but a very active profes-

* Mr. Ellis had hinted that "*Rymer* might not more necessarily indicate an actual poet, than the name of *Taylor* does in modern times an actual knight of the thimble."

† The whole of this subject has derived much illustration from the recent edition of the "Ragman's Roll," a contribution to the Bannatyne Club of Edinburgh by two of Sir Walter Scott's most esteemed friends, the Lord Chief Commissioner Adam and Sir Samuel Shepherd. That record of the oaths of fealty tendered to Edward I., during his Scotch usurpation, furnishes, indeed, very strong confirmation of the views which the editor of "Sir Tristrem" had thus early adopted concerning the origin of surnames in Scotland. The landed gentry, over most of the country, seem to have been then generally distinguished by the surnames still borne by their descendants—it is wonderful how little the land seems to have changed hands in the course of so many centuries. But the town's people have, with few exceptions, designations apparently indicating the actual trade of the individual; and, in many instances, there is distinct evidence that the plan of transmitting such names had not been adopted; for example, Thomas the Tailor is described as son of Thomas the Smith, or *vice versâ*. The chief magistates of the burghs appear, however, to have been, in most cases, younger sons of the neighbouring gentry, and have of course their hereditary designations. This singular document, so often quoted and referred to, was never before printed *in extenso*.

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sion, and your military pursuits, and your domestic occupations to think of, and Leyden having monopolized Asiatic lore, you will presently be quite an idle man! You are, however, still in time to learn Erse, and it is, I am afraid, very necessary that you should do so, in order to stimulate my laziness, which has hitherto made no progress whatever in Welsh. Your ever faithful, G. E.

"P. S. *Is Camp married yet?*"

Ellis had projected some time before this an edition of the Welsh *Mabinogion*, in which he was to be assisted by Mr. Owen, the author of the "Welsh and English Dictionary," "Cambrian Biography," &c.

"I am very sorry," Scott says, (September 14,) "that you flag over those wild and interesting tales. I hope, if you will not work yourself, (for which you have so little excuse, having both the golden talents and the golden leisure necessary for study,) you will at least keep Owen to something that is rational—I mean to *iron horses*, and *magic cauldrons*, and *Bran the Blessed*, with the music of his whole army upon his shoulders, and, in short, to something more pleasing and profitable than old apophthegms, triads, and 'blessed burdens of the womb of the isle of Britain.' Talking of such burdens, Camp has been regularly wedded to a fair dame in the neighbourhood, but notwithstanding the Italian policy of locking the lady in a stable, she is suspected of some inaccuracy; but we suspend judgment; as Othello ought in all reason to have done, till we see the produce of the union. As for my own employment, I have yet much before me, and as the beginning of letting out ink is like the letting out of water, I daresay I shall go on scribbling one nonsense or another to the end of the chapter. People may say this and that of the pleasure of fame or of profit as a motive of writing. I think the only pleasure is in the actual exertion and research, and I would no more write upon any other terms than I would hunt merely to dine upon hare-soup. At the same time, if credit and profit came unlooked for, I would no more quarrel with them than with the soup. I hope this will find you and Mrs. Ellis safely and pleasantly settled

In Yorkshire, near fair Rotherham.'

"—By the way, while you are in his neighbourhood, I hope you will not fail to inquire into the history of the valiant 'Moor of Moorhall and the Dragon of Wantley.' As a noted burlesque upon the popular romance, the ballad has some curiosity and merit. Ever yours, W. S."

Mr. Ellis received this letter where Scott hoped it would reach him, at the seat of Lord Effingham; and he answers, on the 3d of October,—

"The beauty of this part of the country is such as to indemnify the traveller for a few miles of very indifferent road, and the tedious process of creeping up and almost sliding down a succession of high hills; and in the number of picturesque landscapes by which we are encompassed, the den of the dragon which you recommended to our attention is the most superlatively beautiful and romantic. You are, I suppose, aware that this same den is the very spot from whence Lady Mary Wortley Montague wrote many of her early letters; and it seems that an old housekeeper, who lived there till last year, remembered to have seen her, and dwelt with great pleasure on the various charms of her celebrated mistress; so that its wild scenes have an equal claim to veneration from the admirers of wit and gallantry, and the far-famed investigators of remote antiquity. With regard to the original Dragon, I have met with two different traditions. One of these (which I think is preserved by Percy) states him to have been a wicked attorney, a relentless persecutor of the poor, who was at length, fortunately for his neighbours, ruined by a law-suit which he had undertaken against his worthy and powerful antagonist, Moor of Moorhall. The other legend, which is current in the Wortley family, states him to have been a most formidable drinker, whose powers of inglutition, strength of stomach, and stability of head, had procured him a long series of triumphs over common visitants, but who was at length fairly drunk dead by the chieftain of the opposite moors. It must be confessed that the form of the den, a cavern cut in the rock, and very nearly resembling a wine or ale cellar, tends to corroborate this tradition; but I am rather tempted to believe that both the stories were invented *apres coup*, and that the supposed dragon was some wolf or other destructive animal, who was finally hunted down by Moor of Moorhall, after doing considerable mischief to the flocks and herds of his superstitious neighbours.

"The present house appears to have grown to its even now moderate size by successive additions to a very small *logge*, (lodge,) built by 'a gentle knight, Sir Thomas Wortley,' in the time of Henry VIII., for the pleasure, as an old inscription in the present scullery testifies, of 'listening to the Hartes bell.' Its site is on the side of a very high rocky hill, covered with oaks, (the weod of the country,) and overhanging the river Don, which in this place is little more than a mountain torrent, though it becomes navigable a few miles lower at Sheffield. A great part of the road from hence (which is seven miles distant) runs through forest ground, and I have no doubt that the whole was at no distant period covered with wood, because the modern improvements of the country, the result of flourishing manufactories, have been carried on almost within our own time in consequence of the abundance of coal which here breaks out in many places even on the surface. On the opposite side of the river begin almost immediately the extensive moors which strike along the highest land of Yorkshire and Derbyshire, and following the chain of hills, probably communicated not many centuries ago with those of Northumberland, Cumberland, and Scotland. I therefore doubt whether the general face of the country is not better evidence as to the nature of the monster than the particular appearance of the cavern; and am inclined to believe that Moor of Moorhall was a hunter of wild-beasts, rather than of attorneys or hard drinkers.

"You are unjust in saying that I flag over the Mabinogion—I have been very constantly employed upon my preface, and was proceeding to the last section when I set off for this place—so you see I am perfectly exculpated, and all over as white as snow. Anne being a true aristocrat, and considering purity of blood as essential to lay the foundation of all the virtues she expects to call out by a laborious education of a true son of Camp—she highly approves the strict and even prudish severity with which you watch over the morals of his bride, and expects you, inasmuch as all the good knights she has read of have been remarkable for their incomparable beauty, not to neglect that important requisite in selecting her future guardian. We possess a vulgar dog, (a pointer,) to whom it is intended to commit the charge of our house during our absence, and to whom I mean to give orders to repel by force any attempts of our neighbours during the times that I shall be occupied in preparing *hare soup*; but Fitz-Camp will be *her* companion, and she trusts that you will strictly examine him while yet a varlet, and only send him up when you think him likely to become a true knight. *Adieu—mille choses*,

G. E."

Scott tells Ellis in reply (October 14,) that he was "infinitely gratified with his account of Wortley Lodge and the Dragon," and refers him to the article "Kempion," in the Minstrelsy, for a similar tradition respecting an ancestor of the noble house of Somerville. The reader can hardly need to be reminded that the gentle knight, Sir Thomas Wortley's, love of hearing the deer *bell* was often alluded to in Scott's subsequent writings. He goes on to express his hope, that next summer will be "a more propitious season for a visit to Scotland."

"The necessity of the present occasion," he says, "has kept almost every individual, however insignificant, to his post. God has left us entirely to our own means of defence, for we have not above one regiment of the line in all our ancient kingdom. In the mean while, we are doing the best we can to prepare ourselves for a contest, which, perhaps, is not far distant. A beacon light, communicating with that of Edinburgh Castle, is just erecting in front of our quiet cottage. My field equipage is ready, and I want nothing but a pipe and a *schnurbartchen* to convert me into a complete hussar.* Charlotte, with the infantry, (of the household troops, I mean,) is to beat her retreat into Ettrick Forest, where, if the Tweed is in his usual wintry state of flood, she may weather out a descent from Ostend. Next year I hope all this will be over, and that not only I shall have the pleasure of receiving you in peace and quiet, but also of going with you through every part of Caledonia, in which you can possibly be interested. Friday se'ennight our corps takes the field for ten days—for the second time within three months—which may explain the military turn of my epistle.

"Poor Ritson is no more. All his vegetable soups and puddings have not been able to avert the evil day, which,

* *Schnurbartchen* is German for mustachio. It appears from a page of an early note-book, previously transcribed, that Scott had been sometimes a smoker of tobacco in the first days of his light-horsemanship. He had laid aside the habit at the time when this letter was written; but he twice again resumed it, though he never carried the indulgence to any excess.

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I understand, was preceded by madness. 'It must be worth while to inquire who has got his MSS.—I mean his own notes and writings. The 'Life of Arthur,' for example, must contain many curious facts and quotations, which the poor defunct had the power of assembling to an astonishing degree, without being able to combine any thing like a narrative, or even to deduce one useful inference—witness his 'Essay on Romance and Minstrelsy,' which reminds one of a heap of rubbish, which had either turned out unfit for the architect's purpose, or beyond his skill to make use of. The ballads he had collected in Cumberland and Northumberland, too, would greatly interest me. If they have fallen into the hands of any liberal collector, I dare say I might be indulged with a sight of them. Pray inquire about this matter.

"Yesterday Charlotte and I had a visit which we owe to Mrs. E. A rosy lass, the sister of a bold yeoman in our neighbourhood, entered our cottage, towing in a monstrous sort of bulldog, called emphatically Cerberus, whom she came on the part of her brother to beg our acceptance of, understanding we were anxious to have a sea of Camp. Cerberus was no sooner loose (a pleasure which, I suspect, he had rarely enjoyed) than his father (*suppose*) and he engaged in a battle, which might have been celebrated by the author of the 'Unnatural Combat,' and which, for aught I know, might have turned out a combat à *Outrance*, if I had not interfered with a horsewhip, instead of a bâton, as *juge de Camp*. The odds were indeed greatly against the stranger knight—two fierce Forest greyhounds having arrived, and, contrary to the law of arms, stoutly assailed him. I hope to send you a puppy instead of this redoubtable Cerberus. Love to Mrs. E.—W. S."

After giving Scott some information about Ritson's literary treasures, most of which, as it turned out, had been disposed of by auction shortly before his death, Mr. Ellis (10th November) returns to the charge about Tristrem and True Thomas. "You appear," he says, "to have been for some time so military, that I am afraid the most difficult and important part of your original plan, viz., your History of Scottish poetry, will again be postponed, and must be kept for some future publication. I am at this moment much in want of two such assistants as you and Leyden. It seems to me that if I had some local knowledge of that wicked Ettrick Forest, I could extricate myself tolerably—but as it is, although I am convinced that my general idea is tolerably just, I am unable to guide my elephants in that quiet and decorous step-by-step march which the nature of such animals requires, through a country of which I don't know any of the roads. My comfort is, that you cannot publish Tristrem without a preface,—that you can't write one without giving me some assistance,—and that you must finish the said preface long before I go to press with my Introduction."

This was the Introduction to Ellis's "Specimens of Ancient English Romances," in which he intended to prove, that as Valentia was, during several ages, the exposed frontier of Roman Britain towards the unsubdued tribes of the North, and as two whole legions were accordingly usually quartered there, while one besides sufficed for the whole southern part of the island, the manners of Valentia, which included the district of Ettrick Forest, must have been greatly favoured by the continued residence of so many Roman troops. "It is probable, therefore," he says, in another letter, "that the civilization of the northern part became gradually the most perfect. That country gave birth, as you have observed, to Merlin, and to Aneurin—who was probably the same as the historian Gildas. It seems to have given education to Taliessin—it was the country of Bede and Adonnan."

I shall not quote more on this subject, as the reader may turn to the published essay for Mr. Ellis's matured opinions respecting it. To return to his letter of November 10th, 1803, he proceeds—"And now let me ask you about the Lay of the Last Minstrel. That, I think, may go on as well in your tent, amidst the clang of trumpet and the dust of the field, as in your quiet cottage—perhaps indeed still better—nay, I am not sure whether a *real* invasion would not be, as far as your poetry is concerned, a thing to be wished."

It was in the September of this year that Scott first saw Wordsworth. Their mutual acquaintance, Stoddart, had so often talked of them to each other, that they met as if they had not been strangers; and they parted friends.

Mr. and Miss Wordsworth had just completed that tour in the Highlands, of which so many incidents have since been immortalized, both in the poet's verse and in the hardly less poetical prose of his sister's Diary. On the morning of the 17th of September, having left their carriage at Rosslyn, they walked down the valley to Lasswade, and arrived there before Mr. and Mrs. Scott had risen. "We were received," Mr. Wordsworth has told me, "with that frank cordiality which, under whatever circumstances I afterwards met him, always marked his manners; and, indeed I found him then in every respect—except, perhaps, that his animal spirits were somewhat higher—precisely the same man that you knew him in later life: the same lively, entertaining conversation, full of anecdote, and averse from disquisition; the same unaffected modesty about himself; the same cheerful and benevolent and hopeful views of man and the world. He partly read and partly recited, sometimes in an enthusiastic style of chant, the first four cantos of the Lay of the Last Minstrel; and the novelty of the manners, the clear picturesque descriptions, and the easy glowing energy of much of the verse, greatly delighted me."

After this he walked with the tourists to Rosslyn, and promised to meet them in two days at Melrose. The night before they reached Melrose they slept at the little quiet inn of Clovenford, where, on mentioning his name, they were received with all sorts of attention and kindness,—the landlady observing that Mr. Scott, "who was a very clever gentleman," was an old friend of the house, and usually spent a good deal of time there during the fishing season; but indeed," says Mr. Wordsworth, "wherever we named him, we found the word acted as an *open sesamum*; and I believe, that in the character of the *Sheriff's* friends, we might have counted on a hearty welcome under any roof in the Border country."

He met them at Melrose on the 19th, and escorted them through the Abbey, pointing out all its beauties, and pouring out his rich stores of history and tradition. They then dined and spent the evening together at the inn; but Miss Wordsworth observed that there was some difficulty about arranging matters for the night, "the landlady refusing to settle any thing until she had ascertained from *the Sheriff himself* that he had no objection to sleep in the same room with *William*." Scott was thus far on his way to the Circuit Court at Jedburgh, in his capacity of Sheriff, and there his new friends again joined him; but he begged that they would not enter the court, "for," said he, "I really would not like you to see the sort of figure I cut there." They did see him casually, however, in his cocked hat and sword, marching in the Judge's procession to the sound of one cracked trumpet, and where then not surprised that he should have been a little ashamed of the whole ceremonial. He introduced to them his friend William Laidlaw, who was attending the court as a juryman, and who, having read some of Wordsworth's verses in a newspaper, was exceedingly anxious to be of the party, when they explored at leisure, all the law-business being over, the beautiful valley of the Jed, and the ruins of the Castle of Fernieherst, the original fastness of the noble family of Lothian. The grove of stately ancient elms about and below the ruin was seen to great advantage in a fine, gray, breezy autumnal afternoon; and Mr. Wordsworth happened to say, "What life there is in trees!"—"How different," said Scott, "was the feeling of a very intelligent young lady, born and bred in the Orkney Islands, who lately came to spend a season in this neighbourhood! She told me nothing in the mainland scenery had so much disappointed her as woods and trees. She found them so dead and lifeless, that she could never help pining after the eternal motion and variety of the ocean. And so back she has gone, and I believe nothing will ever tempt her from *the windswept Orcades* again."

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Next day they all proceeded together up the Teviot to Hawick, Scott entertaining his friends with some legend or ballad connected with every tower or rock they passed. He made them stop for a little to admire particularly a scene of deep and solemn retirement, called *Horne's Pool*, from its having been the daily haunt of a contemplative schoolmaster, known to him in his youth; and at Kirkton he pointed out the little village schoolhouse to which his friend Leyden has walked six or eight miles every day across the moors "when a poor barefooted boy." From Hawick, where they spent the night, he led them next morning to the brow of a hill, from which they could see a wide range of the Border mountains, Ruberslaw, the Carter, and the Cheviots; and lamented that neither their engagements nor his own would permit them to make at this time an excursion into the wilder glens of Liddisdale, "where," said he, "I have strolled so often and so long, that I may say I have a home in every farm-house." "And, indeed," adds Mr. Wordsworth, "wherever we went with him, he seemed to know every body, and every body to know and like him." Here they parted—the Wordsworths to pursue their journey homeward by Eskdale—he to return to Lasswade.

The impression on Mr. Wordsworth's mind was, that on the whole he attached much less importance to his literary labours or reputation than to his bodily sports, exercises, and social amusements; and yet he spoke of his profession as if he had already given up almost all hope of rising by it; and some allusion being made to its profits, observed that "he was sure he could, if he chose, get more money than he should ever wish to have from the booksellers."*

This confidence in his own literary resources appeared to Mr. Wordsworth remarkable—the more so, from the careless way in which its expression dropt from him. As to his despondence concerning the bar, I confess his *fee-book* indicates much less ground for such a feeling than I should have expected to discover there. His practice brought him, as we have seen, in the session of 1796-7, £144, 10s.: its proceeds fell down, in the first year of his married life, to £79, 17s.; but they rose again, in 1798-9, to £135, 9s.; amounted in 1799-1800, to £129, 13s.—in 1800-1, to £170—in 1801-2, to £202, 12s.—and in the session that had just elapsed, (which is the last included in the record before me,) to £228, 18s.

On reaching his cottage in Westmoreland, Wordsworth addressed a letter to Scott, from which I must quote a few sentences. It is dated Grasmere, October 16, 1803.

"We had a delightful journey home, delightful weather, and a sweet country to travel through. We reached our little cottage in high spirits, and thankful to God for all his bounties. My wife and child were both well, and as I need not say, we had all of us a happy meeting. . . . . We passed Branxholme—your Branxholme, we supposed—about four miles on this side of Hawick. It looks better in your poem than in its present realities. The situation, however, is delightful, and makes amends for an ordinary mansion. The whole of the Teviot and the pastoral steeps about Mosspaul pleased us exceedingly. The Esk below Langholm is a delicious river, and we saw it to great advantage. We did not omit noticing Johnnie Armstrong's keep; but his hanging place, to our great regret, we missed. We were, indeed, most truly sorry that we could not have you along with us into Westmoreland. The country was in its full glory—the verdure of the valleys, in which we are so much superior to you in Scotland, but little tarnished by the weather, and the trees putting on their most beautiful looks. My sister was quite enchanted, and we often said to each other, What a pity Mr. Scott is not with us! . . . . . I had the pleasure of seeing Coleridge and Southey at Keswick, last Sunday. Southey, whom I never saw much of before, I liked much: he is very pleasant in his manner, and a man of great reading in old books, poetry, chronicles, memoirs, &c. &c., particularly Spanish and Portuguese. . . . . My sister and I often talk of the happy days that we spent in your company. Such things do not occur often in life. If we live we shall meet again; that is my consolation when I think of these things. Scotland and England sound like division, do what ye can; but we really are but neighbours, and if you were no further off, and in Yorkshire, we should think so. Farewell. God prosper you, and all that belongs to you. Your sincere friend, for such I will call myself, though slow to use a word of such solemn meaning to any one,

W. WORDSWORTH."

The poet then transcribes his noble sonnet on Neidpath Castle, of which Scott had, it seems, requested a copy. In the MS. it stands somewhat differently from the printed edition; but in that original shape Scott always recited it, and few lines in the language were more frequently in his mouth.

I have already said something of the beginning of Scott's acquaintance with "the Ettrick Shepherd." Shortly after their first meeting, Hogg, coming into Edinburgh with a flock of sheep, was seized with a sudden ambition of seeing himself in print, and he wrote out that same night "Willie and Katie," and a few other ballads, already famous in the Forest, which some obscure bookseller gratified him by putting forth accordingly; but they appear to have attracted no notice beyond their original sphere. Hogg then made an excursion into the Highlands, in quest of employment as overseer of some extensive sheep-farm; but, though Scott had furnished him with strong recommendations to various friends, he returned without success. He printed an account of his travels, however, in a set of letters in the Scots Magazine, which, though exceedingly rugged and uncouth, had abundant traces of the native shrewdness and genuine poetical feeling of this remarkable man. These also failed to excite attention; but, undeterred by such disappointments the Shepherd no sooner read the third volume of the "Minstrelsy," than he made up his mind that the Editor's "Imitations of the Ancients" were by no means what they should have been. "Immediately," he says, in one of his many Memoirs of himself, "I chose a number of traditional facts, and set about imitating the manner of the Ancients myself. These imitations he transmitted to Scott who warmly praised the many striking beauties scattered over their rough surface. The next time that Hogg's business carried him to Edinburgh, he waited upon Scott, who invited him to dinner in Castle Street, in company with William Laidlaw who happened also to be in town, and some other admirers of the rustic genius. When Hogg entered the drawing-room, Mrs. Scott, being at the time in a delicate state of health, was reclining on a sofa. The Shepherd, after being presented, and making his best bow, forthwith took possession of another sofa opposite to hers, and stretched himself there upon at his length; for, as he said afterwards, "I thought I could never do wrong to copy the lady of the house." As his dress at this period was precisely that in which any ordinary herdsman attends cattle to the market, and as his hands, moreover, bore most legible marks of a recent sheep-smearing, the lady of the house did not observe with perfect equanimity the novel usage to which her chintz was exposed. The Shepherd, however, remarked nothing of all this—dined heartily and drank freely, and, by jest, anecdote, and song, afforded plentiful merriment to the more civilized part of the company. As the liquor operated, his familiarity increased and strengthened: from "Mr. Scott," he advanced to "Sherra," and thence to "Scott," "Walter," and "Wattie,"—until, at supper, he fairly convulsed the whole party by addressing Mrs. Scott as "Charlotte."

The collection entitled "The Mountain Bard" was eventually published by Constable, in consequence of Scott's recommendation, and this work did at last afford Hogg no slender share of the popular reputation for which he had so long thirsted. It is not my business, however, to pursue the details of his story. What I have written was only to render intelligible the following letter:—

* I have drawn up the account of this meeting from my recollection partly of Mr. Wordsworth's conversation—partly from that of his sister's charming "Diary," which he was so kind as to read over to me on the 16th May, 1836.

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To Walter Scott, Esq., Advocate Castle Street, Edinburgh.

"Ettrick House, December 24, 1803.

"Dear Mr. Scott,

"I have been very impatient to hear from you. There is a certain affair of which you and I talked a little in private, and which must now be concluded, that naturally increaseth this.

"I am afraid that I was at least half-seas over the night I was with you, for I cannot, for my life, recollect what passed when it was late: and, there being certainly a small vacuum in my brain, which, when empty, is quite empty, but is sometimes supplied with a small distillation of intellectual matter—this must have been empty that night, or it never could have been taken possession of by the fumes of the liquor so easily. If I was in the state in which I suspect that I was, I must have spoke a very great deal of nonsense, for which I beg ten thousand pardons. I have the consolation, however, of remembering that Mrs. Scott kept in company all or most of the time, which she certainly could not have done, had I been very rude. I remember, too, of the filial injunction you gave at parting, cautioning me against being ensnared by the loose women in town. I am sure I had not reason enough left at that time to express either the half of my gratitude for the kind hint, or the utter abhorrence I inherit at those seminaries of lewdness.

"You once promised me your best advice in the first lawsuit in which I had the particular happiness of being engaged. I am now going to ask it seriously in an affair, in which, I am sure, we will both take as much pleasure. It is this:—I have as many songs beside me, which are certainly the *worst* of my productions, as will make about one hundred pages close printed, and about two hundred printed as the Minstrelsy is. Now, although I will not proceed without your consent and advice, yet I would have you to understand that I expect it, and have the scheme much at heart at present. The first thing that suggested it was their extraordinary repute in Ettrick and its neighbourhood, and being everlastingly plagued with writing copies, and promising scores which I never meant to perform. As my last pamphlet was never known, save to a few friends, I wish your advice what pieces of it are worth preserving. The 'Pastoral' I am resolved to insert, as I am 'Sandy Tod.' As to my manuscripts, they are endless; and as I doubt you will disapprove of publishing them wholesale, and letting the good help off the bad, I think you must trust to my discretion in the selection of a few. I wish likewise to know if you think a graven image on the first leaf is any recommendation; and if we might front the songs with a letter to you, giving an impartial account of my manner of life and education, and, which if you pleased to transcribe, putting He for I. Again, there is no publishing a book without a patron, and I have one or two in my eye, and of which I will, with my wonted assurance to you, give you the most free choice. The first is Walter Scott, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff-depute of Ettrick Forest, which, if permitted, I will address you in a dedication singular enough. The next is Lady Dalkeith, which, if you approved of, you must become the Editor yourself; and I shall give you my word for it, that neither word nor sentiment in it shall offend the most delicate ear. You will not be in the least jealous, if, alongst with my services to you, I present my kindest compliments to the sweet little lady whom you call Charlotte. As for Camp and Walter (I beg pardon for this pre-eminence), they will not mind them if I should exhaust my eloquence in compliments. Believe me, dear Walter, your most devoted servant,

JAMES HOGG."

The reader will, I doubt not, be particularly amused by one of the suggestions in this letter; namely, that Scott should transcribe the Shepherd's narrative *in fore* of his life and education, and merely putting "He" for "I," adopt it as his own composition. James, however, would have had no hesitation about offering a similar suggestion either to Scott, or Wordsworth, or Byron, at any period of their renown. To say nothing about modesty, his notions of literary honesty were always exceedingly loose; but, at the same time, we must take into account his peculiar notions, or rather no notions, as to the proper limits of a joke.

Literature, like misery, makes men acquainted with strange bed-fellows. Let us return from the worthy Shepherd of Ettrick to the courtly wit and scholar of Sunninghill. In the last quoted of his letters, he expresses his fear that Scott's military avocations might cause him to publish the Tristrem unaccompanied by his "Essay on the History of Scottish Poetry." It is needless to add that no such Essay ever was completed; but I have heard Scott say that his plan had been to begin with the age of Thomas of Ercildoune, and bring the subject down to his own, illustrating each stage of his progress by a specimen of verse imitating every great master's style, as he had done that of the original Sir Tristrem in his "*Conclusion*." Such a series of pieces from his hand would have been invaluable, merely as bringing out in a clear manner the *gradual* divarication of the two great dialects of the English tongue; but seeing by his "Verses on a Poacher," written many years after this, in professed imitation of Crabbe, with what happy art he could pour the poetry of his own mind into the mould of another artist, it is impossible to doubt that we have lost better things than antiquarian illumination, by the non-completion of a design in which he should have embraced successively the tone and measure of Douglas, Dunbar, Lindesay, Montgomerie, Hamilton, Ramsay, Fergusson, and Burns.

The "Tristrem" was now far advanced at press. He says to Ellis, on the 19th March, 1804.

"As I had a world of things to say to you, I have been culpably, but most naturally silent. When you turn a bottle with its head downmost, you must have remarked that the extreme impatience of the contents to get out all at once, greatly impedes their getting out at all. I have, however, been forming the resolution of sending a grand packet with Sir Tristrem, who will kiss your hands in about a fortnight. I intend ungastrated copies for you, Heber, and Mr. Douce, who, I am willing to hope, will accept this mark of my great respect and warm remembrance of his kindness while in London. Pray send me without delay the passage referring to *Thomas* in the French 'Hornchild.' Far from being daunted with the position of the enemy, I am resolved to carry it at the point of the bayonet, and, like an able general, to attack where it would be difficult to defend. Without metaphor or parable, I am determined not only that my Tomas *shall* be the author of 'Tristrem,' but that he shall be the author of 'Hornchild' also. I must, however, read over the romance before I can make my arrangements. Holding, with Ritson, that the copy in *his* collection is translated from the French, I do not see why we should not suppose that the French had been originally a version from our Thomas. The date does not greatly frighten me, as I have extended Thomas of Ercildoune's life to the three-score and ten years of the Psalmist, and consequently removed back the date of 'Sir Tristrem' to 1250. The French translation might be written for that matter within a few days after Thomas's work was completed—and I can allow a few years. He lived on the Border, already possessed by Norman families, and in the vicinity of Northumberland, where there were many more. Do you think the minstrels of the Percies, the Veseies, the Morells, the Grais, and the De Vaux, where not acquainted with honest Thomas, their next door neighbour, who was a poet, and wrote excellent tales—and, moreover, a *laird*, and gave, I dare be sworn, good dinners? And would they not anxiously translate, for the amusement of their masters, a story like 'Hornchild,' so intimately connected with the lands in which they had settled? And do you not think, from the whole structure of 'Hornchild,' however often translated and retranslated, that it must have been originally of northern extraction? I have not time to tell you certain suspicions I entertain that Mr. Douce's fragments are the work of one Raoull de Beauvais, who flourished about the middle of the thirteenth century, and for whose accommodation, principally, I have made Thomas, to use a military phrase, *dress backwards* for ten years."

All this playful language is exquisitely characteristic of Scott's indomitable adherence to his own views. But his making *Thomas dress backwards*, —and resolving that, if necessary, he *shall be* the author of Hornchild, as well as Sir Tristrem—may perhaps remind the reader of Don Quixote's method of repairing the headpiece, which, as originally constructed, one blow had sufficed to demolish:—"Not altogether approving of his having broken it to pieces with so much ease, to secure himself from the like danger for the future, he made it over again, fencing it with small bars of iron within, in such a manner—that *he rested satisfied of its strength—and, without caring to make a fresh experiment on*

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it, he approved and looked upon it as a most excellent helmet."

Ellis having made some observations on Scott's article upon Godwin's Life of Chaucer, which implied a notion that he had formed a regular connexion with the Edinburgh Review, he in the same letter says:—

"I quite agree with you as to the general conduct of the Review, which savours more of a wish to display than to instruct; but as essays, many of the articles are invaluable, and the principal conductor is a man of very acute and universal talent. I am not regularly connected with the work, nor have I either inclination or talents to use the critical scalping knife, unless, as in the case of Godwin, where flesh and blood succumbed under the temptation. I don't know if you have looked into this tomes, of which a whole edition has vanished, I was at a loss to know how, till I conjectured that, as the heaviest materials to be come at, they have been sent on the secret expedition planned by Mr. Phillips, and adopted by our sapient Government, for blocking up the mouth of our enemy's harbours. They should have had my free consent to take Phillips and Godwin, and all our other lumber, literary and political, for the same beneficial purpose. But, in general, I think it ungentlemanly to wound any person's feelings, through an anonymous publication, unless where conceit or false doctrine strongly calls for reprobation. Where praise can be conscientiously mingled in a larger proportion than blame, there is always some amusement in throwing together our ideas upon the works of our fellow-labourers, and no injustice in publishing them. On such occasions, *and in our way*, I may possibly, once or twice a-year, furnish my critical friends with an article."

"Sir Tristrem" was at length published on the 2d of May, 1804, by Constable, who, however, expected so little popularity for the work, that the edition consisted only of 150 copies. These were sold at a high price, (two guineas,) otherwise they would not have been enough to cover the expenses of paper and printing. Mr. Ellis, and Scott's other antiquarian friends, were much dissatisfied with these arrangements; but I doubt not that Constable was a better judge than any of them. The work, however, partook in due time of the favour attending its editor's name. In 1806, 750 copies were called for; and 1000 in 1811. After that time Sir Tristrem was included in the collective editions of Scott's poetry; but he had never parted with the copyright, merely allowing his general publishers to insert it among his other works, whenever they chose to do so, as a matter of courtesy. It was not a performance from which he had ever anticipated any pecuniary profit, but it maintained at least, if it did not raise, his reputation in the circle of his fellow antiquaries; and his own *Conclusion*, in the manner of the original romance, must always be admired as a remarkable specimen of skill and dexterity.

As to the arguments of the Introduction, I shall not in this place attempt any discussion.* Whether the story of Tristrem was first told in Welsh, Armorican, French, or English verse, there can, I think, be no doubt that it had been told in verse, with such success as to obtain very general renown, by Thomas of Ercildoune, and that the copy edited by Scott was either the composition of one who had heard the old Rhymer recite his lay, or the identical lay itself. The introduction of Thomas's name in the third person, as not the author, but the author's authority, appears to have had a great share in convincing Scott that the Auchinleck MS. contained not the original, but the copy of an English admirer and contemporary. This point seems to have been rendered more doubtful by some quotations in the recent edition of Warton's History of English Poetry; but the argument derived from the enthusiastic exclamation "God help Sir Tristrem the knight—he fought for England," still remains; and stronger perhaps even than that, in the opinion of modern philologists, is the total absence of any Scottish or even Northumbrian pecuharities in the diction.

* The critical reader will find all the learning on the subject brought together with much ability in the Preface to "The Poetical Romances of Tristan, in French, in Anglo-Norman, and in Greek, composed in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries—Edited by Francisque Michel," 2 vols. London, 1835.

All this controversy may be waived here. Scott's object and delight was to revive the fame of the Rhymer, whose traditional history he had listened to while yet an infant among the crags of Smailholme. He had already celebrated him in a noble ballad;* he now devoted a volume to elucidate a fragment supposed to be substantially his work; and we shall find that thirty years after, when the lamp of his own genius was all but spent, it could still revive and throw out at least some glimmerings of its original brightness at the name of Thomas of Ercildoune.

CHAPTER XIII.

REMOVAL TO ASHESTIEL—DEATH OF CAPTAIN ROBERT SCOTT—MUNGO PARK—COMPLETION AND PUBLICATION OF THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL—1804-1805.

It has been mentioned that in the course of the preceding summer, the Lord-Lieutenant of Selkirkshire complained of Scott's military zeal as interfering sometimes with the discharge of his shrieval functions, and took occasion to remind him, that the law, requiring every Sheriff to reside at least four months in the year within his own jurisdiction, had not hitherto been complied with. It appears that Scott received this communication with some displeasure, being conscious that no duty of any importance had ever been neglected by him; well knowing that the law of residence was not enforced in the cases of many of his brother sheriffs; and, in fact, ascribing his Lord-Lieutenant's complaint to nothing but a certain nervous fidget as to all points of form, for which that respectable nobleman was notorious as well became, perhaps, an old Lord of the Bedchamber, and High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Kirk.† Scott, however, must have been found so clearly in the wrong, had the case been submitted to the Secretary of State, and Lord Napier conducted the correspondence with such courtesy, never failing to allege as a chief argument the pleasure which it would afford himself and the other gentlemen of Selkirkshire to have more of their Sheriff's society, that, while it would have been highly imprudent to persist, there could be no mortification in yielding. He flattered himself that his active habits would enable him to maintain his connexion with the Edinburgh Cavalry as usual; and, perhaps, he also flattered himself, that residing for the summer in Selkirkshire would not interfere more seriously with his business as a barrister, than the occupation of the cottage at Lasswade had hitherto done.

While he was seeking about, accordingly, for some "lodge in the Forest," his kinsman of Harden suggested that the tower of Auld Wat might be refitted so as to serve his purpose; and he received the proposal with enthusiastic delight. On a more careful inspection of the localities, however, he became sensible that he would be practically at a greater distance from county business of all kinds at Harden, than if he were to continue at Lasswade. Just at this time, the house of Ashestiel, situated on the southern bank of the Tweed, a few miles from Selkirk, became vacant by the death of its proprietor, Colonel Russel, who had married a sister of Scott's mother, and the consequent dispersion of the family. The young laird of Ashestiel, his cousin, was then in India, and the Sheriff took a lease of the house and grounds, with a small farm adjoining. On the 4th May, two days after the

* See the Minstrelsy, (Edition 1833,) vol. iv. p. 116.

† I remember being much amused with an instance of Lord Napier's precision in small matters, mentioned by the late Lady Stewart of Castlemilk, in Lanarkshire. Lord and Lady Napier had arrived at Castlemilk, with the intention of staying a week; but next morning it was announced that a circumstance had occurred which rendered it indispensable for them to return without delay to their own seat in Selkirkshire. It was impossible for Lady Stewart to extract any further explanation at the moment, but it turned out afterwards that Lord Napier's valet had committed the grievous mistake of packing up a set of neckcloths which did not correspond *in point of date* with the shirts they accompanied t

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Tristrem had been published, he says to Ellis: "I have been engaged in travelling backwards and forwards to Selkirkshire upon little pieces of business, just important enough to prevent my doing any thing to purpose. One great matter, however, I have achieved, which is, procuring myself a place of residence, which will save me these teasing migrations in future, so that though I part with my sweet little cottage on the banks of the Esk, you will find me this summer in the very centre of the ancient Reged, in a decent farmhouse overhanging the Tweed, and situated in a wild pastoral country." And again, on the 19th, he thus apologizes for not having answered a letter of the 10th:—"For more than a month my head was fairly tenanted by ideas, which, though strictly pastoral and rural, were neither literary nor poetical. *Long sheep*, and *short sheep*, and *tups*, and *gimmers*, and *hogs*, and *dinmonts*, had made a perfect sheepfold of my understanding, which is hardly yet cleared of them.* —I hope Mrs. Ellis will clap a bridle on her imagination. Ettrick Forest boasts finely shaped hills and clear romantic streams; but, alas! they are bare to wildness, and denuded of the beautiful natural wood with which they were formerly shaded. It is mortifying to see that, though wherever the sheep are excluded, the copse has immediately sprung up in abundance, so that inclosures only are wanting to restore the wood wherever it might be useful or ornamental, yet hardly a proprietor has attempted to give it fair play for a resurrection. . . . You see we reckon positively on you—the more because our arch-critic Jeffrey tells me that he met you in London, and found you still inclined for a northern trip. All our wise men in the north are rejoiced at the prospect of seeing George Ellis. If you delay your journey till July, I shall then be free of the Courts of Law, and will meet you upon the Border, at whatever side you enter."

The business part of these letters refers to Scott's brother Daniel, who, as he expresses it, "having been bred to the mercantile line, had been obliged, by some untoward circumstances, particularly an imprudent connexion with an artful woman, to leave Edinburgh for Liverpool, and now to be casting his eyes towards Jamaica." Scott requests Ellis to help him if he can, by introducing him to some of his own friends or agents in that island: and Ellis furnished him accordingly with letters to Mr. Blackburne, a friend and brother proprietor, who appears to have paid Daniel Scott every possible attention, and soon provided him with suitable employment on a healthy part of his estates. But the same low tastes and habits which had reduced the unfortunate young man to the necessity of expatriating himself, recurred after a brief season of penitence and order, and continued until he had accumulated great affliction upon all his family.

On the 10th of June, 1804, died, at his seat of Rosebank, Captain Robert Scott, the affectionate uncle whose name has often occurred in this narrative.† "He was," says his nephew to Ellis, on the 18th, "a man of universal benevolence, and great kindness towards his friends, and to me individually. His manners were so much tinged with the habits of celibacy as to render them peculiar, though by no means unpleasingly so, and his profession (that of a seaman) gave a high colouring to the whole. The loss is one which, though the course of nature led me to expect it, did not take place at last without considerable pain to my feelings. The arrangement of his affairs, and the distribution of his small fortune among his relations, will devolve in a great measure upon me. He has distinguished me by leaving me a beautiful little villa on the banks of the Tweed, with every possible convenience annexed to it, and about thirty acres of the finest land in Scotland. Notwithstanding, however, the temptation that this bequest offers, I continue to pursue my Reged plan, and expect to be settled at Ashestiel in the course of a month. Rosebank is situated so near the village of Kelso as hardly to be sufficiently a country residence; besides, it is hemmed in by hedges and ditches, not to mention Dukes and Lady Dowagers, which are bad things for little people. It is expected to sell to great advantage. I shall buy a mountain farm with the purchase-money, and be quite the Laird of the Cairn and the Scaur."

Scott sold Rosebank in the course of the year for £5000; his share (being a ninth) of his uncle's other property, amounted, I believe, to about £500; and he had besides a legacy of £100 in his quality of trustee. This bequest made an important change in his pecuniary position, and influenced, accordingly, the arrangements of his future life. Independently of practice at the bar, and of literary profits, he was now, with his little patrimony, his Sheriffship, and about £200 per annum arising from the stock ultimately settled on his wife, in possession of a fixed revenue of nearly, if not quite, £1000 a-year.

On the 1st of August he writes to Ellis from Ashestiel—

"Having had only about a hundred and fifty things to do, I have scarcely done any thing, and yet could not give myself leave to suppose that I had leisure to write letters. 1st, I had this farm-house to furnish from sales, from broker's shops, and from all manner of hospitals for incurable furniture. 2dly, I had to let my cottage on the banks of the Esk. 3dly, I had to go into quarters with our cavalry, which made a very idle fortnight in the midst of all this business. Last of all, I had to superintend a removal, or what we call a *flitting*, which, of all bores under the cope of Heaven, is bore the most tremendous. After all these storms, we are now most comfortably settled, and have only to regret deeply our disappointment at finding your northern march blown up. We had been projecting about twenty expeditions, and were pleasing ourselves at Mrs. Ellis's expected surprise on finding herself so totally built in by mountains, as I am at the present writing hereof. We are seven miles from kirk and market. We rectify the last inconvenience by killing our own mutton and poultry; and as to the former, finding there was some chance of my family turning pagans, I have adopted the goodly practice of reading prayers every Sunday, to the great edification of my household. Think of this, you that have the happiness to be within two steps of the church, and commiserate those who dwell in the wilderness. I showed Charlotte yesterday *the Catrail*, and told her that to inspect that venerable monument was one main object of your intended journey to Scotland. She is of opinion that ditches must be more scarce in the neighbourhood of Windsor Forest than she had hitherto had the least idea of."

Ashestiel will be visited by many for his sake, as long as Waverley and Marmion are remembered. A more beautiful situation for the residence of a poet could not be conceived. The house was then a small one, but, compared with the cottage at Lasswade, its accommodations were amply sufficient. You approached it through an old-fashioned garden, with holly hedges, and broad, green, terrace walks. On one side, close under the windows, is a deep ravine, clothed with venerable trees, down which a

* Describing his meeting with Scott in the summer of 1801, James Hogg says—"During the sociality of the evening, the discourse ran very much on the different breeds of sheep, that curse of the community of Ettrick Forest. The original black-faced Forest breed being always called *the short sheep*, and the Cheviot breed *the long sheep*, the disputes at that period ran very high about the predicable profits of each. Mr. Scott, who had come into that remote district to preserve what fragments remained of its legendary lore, was rather bored with everlasting questions of the long and the short sheep. So at length, putting on his most serious, calculating face, he turned to Mr. Walter Bryden, and said, 'I am rather at a loss regarding the merits of this *very* important question. How long must a sheep actually measure to come under the denomination of a *long sheep*?' Mr. Bryden, who, in the simplicity of his heart, neither perceived the quiz nor the reproof, fell to answer with great sincerity. 'It's the woo', Sirrell, sir—it's the woo' that makes the difference. The lang sheep ha'e the short woo', and the short sheep ha'e the lang ane, and these are just kind o' names we gi'e them like.' Mr. Scott could not preserve his grave face of strict calculation; it went gradually awry, and a hearty guffaw [*i. e.* horse-laugh] followed. When I saw the very same words repeated near the beginning (p. 4) of the 'Black Dwarf,' how could I be mistaken of the author?"—*Autobiography* prefixed to Hogg's "Altrive Tales."

† In the obituary of the Scots Magazine for this month I find:—"Universally regretted, Captain Robert Scott of Rosebank, a gentleman whose life afforded an uniform example of unostentatious charity and extensive benevolence."

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mountain rivulet is heard, more than seen, in its progress to the Tweed. The river itself is separated from the high bank on which the house stands only by a narrow meadow of the richest verdure. Opposite, and all around, are the green hills. The valley there is narrow, and the aspect in every direction is that of perfect pastoral repose. The heights immediately behind are those which divide the Tweed from the Yarrow; and the latter celebrated stream lies within an easy ride, in the course of which the traveller passes through a variety of the finest mountain scenery in the south of Scotland. No town is within seven miles, but Selkirk, which was then still smaller and quieter than it is now; there was hardly even a gentleman's family within visiting distance, except at Yair, a few miles lower on the Tweed, the ancient seat of the Pringles of Whytbank, and at Bowhill, between the Yarrow and the Ettrick, where the Earl of Dalkeith used occasionally to inhabit a small shooting lodge, which has since grown to be a magnificent ducal residence. The country all around, with here and there an insignificant exception, belongs to the Buccleuch estate; so that, whichever way he chose to turn, the bard of the clan had ample room and verge enough, and all appliances to boot, for every variety of field sport that might happen to please his fancy; and being then in the prime vigour of manhood, he was not slow to profit by these advantages. Mean time, the concerns of his own little farm, and the care of his absent relation's woods, gave him healthful occupation in the intervals of the chase; and he had long, solitary evenings for the uninterrupted exercise of his pen; perhaps, on the whole, better opportunities of study than he had ever enjoyed before, or was to meet with elsewhere in later days.

When he first examined Ashestiel, with a view to being his cousin's tenant, he thought of taking home James Hogg to superintend the sheep farm, and keep watch over the house also during the winter. I am not able to tell exactly in what manner this proposal fell to the ground. In January, 1804, the Shepherd writes to him:—"I have no intention of waiting for so distant a prospect as that of being manager of your farm, though I have no doubt of our joint endeavour proving successful, nor yet of your willingness to employ me in that capacity. His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch hath at present a farm vacant in Eskdale, and I have been importuned by friends to get a letter from you and apply for it. You can hardly be conscious what importance your protection hath given me already, not only in mine own eyes, but even in those of others. You might write to him, or to any of the family you are best acquainted with, stating that such and such a character was about leaving his native country for want of a residence in the farming line." I am very doubtful if Scott—however willing to encounter the risk of employing Hogg as his own *grieve*, or bailiff—would have felt himself justified at this, or, indeed, at any time, in recommending him as the tenant of a considerable farm on the Duke of Buccleuch's estate. But I am also quite at a loss to comprehend how Hogg should have conceived it possible, at this period, when he certainly had no capital whatever, that the Duke's Chamberlain should agree to accept him for a tenant, on any attestation, however strong, as to the excellence of his character and intentions. Be that as it may, if Scott made the application which the Shepherd suggested, it failed. So did a negotiation which he certainly did enter upon about the same time with the late Earl of Caernarvon, (then Lord Porchester,) through that nobleman's aunt, Mrs. Scott of Harden, with the view of obtaining for Hogg the situation of bailiff on one of his Lordship's estates in the west of England; and such, I believe, was the result of several other attempts of the same kind with landed proprietors nearer home. Perhaps the Shepherd had already set his heart so much on taking rank as a farmer in his own district, that he witnessed the failure of any such negotiations with indifference. As regards the management of Ashestiel, I find no trace of that proposal having ever been renewed.

In truth, Scott had hardly been a week in possession of his new domains, before he made acquaintance with a character much better suited to his purpose than James Hogg ever could have been. I mean honest Thomas Purdie, his faithful servant—his affectionately devoted humble friend from this time until death parted them. Tom was first brought before him, in his capacity of Sheriff, on a charge of poaching, when the poor fellow gave such a touching account of his circumstances—a wife, and I know not how many children depending on his exertions—work scarce and grouse abundant—and all this with a mixture of odd sly humour,—that the Sheriff's heart was moved. Tom escaped the penalty of the law—was taken into employment as shepherd, and showed such zeal, activity, and shrewdness in that capacity, that Scott never had any occasion to repent of the step he soon afterwards took, in promoting him to the position which had been originally offered to James Hogg.

It was also about the same time that he took into his service as coachman Peter Mathieson, brother-in-law to Thomas Purdie, another faithful servant who never afterwards left him, and still survives his kind master. Scott's awkward conduct of the little phaeton had exposed his wife to more than one perilous overturn, before he agreed to set up a close carriage, and call in the assistance of this steady charioteer.

During this autumn Scott formed the personal acquaintance of Mungo Park, the celebrated victim of African discovery. On his return from his first expedition, Park endeavoured to establish himself as a medical practitioner in the town of Hawick, but the drudgeries of that calling in such a district soon exhausted his ardent temper, and he was now living in seclusion in his native cottage at Fowlsheils on the Yarrow, nearly opposite Newark Castle. His brother, Archibald Park, a man remarkable for strength both of mind and body, was the sheriff's officer of that district, and introduced the traveller to his principal. They soon became much attached to each other; and Scott supplied some interesting anecdotes of their brief intercourse, to the late Mr. Wishaw, the editor of Park's posthumous Journal, with which I shall blend a few minor circumstances which I gathered from him in conversation long afterwards. "On one occasion," he says, "the traveller communicated to him some very remarkable adventures, which had befallen him in Africa, but which he had not recorded in his book." On Scott's asking the cause of this silence, Mungo answered, "that in all cases where he had information to communicate, which he thought of importance to the public, he had stated the facts boldly, leaving it to his readers to give such credit to his statement as they might appear justly to deserve; but that he would not shock their faith, or render his travels more marvellous, by introducing circumstances which, however true, were of little or no moment as they related solely to his own personal adventures and escapes." This reply struck Scott as highly characteristic of the man; and though strongly tempted to set down some of these marvels for Mr. Wishaw's use, he on reflection abstained from doing so, holding it unfair to record what the adventurer had deliberately chosen to suppress in his own narrative. He confirms the account given by Park's biographer of his cold and reserved manners to strangers; and in particular, of his disgust with the *indirect* questions which curious visitors would often put to him upon the subject of his travels. "The practice," said Mungo, "exposes me to two risks, either that I may not understand the question meant to be put, or that my answers to them may be misconstrued;" and he contrasted such conduct with the frankness of Scott's revered friend, Dr. Adam Ferguson, who, the very first day the traveller dined with him at Hallyards, spread a large map of Africa on the table, and made him trace out his progress thereupon, inch by inch, questioning him minutely as to every step he had taken. "Here

however," says Scott, "Dr. F. was using a privilege to which he was well entitled by his venerable age and high literary character, but which could not have been exercised with propriety by any common stranger."

Calling one day at Fowlsheils, and not finding Park at home, Scott walked in search of him along the banks of the Yarrow, which in that neighbourhood passes over various ledges of rock, forming deep pools and eddies between them. Presently he discovered his friend standing alone on the bank, plunging one stone after another into the water, and watching anxiously the bubbles as they rose to the surface. "This," said Scott, "appears but an idle amusement for one who has seen so much stirring adventure." "Not so idle, perhaps, as you suppose," answered Mungo. "This was the manner in which I used to ascertain the depth of a river in Africa before I ventured to cross it—judging whether the attempt would be safe, by the time the bubbles of air took to ascend." At this time Park's intention of a second expedition had never been revealed to Scott; but he instantly formed the opinion that these experiments on Yarrow were connected with some such purpose.

His thoughts had always continued to be haunted with Africa. He told Scott that whenever he awoke suddenly in the night, owing to a nervous disorder with which he was troubled, he fancied himself still a prisoner in the tent of Ali; but when the poet expressed some surprise that he should design again to revisit those scenes, he answered, that he would rather brave Africa and all its horrors, than wear out his life in long and toilsome rides over the hills of Scotland, for which the remuneration was hardly enough to keep soul and body together.

Towards the end of the autumn, when about to quit his country for the last time, Park paid Scott a farewell visit, and slept at Ashestiel. Next morning his host accompanied him homewards over the wild chain of hills between the Tweed and the Yarrow. Park talked much of his new scheme, and mentioned his determination to tell his family that he had some business for a day or two in Edinburgh, and send them his blessing from thence without returning to take leave. He had married, not long before, a pretty and amiable woman; and when they reached the *Williamhope Ridge*, "the autumnal mist floating heavily and slowly down the valley of the Yarrow," presented to Scott's imagination "a striking emblem of the troubled and uncertain prospect which his undertaking afforded." He remained, however, undaken, and at length they reached the spot at which they had agreed to separate. A small ditch divided the moor from the road, and, in going over it, Park's horse stumbled, and nearly fell. "I am afraid, Mungo," said the Sheriff, "that is a bad omen." To which he answered, smiling, "*Freits* (omens) follow those who look to them." With this expression Mungo struck the spurs into his horse, and Scott never saw him again. His parting proverb, by the way, was probably suggested by one of the Border ballads, in which species of lore he was almost as great a proficient as the Sheriff himself; for we read in "Edom o' Gordon,"—

> "Them look to freits, my master dear,
> Then freits will follow them."

I must not omit that George Scott, the unfortunate companion of Park's second journey, was the son of a tenant on the Buccleuch estate, whose skill in drawing having casually attracted the Sheriff's attention, he was recommended by him to the protection of the family, and by this means established in a respectable situation in the Ordnance department of the Tower of London; but the stories of his old acquaintance Mungo Park's discoveries, had made such an impression on his fancy, that nothing could prevent his accompanying him on the fatal expedition of 1806.

The brother of Mungo Park remained in Scott's employment for many years, and was frequently his companion in his mountain rides. Though a man of the most dauntless temperament, he was often alarmed at Scott's reckless horsemanship. "The de'il's in ye, Sherra," he would say, "ye'll never halt till they bring you hame with your feet foremost." He rose greatly in favour, in consequence of the gallantry with which he seized a gipsy, accused of murder, from amidst a group of similar desperadoes, on whom the Sheriff and he had come unexpectedly in a desolate part of the country.

To return to the Lay of the Last Minstrel:—Ellis, understanding it to be now nearly ready for the press, writes to Scott, urging him to set it forth with some engraved illustrations—if possible, after Flaxman, whose splendid designs from Homer had shortly before made their appearance. He answers, August 21—

"I should have liked very much to have had appropriate embellishments. Indeed, we made some attempts of the kind, but they did not succeed. I should fear Flaxman's genius is too classic to stoop to body forth my Gothic Borderers. Would there not be some risk of their resembling the antique of Homer's heroes rather than the iron race of Salvator? After all, perhaps, nothing is more difficult than for a painter to adopt the author's ideas of an imaginary character, especially when it is founded on traditions to which the artist is a stranger. I should like at least to be at his elbow when at work. I wish very much I could have sent you the Lay while in MS., to have had the advantage of your opinion and corrections. But Ballantyne galled my kibes so severely during an unusual fit of activity, that I gave him the whole story in a sort of pet both with him and with it. . . . I have lighted upon a very good amanuensis for copying such matters as the *Lay le Frain*, &c. He was sent down here by some of the London booksellers in a half-starved state, but begins to pick up a little. . . I am just about to set out on a grand expedition of great importance to my comfort in this place. You must know that Mr. Plummer, my predecessor in this county, was a good antiquary, and left a valuable collection of books, which he entailed with the estate, the first successors being three of his sisters, at least as old and musty as any Caxton or Wynkyn de Worde in his library. Now I must contrive to coax those watchful dragons to give me admittance into this garden of the Hesperides. I suppose they trouble the volumes as little as *the* dragon did the golden pippins; but they may not be the more easily soothed on that account. However, I set out on my *quest*, like a *preux chevalier*, taking care to leave Camp, for dirtying the carpet, and to carry the greyhounds with me, whose appearance will indicate that hare-soup may be forthcoming in due season. By the way, did I tell you that Fitz-Camp is dead, and another on the stocks? As our stupid postman might mistake *Reged*, address, as per date, Asheatiel, Selkirk, by Berwick."

I believe the spinsters of Sunderland hall proved very generous dragons; and Scott lived to see them succeeded in the guardianship of Mr. Plummer's literary treasures by an amiable young gentleman of his own name and family. The half-starved amanuensis of this letter was *Henry Weber*, a laborious German, of whom we shall hear more hereafter. With regard to the pictorial embellishments contemplated for the first edition of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, I believe the artist in whose designs the poet took the greatest interest was Mr. Masquerier, now of Brighton, with whom he corresponded at some length on the subject: but his distance from that ingenious gentleman's residence was inconvenient, and the booksellers were probably impatient of delay, when the MS. was once known to be in the hands of the printer.

There is a circumstance which must already have struck such of my readers as knew the author in his latter days, namely, the readiness with which he seems to have communicated this poem, in its progress, not only to his own familiar friends, but to new and casual acquaintances. We shall find him following the same course with his Marmion—but not, I think, with any of his subsequent works. His determination to consult the movements of his own mind alone in the conduct of his pieces was probably taken before he began the Lay; and he soon resolved to trust for the detection of minor inaccuracies to two persons only—James Ballantyne and

William Erskine. The printer was himself a man of considerabe literary talents; his own style had the incurable faults of pomposity and affectation, but his eye for more venial errors in the writings of others was quick, and, though his personal address was apt to give a stranger the impression of insincerity, he was in reality an honest man, and conveyed his mind on such matters with equal candour and delicacy during the whole of Scott's brilliant career. In the vast majority of instances he found his friend acquiesce at once in the propriety of his suggestions; nay, there certainly were cases, though rare, in which his advice to alter things of much more consequence than a word or a rhyme, was frankly tendered, and on deliberation adopted by Scott. Mr. Erskine was the referee whenever the poet hesitated about taking the hints of the zealous typographer, and his refined taste and gentle manners rendered his critical alliance highly valuable. With two such faithful friends within his reach, the author of the Lay might safely dispense with sending his MS. to be revised even by George Ellis.

Before he left Ashestiel for the winter session, the printing of the poem had made considerable progress. Ellis writes to him on the 10th November, complaining of bad health, and adds, "Tu quid agis? I suppose you are still an inhabitant of Reged, and being there it is impossible that your head should have been solely occupied by the ten thousand cares which you are likely to have in common with other mortals, or even by the *Lay*, which must have been long since completed, but must have started during the summer new projects sufficient to employ the lives of half-a-dozen patriarchs. Pray tell me all about it, for as the present state of my frame precludes me from much activity, I want to enjoy that of my friends." Scott answers from Edinburgh: "I fear you fall too much into the sedentary habits incident to a literary life, like my poor friend Plummer, who used to say that a walk from the parlour to the garden once a day was sufficient exercise for any rational being, and that no one but a fool or a fox-hunter would take more. I wish you could have had a seat on Hassan's tapestry to have brought Mrs. Ellis and you soft and fair to Ashestiel, where with farm mutton at four P. M., and goats whey at 6 A. M., I think we could have re-established as much *embonpoint* as ought to satisfy a poetical antiquary. As for my country amusements, I have finished the Lay, with which and its accompanying notes the press now groans; but I have started nothing except some scores of hares, many of which my gallant greyhounds brought to the ground."

Ellis had also touched upon a literary feud then raging between Scott's allies of the Edinburgh Review, and the late Dr. Thomas Young, illustrious for inventive genius, displayed equally in physical science and in philological literature. A northern critic, whoever he was, had treated with merry contempt certain discoveries in natural philosophy and the mechanical arts, more especially that of the undulating theory of light, which ultimately conferred on Young's name one of its highest distinctions. "He had been for some time," says Ellis, "lecturer at the Royal Institution; and having determined to publish his lectures, he had received from one of the booksellers the offer of £1000 for the copyright. He was actually preparing for the press, when the bookseller came to him, and told him that the ridicule thrown by the Edinburgh Review, on some papers of his in the Philosophical Transactions, had so frightened the whole *trade*, that he must request to be released from his bargain. This consequence, it is true, could not have been foreseen by the reviewer, who, however, appears to have written from feelings of private animosity; and I still continue to think, though I greatly admire the good taste of the literary essays, and the perspicuity of the dissertations on political economy, that an apparent want of candour is too generally the character of a work which, from its independence on the interests of booksellers, might have been expected to be particularly free from this defect." Scott rejoins: "I am sorry for the very pitiful catastrophe of Dr Young's publication, because, although I am altogether unacquainted with the merits of the controversy, one must always regret so very serious a consequence of a diatribe. The truth is, that these gentlemen reviewers ought often to read over the fable of the boys and frogs, and should also remember it is much more easy to destroy than to build to criticise than to compose. While on this subject I kiss the rod of my critic in the Edinburgh, on the subject of the price of Sir Tristrem; it was not my fault, however, that the public had it not cheap enough, as I declined taking any copy-money, or share in the profits, and *nothing* surely was as reasonable a charge as I could make."

On the 30th December he resumes: "The *Lay* is now ready, and will probably be in Longman and Rees's hands shortly after this comes to yours. I have charged them to send you a copy by the first conveyance, and shall be impatient to know whether you think the entire piece corresponds to that which you have already seen. I would also fain send a copy to Gifford, by way of introduction.—My reason is, that I understand he is about to publish an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, and I think I could offer him the use of some miscellaneous notes, which I made long since on the margin of their works.* Besides, I have a good esteem of Mr. Gifford as a manly English poet, very different from most of our modern versifiers.—We are so fond of Reged that we are just going to set out for our farm in the middle of a snow storm; all that we have to comfort ourselves with is, that our march has been ordered with great military talent—a detachment of mince pies and brandy having preceded us. In case we are not buried in a snow-wreath, our stay will be but short. Should that event happen, we must wait the thaw."

Ellis, not having as yet received the new poem, answers on the 9th January, 1805, "I look daily and with the greatest anxiety for the Last Minstrel—of which I still hope to see a future edition decorated with designs *à la Flaxman*, as the Lays of Homer have already been. I think you told me that Sir Tristrem had not excited much sensation in Edinburgh. As I have not been in London this age, I can't produce the contrary testimony of our metropolis. But I can produce one person, and that one worth a considerable number, who speaks of it with rapture, and says, 'I am only sorry that Scott has not (and I am sure he has not) told us the whole of his creed on the subject of Tomas, and the other early Scotch minstrels. I suppose he was afraid of the critics, and determined to say very little more than he was ablo to establish by incontestable proofs. I feel infinitely obliged to him for what he has told us, and I have no hesitation in saying, that I consider Sir T. as by far the most interesting work that has as yet been published on the subject of our earliest poets, and, indeed, such a piece of literary antiquity as no one could have, *à priori*, supposed to exist.' This is Frere—our ex-ambassador for Spain, whom you would delight to know, and who would delight to know you. It is remarkable that *you* were, I believe, the *most ardent* of all the admirers of his old English version of the Saxon Ode;† and he is, *per contra*, the warmest panegyrist of

* It was his *Massinger* that Gifford had at this time in hand. His Ben Jonson followed, and then his Ford. Some time later he projected editions, both of Beaumont and Fletcher, and of Shakspeare: but to the grievous misfortune of literature, died without having completed either of them. We shall see presently what became of Scott's Notes on Beaumont and Fletcher.

† "I have only met, in my researches into these matters," says Scott in 1830, "with one poem, which, if it had been produced as ancient, could not have been detected on internal evidence. It is the War Song upon the Victory at Brunnanburgh, translated from the Anglo-Saxon into Anglo-Norman, by the Right Hon. John Hookham Frere. See Ellis's *Specimens of Ancient English Poetry*, vol. i. p. 32. The accomplished Editor tells us, that this very singular poem was intended as an imitation of the style and language of the fourteenth century, and was written during the controversy occasioned by the poems attributed to Rowley. Mr. Ellis adds, 'the reader will probably hear with some surprise that this singular instance of critical ingenuity was the composition of an Eton schoolboy.'"—*Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad*, p. 13.

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your Conclusion, which he can repeat by heart, and affirms to be the very best imitation of old English at present existing. I think I can trust you for having concluded the Last Minstrel with as much spirit as it was begun—if you have been capable of any thing unworthy of your fame amidst the highest mountains of Reged, there is an end of all inspiration."

Scott answers—"Frere is so perfect a master of the ancient style of composition, that I would rather have his suffrage than that of a whole synod of your vulgar antiquaries. The more I think on *our* system of the origin of romance, the more simplicity and uniformity it seems to possess; and though I adopted it late and with hesitation, I believe I shall never see cause to abandon it. Yet I am aware of the danger of attempting to *prove*, where proofs are but scanty, and probable suppositions must be placed in lieu of them. I think the Welsh antiquaries have considerably injured their claims to confidence, by attempting to detail very remote events with all the accuracy belonging to the facts of yesterday. You will hear one of them describe you the cut of Llywarch Hen's beard, or the whittle of Urien Reged, as if he had trimmed the one, or cut *his* cheese with the other. These high pretensions weaken greatly our belief in the Welsh poems, which probably contain real treasures. 'Tis a pity some sober-minded man will not take the trouble to sift the wheat from the chaff, and give us a good account of their MSS. and traditions. Pray, what is become of the *Mabinogion?* It is a proverb, that children and fools talk truth, and I am mistaken if even the same valuable quality may not sometimes be extracted out of the tales made to entertain both. I presume, while we talk of childish and foolish tales, that the Lay is already with you, although, in these points, *Long-manum est errare.* Pray inquire for your copy."

In the first week in January, 1805, "The Lay" was published; and its success at once decided that literature should form the main business of Scott's life.

In his modest *Introduction* of 1830, he had himself told us all that he thought the world would ever desire to know of the origin and progress of his his first great original production. The present Memoir, however, has already included many minor particulars, for which I believe no student of literature will reproach the compiler. I shall not mock the reader with many words as to the merits of a poem which has now kept its place for nearly a third of a century; but one or two additional remarks on the history of the composition may be pardoned.

It is curious to trace the small beginnings and gradual development of his design. The lovely Countess of Dalkeith hears a wild rude legend of Border *diablerie*, and sportively asks him to make it the subject of a ballad. He had been already labouring in the elucidation of the "quaint Inglis" inscribed to an ancient seer and bard of the same district, and perhaps completed his own sequel, intending the whole to be included in the third volume of the Minstrelsy. He assents to Lady Dalkeith's request, and casts about for some new variety of diction and rhyme, which might be adopted without impropriety in a closing strain for the same collection. Sir John Stoddart's casual recitation, a year or two before, of Coleridge's unpublished Christabel, had fixed the music of that noble fragment in his memory; and it occurs to him, that by throwing the story of Gilpin Horner into somewhat of a similar cadence, he might produce such an echo of the later metrical romance, as would serve to connect his *Conclusion* of the primitive Sir Tristrem with his imitations of the common popular ballad in the Gray Brother and Eve of St. John. A single scene of feudal festivity in the Hall of Branksome, disturbed by some pranks of a nondescript goblin, was probably all that he contemplated; but his accidental confinement in the midst of a volunteer camp gave him leisure to meditate his theme to the sound of the bugle;—and suddenly there flashes on him the idea of extending his simple outline, so as to embrace a vivid panorama of that old Border life of war and tumult, and all earnest passions, with which his researches on the "Minstrelsy" had by degrees fed his imagination, until every the minutest feature had been taken home and realized with unconscious intenseness of sympathy; so that he had won for himself in the past another world, hardly less complete or familiar than the present. Erskine or Cranstoun suggests that he would do well to divide the poem into cantos, and prefix to each of them a motto explanatory of the action, after the fashion of Spenser in the Faery Queen. He pauses for a moment—and the happiest conception of the framework of a picturesque narrative that ever occurred to any poet—one that Homer might have envied—the creation of the ancient harper starts to life. By such steps did the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" grow out of the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border."

A word more of its felicitous machinery. It was at Bowhill that the Countess of Dalkeith requested a ballad on Gilpin Horner. The ruined castle of Newark closely adjoins that seat, and is now indeed included within its *pleasance*. Newark had been the chosen residence of the first Duchess of Buccleuch, and he accordingly shadows out his own beautiful friend in the person of her lord's ancestress, the last of the original stock of that great house; himself the favoured inmate of Bowhill, introduced certainly to the familiarity of its circle in consequence of his devotion to the poetry of a bypast age, in that of an aged minstrel, "the last of all the race," seeking shelter at the gate of Newark, in days when many an adherent of the fallen cause of Stuart—his own bearded ancestor, *who had fought at Killiekrankie*, among the rest,—owed their safety to her who

> "In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
> Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb."

The arch allusions which run through all these *Introductions*, without in the least interrupting the truth and graceful pathos of their main impression, seem to me exquisitely characteristic of Scott, whose delight and pride was to play with the genius which nevertheless mastered him at will. For, in truth, what is it that gives to all his works their unique and marking charm, except the matchless effects which sudden effusions of the purest heart blood of nature derive from their being poured out, to all appearance involuntarily, amidst diction and sentiment cast equally in the mould of the busy world, and the seemingly habitual desire to dwell on nothing but what might be likely to excite curiosity, without too much disturbing deeper feelings in the saloons of polished life? Such outbursts come forth dramatically in all his writings; but in the interludes and passionate parentheses of the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," we have the poet's own inner soul and temperament laid bare and throbbing before us:—even here, indeed, he has a mask, and he trusts it—but fortunately it is a transparent one.

Many minor personal allusions have been explained in the notes to the last edition of the "Lay." It was hardly necessary even then to say that the choice of the hero had been dictated by the poet's affection for the living descendants of the Baron of Cranstoun; and now—none who have perused the preceding pages can doubt, that he had dressed out his Margaret of Branksome in the form and features of his own first love. This poem may be considered as the "bright consummate flower," in which all the dearest dreams of his youthful fancy had at length found expansion for their strength, spirit, tenderness, and beauty.

In the closing lines—

> "Hush'd is the harp—the Minstrel gone;
> And did he wander forth alone?
> Alone, in indigence and age,
> To linger out his pilgrimage?
> No!—close beneath proud Newark's tower
> Arose the Minstrel's humble bower," &c.,—

—in these charming lines he has embodied what

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was, at the time when he penned them, the chief day-dream of Ashestiel. From the moment that his uncle's death placed a considerable sum of ready money at his command, he pleased himself, as we have seen, with the idea of buying a mountain farm, and becoming not only the "sheriff," (as he had in former days delighted to call himself,) but "the *laird* of the cairn and the scaur." While he was "labouring *doucement* at the Lay," (as in one of his letters he expresses it,) during the recess of 1804, circumstances rendered it next to certain that the small estate of *Broadmeadows*, situated just over against the ruins of Newark on the northern bank of the Yarrow, would soon be exposed to sale; and many a time did he ride round it in company with Lord and Lady Dalkeith,

"When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,"

surveying the beautiful little domain with wistful eyes, and anticipating that

> "*There* would he sing achievement high
> And circumstance of chivalry,
> Till the rapt traveller would stay,
> Forgetful of the closing day;
> And noble youths, the strain to hear,
> Forget the hunting of the deer;
> And Yarrow, as he rolled along,
> Bear burden to the Minstrel's song."

I consider it as, in one point of view, the greatest misfortune of his life that this vision was not realized; but the success of the poem itself changed "the spirit of his dream." The favour which it at once attained, had not been equalled in the case of any one poem of considerable length during at least two generations: it certainly had not been approached in the case of any narrative poem since the days of Dryden. Before it was sent to the press, it had received warm commendation from the ablest and most influential critic of the time; but when Mr. Jeffrey's reviewal appeared, a month after publication, laudatory as its language was, it scarcely came up to the opinion which had already taken root in the public mind. It, however, quite satisfied the author, and were I at liberty to insert some letters which passed between them in the course of the summer of 1805, it would be seen that their feelings towards each other were those of mutual confidence and gratitude. Indeed, a severe domestic affliction, which about this time befell Mr. Jeffrey, called out the expression of such sentiments on both sides in a very touching manner.

I abstain from transcribing the letters which conveyed to Scott the private opinions of persons themselves eminently distinguished in poetry; but I think it just to state, that I have not discovered in any of them—no, not even in those of Wordsworth or Campbell—a strain of approbation higher on the whole than that of the chief professional reviewer of the period. When the happy days of youth are over, even the most genial and generous of minds are seldom able to enter into the strains of a new poet with that full and open delight which he awakens in the bosoms of the rising generation about him. Their deep and eager sympathies have already been drawn upon to an extent of which the prosaic part of the species can never have any conception; and when the fit of creative inspiration has subsided, they are apt to be rather cold critics, even of their own noblest appeals to the simple primary feelings of their kind. Miss Seward's letter, on this occasion, has been since included in the printed collection of her correspondence; but perhaps the reader may form a sufficient notion of its tenor from the poet's answer—which, at all events, he will be amused to compare with the Introduction of 1830:—

To Miss Seward, Lichfield.

"Edinburgh, 21st March, 1805.

"My dear Miss Seward,

"I am truly happy that you found any amusement in the Lay of the Last Minstrel. It has great faults, of which no one can be more sensible than I am myself. Above all, it is deficient in that sort of continuity which a story ought to have, and which, were it to write again, I would endeavour to give it. But I began and meandered forward, like one in a pleasant country, getting to the top of one hill to see a prospect, and to the bottom of another to enjoy a shade, and what wonder if my course has been devious and desultory, and many of my excursions altogether unprofitable to the advance of my journey. The *Dwarf Page* is also an excrescence, and I plead guilty to all the censures concerning him. The truth is, he has a history, and it is this: The story of Gilpin Horner was told by an old gentleman to Lady Dalkeith, and she, much diverted with his actually believing so grotesque a tale, insisted that I should make it into a Border ballad. I don't know if ever you saw my lovely chieftainess—if you have, you must be aware that it is *impossible* for any one to refuse her request, as she has more of the angel in face and temper than any one alive; so that if she had asked me to write a ballad on a broomstick I must have attempted it. I began a few verses, to be called the Goblin Page; and they lay long by me, till the applause of some friends whose judgment I valued induced me to resume the poem; so on I wrote, knowing no more than the man in the moon how I was to end. At length the story appeared so uncouth, that I was fain to put it into the mouth of my old minstrel—lest the nature of it should be misunderstood, and I should be suspected of setting up a new school of poetry, instead of a feeble attempt to imitate the old. In the process of the romance the page, intended to be a principal person in the work, contrived (from the baseness of his natural propensities I suppose) to slink down stairs into the kitchen, and now he must e'en abide there.

I mention these circumstances to you, and to any one whose applause I value, because I am unwilling you should suspect me of trifling with the public in *malice prepense*. As to the herd of critics, it is impossible for me to pay much attention to them; for, as they do not understand what I call poetry, we talk in a foreign language to each other. Indeed, many of these gentlemen appear to me to be a sort of tinkers, who, unable to *make* pots and pans, set up for *menders* of them, and God knows, often make two holes in patching one. The sixth canto is altogether redundant; for the poem should certainly have closed with the union of the lovers, when the interest, if any, was at an end. But what could I do? I had my book and my page still on my hands, and must get rid of them at all events. Manage them as I would, their catastrophe must have been insufficient to occupy an entire canto; so I was fain to eke it out with the songs of the minstrels. I will now descend from the confessional, which I think I have occupied long enough for the patience of my fair confessor. I am happy you are disposed to give me absolution, notwithstanding all my sins.

"We have a new poet come forth amongst us—James Graham, author of a poem called the Sabbath, which I admire very much. If I can find an opportunity, I will send you a copy. Your affectionate humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

Mr. Ellis does not seem to have written at any length on the subject of the Lay, until he had perused the article in the Edinburgh Review. He then says,

"Though I had previously made up my mind, or rather perhaps because I had done so, I was very anxious to compare my sentiments with those of the Edinburgh critic, and I found that in general we were perfectly agreed, though there are parts of the subject which we consider from very different points of view. Frere, with whom I had not any previous communication about it, agrees with me; and trusting very much to the justice of his poetical feelings, I feel some degree of confidence in my own judgment—though in opposition to Mr. Jeffrey, whose criticism I admire upon the whole extremely, as being equally acute and impartial, and as exhibiting the fairest judgment respecting the work that could be formed by the mere assistance of good sense and general taste, without that particular sort of taste which arises from the study of romantic compositions.

"What Frere and myself think, must be stated in the shape of a *hyper-criticism*—that is to say, of a review of the reviewer. We say that the Lay of the Last Minstrel is a work *sui generis*, written with the *intention* of exhibiting what our old romances do indeed exhibit in point of fact, but incidentally, and often without the wish, or rather contrary to the wish of the author;—viz. the manners of a particular age; and that therefore, if it does this truly, and is at the same time capable of keeping the steady attention of the reader, it is so far perfect. This is also a poem, and ought therefore to contain a great deal of poetical merit. This indeed it does by the admission of the reviewer, and it must be admitted that he has shown much real taste in estimating the most beautiful passages; but he finds fault with many of the lines as careless, with some as prosaic, and contends that the story is not suffi-

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ciently full of incident, and that one of the incidents is borrowed from a merely local superstition, &c. &c. To this we answer—1st, that if the Lay were intended to give *any* idea of the Minstrel compositions, it would have been a most glaring absurdity to have rendered the poetry as perfect and uniform as the works usually submitted to modern readers—and as in telling a story, nothing, or very little would be lost, though the merely connecting part of the narrative were in plain prose, the reader is certainly no loser by the incorrectness of the smaller part. Indeed, who is so unequal as Dryden? It may be said that he was *not* intentionally so—but to be *very smooth* is very often to be *tame*; and though this should be admitted to be a less important fault then inequality in a common modern poem, there can be no doubt with respect to the necessity of subjecting yourself to the latter fault (if it is one) in an imitation of an ancient model. 2d, Though it is naturally to be expected that many readers will expect an almost infinite accumulation of incidents in a romance, this is only because readers in general have acquired all their ideas on the subject from the prose romances, which commonly contained a farrago of metrical stories. The *only* thing *essential* to a romance was, that is should be *believed* by the hearers. Not only tournaments, but battles, are indeed accumulated in some of our ancient romances, because tradition had of course ascribed to every great conqueror a great number of conquests, and the minstrel would have been thought deficient if, in a warlike age, he had omitted any military event. But in other respects a paucity of incident is the general characteristic of our minstrel poems. 3d, With respect to the Goblin Page, it is by no means necessary that the superstition on which this is founded should be universally or even generally current. It is quite sufficient that it should exist somewhere in the neighbourhood of the castle where the scene is placed; and it cannot fairly be required that because the goblin is mischievous, all his tricks should be directed to the production of general evil. The old idea of goblins seems to have been, that they were essentially active, and careless about the mischief they produced, rather than providentially malicious.

"We therefore (*i. e.* Frere and myself) dissent from all the reviewer's objections to these circumstances in the narrative; but we entertain some doubts about the propriety of dwelling so long on the Minstrel songs in the last Canto. I say we *doubt*, because we are not aware of your having *ancient authority* for such a practice; but though the attempt was a bold one, inasmuch at it is not usual to add a whole canto to a story which is already finished, we are far from wishing that you had left it unattempted. I must tell you the answer of a philosopher (Sir Henry Englefield) to a friend of his who was criticising the obscurity of the language used in the Minstrel. 'I read little poetry, and often am in doubt whether I exactly understand the poet's meaning; but I found, after reading the Minstrel three times, that I understood it all perfectly.' 'Three times?' replied his friend. 'Yes, certainly; the first time, I discovered that there was a great deal of meaning in it; a second would have cleared it all up, but that I was run away with by the beautiful passages, which distracted my attention; the third time I skipped over these, and only attended to the scheme and structure of the poem, with which I am delighted.' At this conversation I was present, and though I could not help smiling at Sir Henry's mode of reading poetry, was pleased to see the degree of interest which he took in the narrative."*

I fancy most of my readers will agree with me in thinking that Sir Henry Englefield's method of reading and enjoying poetry was more to be envied than smiled at; and in doubting whether posterity will ever dispute about the "*propriety*" of the Canto which includes the Ballad of Rosabelle and the Requiem of Melrose. The friendly *hypercritics* seem, I confess, to have judged the poem on principles not less pedantic, though of another kind of pedantry, than those which induced the *critic* to pronounce that its great prevailing blot originated in those "local partialities of the author," which had induced him to expect general interest and sympathy for such personages as his "Johnstones, Elliots, and Armstrongs." "Mr. Scott," said Jeffrey, "must either sacrifice his Border prejudices, or offend his readers in the other parts of the empire." It might have been answered by Ellis or Frere, that these Border clans figured after all on a scene at least as wide as the Troad; and that their chiefs were not perhaps inferior, either in rank or power, to the majority of the Homeric kings; but even the most zealous of its admirers among the professed literators of the day would hardly have ventured to suspect that the Lay of the Last Minstrel might have no prejudices to encounter but their own. It was destined to charm not only the British empire, but the whole civilized world; and had, in fact, exhibited a more Homeric genius than any regular epic since the days of Homer.

"It would be great affectation," says the Introduction of 1830, "not to own that the author expected some success from the Lay of the Last Minstrel. The attempt to return to a more simple and natural style of poetry was likely to be welcomed, at a time when the public had become tired of heroic hexameters, with all the buckram and binding that belong to them in modern days. But whatever might have been his expectations, whether moderate or unreasonable, the result left them far behind; for among those who smiled on the adventurous minstrel, were numbered the great names of William Pitt and Charles Fox. Neither was the extent of the sale inferior to the character of the judges who received the poem with approbation. Upwards of 30,000 copies were disposed of by the trade; and the author had to perform a task difficult to human vanity, when called upon to make the necessary deductions from his own merits, in a calm attempt to account for its popularity."

Through what channel or in what terms Fox made known his opinion of the Lay, I have failed to ascertain. Pitt's praise, as expressed to his niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, within a few weeks after the poem appeared, was repeated by her to Mr. William Stewart Rose, who, of course, communicated it forthwith to the author; and not long after, the Minister, in conversation with Scott's early friend, the Right Hon. William Dundas, signified that it would give him pleasure to find some opportunity of advancing the fortunes of such a writer. "I remember," writes this gentleman, "at Mr. Pitt's table in 1805, the Chancellor asked me about you and your then situation, and after I had answered him, Mr. Pitt observed,—'he can't remain as he is,' and desired me to 'look to it.' He then repeated some lines from the Lay describing the old harper's embarrassment when asked to play, and said,—'This is a sort of thing which I might have expected in painting, but could never have fancied capable of being given in poetry.'"†

It is agreeable to know that this great statesman and accomplished scholar awoke at least once from his supposed apathy as to the elegant literature of his own time.

The poet has under-estimated even the patent and tangible evidence of his success. The first edition of the Lay was a magnificent quarto, 750 copies; but this was soon exhausted, and there followed an octavo impression of 1500; in 1806, two more, one of 2000 copies, another of 2250; in 1807, a fifth edition of 2000, and a sixth of 3000; in 1808, 3550; in 1809, 3000—a small edition in quarto (the ballads and lyrical pieces being then annexed to it,)—and another octavo edition of 3250; in 1811, 3000; in 1812, 3000; in 1816, 3000; in 1823, 1000. A fourteenth impression of 2000 foolscap appeared in 1825, and besides all this, before the end of 1836, 11,000 copies had gone forth in the collected editions of his

* Mr. Morritt informs me, that he well remembers the dinner where this conversation occurred, and thinks Mr. Ellis has omitted in his report the best thing that Sir Harry Englefield said, in answer to one of the *Dii Minorum Gentium*, who made himself conspicuous by the severity of his censure on the verbal inaccuracies and careless lines of The Lay. "My dear sir," said the Baronet, "you remind me of a lecture on sculpture, which M. Falconet delivered at Rome, shortly after completing the model of his equestrian statue of Czar Peter, now at Petersburg. He took for his subject the celebrated horse of Marcus Aurelius in the Capitol, and pointed out as many faults in it as ever a jockey did in an animal he was about to purchase. But something came over him, vain as he was, when he was about to conclude the harangue. He took a long pinch of snuff, and eyeing his own faultless model, exclaimed with a sigh—*Cependant, Messieurs, il faut avouer que cette vilaine bête là est vivante, et que la nôtre est morte.*"

† Letter dated April 25th, 1818, and indorsed by Scott, "*William Dundas—a very kind letter.*"

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poetical works. Thus, nearly forty-four thousand copies had been disposed of in this country, and by the legitimate trade alone, before he superintended the edition of 1830, to which his biographical introductions were prefixed. In the history of British Poetry nothing had ever equalled the demand for the Lay of the Last Minstrel.

The publishers of the first edition were Longman and Co. of London, and Archibald Constable and Co. of Edinburgh; which last house, however, had but a small share in the adventure. The profits were to be divided equally between the author and his publishers; and Scott's moiety was £169, 6s. Messrs. Longman, when a second edition was called for, offered £500 for the copyright; this was accepted, but they afterwards, as the Introduction says, "added £100 in their own unsolicited kindness. It was handsomely given to supply the loss of a fine horse which broke down suddenly while the author was riding with one of the worthy publishers." This worthy publisher was Mr. Owen Rees, and the gallant steed, to whom a desperate leap in the coursing-field proved fatal, was, I believe, *Captain*, the immediate successor of *Lenore*, as Scott's charger in the volunteer cavalry; *Captain* was replaced by *Lieutenant*. The author's whole share, then, in the profits of the Lay, came to £769, 6s.

Mr. Rees' visit to Ashestiel occurred in the autumn. The success of the poem had already been decisive; and fresh negotiations of more kinds than one were at this time in progress between Scott and various booksellers' houses, both of Edinburgh and London.

CHAPTER XIV.

PARTNERSHIP WITH JAMES BALLANTYNE—LITERARY PROJECTS—EDITION OF THE BRITISH POETS—EDITION OF THE ANCIENT ENGLISH CHRONICLES, &c. &c.—EDITION OF DRYDEN UNDERTAKEN—EARL MOIRA COMMANDER OF THE FORCES IN SCOTLAND—SHAM BATTLES—ARTICLES IN THE EDINBURGH REVIEW—COMMENCEMENT OF WAVERLEY—LETTER ON OSSIAN—MR. SKENE'S REMINISCENCES OF ASHESTIEL—EXCURSION TO CUMBERLAND—ALARM OF INVASION—VISIT OF MR. SOUTHEY—CORRESPONDENCE ON DRYDEN WITH ELLIS AND WORDSWORTH—1805.

Mr. Ballantyne, in his Memorandum, says, that very shortly after the publication of the Lay, he found himself obliged to apply to Mr. Scott for an advance of money; his own capital being inadequate for the business which had been accumulated on his press, in consequence of the reputation it had acquired for beauty and correctness of execution. Already, as we have seen, Ballantyne had received "a liberal loan;" "and now," says he, "being compelled, maugre all delicacy, to renew my application, he candidly answered that he was not quite sure that it would be prudent for him to comply, but in order to evince his entire confidence in me, he was willing to make a suitable advance to be admitted as a third-sharer of my business." In truth, Scott now embarked in Ballantyne's concern almost the whole of the capital at his disposal, namely, the £5000 which he had received for Rosebank, and which he had a few months before designed to invest in the purchase of Broadmeadows. *Dis aliter visum.*

I have, many pages back, hinted my suspicion that he had formed some distant notion of such an alliance, as early as the date of Ballantyne's projected removal from Kelso to Edinburgh; and his introduction to the Lay, in 1830, appears to leave little doubt that the hope of ultimately succeeding at the Bar had waxed very faint, before the third volume of the Minstrelsy was brought out in 1803. When that hope ultimately vanished altogether, perhaps he himself would not have found it easy to tell. The most important of men's opinions, views, and projects, are sometimes taken up in so very gradual a manner, and after so many pauses of hesitation and of inward retractation, that they themselves are at a loss to trace in retrospect all the stages through which their minds have passed. We see plainly that Scott had never been fond of his profession, but that, conscious of his own persevering diligence, he ascribed his scanty success in it mainly to the prejudices of the Scotch solicitors against employing, in weighty causes at least, any barrister supposed to be strongly imbued with the love of literature; instancing the career of his friend Jeffrey as almost the solitary instance within his experience of such prejudices being entirely overcome. Had Scott, to his strong sense and dexterous ingenuity, his well-grounded knowledge of the jurisprudence of his country, and his admirable industry, added a brisk and ready talent for debate and declamation, I can have no doubt that his triumph over the prejudices alluded to would have been as complete as Mr. Jeffrey's; nor in truth do I much question that, had one really great and interesting case been submitted to his sole care and management, the result would have been to place his professional character, for skill and judgment, and variety of resource, on so firm a basis, that even his rising celebrity as a man of letters could not have seriously disturbed it. Nay, I think it quite possible, that had he been intrusted with one such case after his reputation was established, and he had been compelled to do his abilities some measure of justice in his own secret estimate, he might have displayed very considerable powers even as a forensic speaker. But no opportunities of this engaging kind having ever been presented to him—after he had persisted for more than ten years in sweeping the floor of the Parliament House, without meeting with any employment but what would have suited the dullest drudge, and seen himself termly and yearly more and more distanced by contemporaries for whose general capacity he could have had little respect—while, at the same time, he already felt his own position in the eyes of society at large to have been signally elevated in consequence of his extra-professional exertions—it is not wonderful that disgust should have gradually gained upon him, and that the sudden blaze and tumult of renown which surrounded the author of the Lay should have at last determined him to concentrate all his ambition on the pursuits which had alone brought him distinction. It ought to be mentioned, that the business in George's Square, once extensive and lucrative, had dwindled away in the hands of his brother Thomas, whose varied and powerful talents were unfortunately combined with some tastes by no means favourable to the successful prosecution of his prudent father's vocation; so that very possibly even the humble employment of which, during his first years at the bar, Scott had at least a sure and respectable allowance, was by this time much reduced. I have not his fee-books of later date than 1803: it is, however, my impression, from the whole tenour of his conversation and correspondence, that after that period he had not only not advanced as a professional man, but had been retrograding in nearly the same proportion that his literary reputation advanced.

We have seen that, before he formed his contract with Ballantyne, he was in possession of such a fixed income as might have satisfied all his desires, had he not found his family increasing rapidly about him. Even as that was, with nearly if not quite £1000 per annum, he might perhaps have retired not only from the Bar, but from Edinburgh, and settled entirely at Ashestiel or Broadmeadows, without encountering what any man of his station and habits ought to have considered as an imprudent risk. He had, however, no wish to cut himself off from the busy and intelligent society to which he had been hitherto accustomed; and resolved not to leave the bar until he should have at least used his best efforts for obtaining, in addition to his Shrievalty, one of those clerkships of the supreme court at Edinburgh, which are usually considered as honourable retirements for advocates who, at a certain standing, finally give up all hopes of reaching the dignity of the bench. "I determined," he says, "that literature should be my staff but not my crutch, and that the profits of my literary labour, however convenient

otherwise, should not, if I could help it, become necessary to my ordinary expenses. Upon such a post an author might hope to retreat, without any perceptible alteration of circumstances, whenever the time should arrive that the public grew weary of his endeavours to please, or he himself should tire of the pen. I possessed so many friends capable of assisting me in this object of ambition, that I could hardly over-rate my own prospects of obtaining the preferment to which I limited my wishes; and, in fact, I obtained, in no long period, the reversion of a situation which completely met them."*

The first notice of this affair that occurs in his correspondence, is in a note of Lord Dalkeith's, Feb. the 2d, 1805, in which his noble friend says, "My father desires me to tell you, that he has had a communication with Lord Melville within these few days, and that he thinks *your business is in a good train, though not certain.*" I consider it as clear, then, that he began his negotiations concerning a seat at the clerk's table immediately after the Lay was published; and that their commencement had been resolved upon in the strictest connexion with his embarkation in the printing concern of James Ballantyne and Company. Such matters are seldom speedily arranged; but we shall find him in possession of his object before twelve months had elapsed.

Mean while, his design of quitting the bar was divulged to none but those immediately necessary for the purposes of his negotiation with the government; and the nature of his connexion with the printing company remained, I believe, not only unknown, but for some years wholly unsuspected, by any of his daily companions except Mr. Erskine.

The forming of this commercial connexion was one of the most important steps in Scott's life. He continued bound by it during twenty years, and its influence on his literary exertions and his worldly fortunes was productive of much good and not a little evil. Its effects were in truth so mixed and balanced during the vicissitudes of a long and vigorous career, that I at this moment doubt whether it ought, on the whole, to be considered with more of satisfaction or of regret.

With what zeal he proceeded in advancing the views of the new copartnership, his correspondence bears ample evidence. The brilliant and captivating genius, now acknowledged universally, was soon discovered by the leading booksellers of the time to be united with such abundance of matured information in many departments, and, above all, with such indefatigable habits, as to mark him out for the most valuable workman they could engage for the furtherance of their schemes. He had, long before this, cast a shrewd and penetrating eye over the field of literary enterprise, and developed in his own mind the outlines of many extensive plans, which wanted nothing but the command of a sufficient body of able subalterns to be carried into execution with splendid success. Such of these as he grappled with in his own person were, with rare exceptions, carried to a triumphant conclusion; but the alliance with Ballantyne soon infected him with the proverbial rashness of mere mercantile adventure—while, at the same time, his generous feelings for other men of letters, and his characteristic propensity to over-rate their talents, combined to hurry him and his friends into a multitude of arrangements, the results of which were often extremely embarrassing, and ultimately, in the aggregate, all but disastrous. It is an old saying, that wherever there is a secret there must be something wrong; and dearly did he pay the penalty for the mystery in which he had chosen to involve this transaction. It was his rule from the beginning, that whatever he wrote or edited must be printed at that press; and had he catered for it only as author and sole editor, all had been well; but had the booksellers known his direct pecuniary interest in keeping up and extending the occupation of those types, they would have taken into account his lively imagination and sanguine temperament, as well as his taste and judgment, and considered, far more deliberately than they too often did, his multifarious recommendations of new literary schemes, coupled though these were with some dim understanding that, if the Ballantyne press were employed, his own literary skill would be at his friend's disposal for the general superintendence of the undertaking. On the other hand, Scott's suggestions were, in many cases, perhaps in the majority of them, conveyed through Ballantyne, whose habitual deference to his opinion induced him to advocate them with enthusiastic zeal; and the printer, who had thus pledged his personal authority for the merits of the proposed scheme, must have felt himself committed to the bookseller, and could hardly refuse with decency to take a certain share of the pecuniary risk, by allowing the time and method of his own payment to be regulated according to the employer's convenience. Hence, by degrees, was woven a web of entanglement from which neither Ballantyne nor his adviser had any means of escape, except only in that indomitable spirit, the mainspring of personal industry altogether unparalleled, to which, thus set in motion, the world owes its most gigantic monument of literary genius.

The following is the first letter I have found of Scott to his PARTNER. The Mr. Foster mentioned in the beginning of it was a literary gentleman who had proposed to take on himself a considerable share in the annotation of some of the new *editions* then on the carpet—among others, one of Dryden.

To Mr. James Ballantyne, Printer, Edinburgh.

"Ashestiel, April 12th, 1805.

"Dear Ballantyne,

"I have duly received your two favours—also Foster's. He still howls about the expense of printing, but I think we shall finally settle. His argument is that you print too fine, *alias* too dear. I intend to stick to my answer, that I know nothing of the matter; but that settle it how you and he will, it must be printed by you, or can be no concern of mine. This gives you an advantage in driving the bargain. As to every thing else, I think we shall do, and I will endeavour to set a few volumes agoing on the plan you propose.

"I have imagined a very superb work. What think you of a complete edition of British Poets, ancient and modern? Johnson's is imperfect and out of print; so is Bell's, which is a Lilliputian thing; and Anderson's, the most complete in point of number, is most contemptible in execution both of the editor and printer. There is a scheme for you! At least a hundred volumes, to be published at the rate of ten a-year. I cannot, however, be ready till midsummer. If the booksellers will give me a decent allowance per volume, say thirty guineas, I shall hold myself well paid on the *writing* hand. This is a dead secret.

"I think it quite right to let Doing* have a share of Thomson;† but he is hard and slippery, so settle your bargain fast and firm—no loop-holes! I am glad you have got some elbow-room at last. Cowan will come to, or we will find some fit place in time. If not, we *must* build—necessity has no law. I see nothing to hinder you from doing Tacitus with your correctness of eye, and I congratulate you on the fair prospect before us. When you have time you will make out a list of the debts to be discharged at Whitsunday, that we may see what cash we shall have in bank. Our book-keeping may be very simple—an accurate cash book and leger is all that is necessary; and I think I know enough of the matter to assist at making the balance sheet.

"In short, with the assistance of a little cash, I have no doubt things will go on à *merveille*. If you could take a little pleasuring, I wish you could come here and see us in all the glories of a Scottish spring. Yours truly,

W. Scott."

Scott opened forthwith his gigantic scheme of the British Poets to Constable, who entered into it with eagerness. They found presently that Messrs. Cadell and Davies, and some of the other London publishers, had a similar plan on foot, and after an unsuccessful negotiation with Mackintosh, were now actually treating with Campbell for the Biographical prefaces. Scott proposed that the Edin-

* Introduction to the Lay of the Last Minstrel—1830.

* A bookseller in Edinburgh.

† A projected edition of the Works of the author of the Seasons.

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burgh and London houses should join in the adventure, and that the editorial task should be shared between himself and his brother poet. To this both Messrs. Cadell and Mr. Campbell warmly assented; but the design ultimately fell to the ground in consequence of the booksellers refusing to admit certain works which both Scott and Campbell insisted upon. Such, and from analogous causes, has been the fate of various similar schemes both before and since. But the public had no trivial compensation upon the present occasion, since the failure of the original project led Mr. Campbell to prepare for the press those "Specimens of English Poetry," which he illustrated with sketches of biography and critical essays, alike honourable to his learning and taste; while Scott, Mr. Foster ultimately standing off, took on himself the whole burden of a new edition, as well as biography, of Dryden. The body of booksellers mean while combined in what they still called a *general edition* of the English Poets, under the superintendence of one of their own Grub-street vassals, Mr. Alexander Chalmers.

Precisely at the time when Scott's poetical ambition had been stimulated by the first outburst of universal applause, and when he was forming those engagements with Ballantyne which involved so large an accession of literary labours, as well as of pecuniary cares and responsibilities, a fresh impetus was given to the volunteer mania in Scotland, by the appointment of the late Earl of Moira (afterwards Marquis of Hastings) to the chief military command in that part of the empire. The Earl had married, the year before, a Scottish Peeress, the Countess of Loudon, and entered with great zeal into her sympathy with the patriotic enthusiasm of her countrymen. Edinburgh was converted into a camp; independently of a large garrison of regular troops, nearly 10,000 fencibles and volunteers were almost constantly under arms. The lawyer wore his uniform under his gown; the shopkeeper measured out his wares in scarlet; in short, the citizens of all classes made more use for several months of the military than of any other dress; and the new commander-in-chief consulted equally his own gratification and theirs, by devising a succession of manœuvres which presented a vivid image of the art of war conducted on a large and scientific scale. In the *sham battles* and *sham sieges* of 1805, Craigmillar, Preston, Gilmerton, the Crosscauseway, and other formidable positions in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, were the scenes of many a dashing assault and resolute defence; and occasionally the spirits of the mock combatants—English and Scotch, or Lowland and Highland—became so much excited, that there was some difficulty in preventing the rough mockery of warfare from passing into its realities. The Highlanders, in particular, were very hard to be dealt with; and once, at least, Lord Moira was forced to alter at the eleventh hour his programme of battle, because a battalion of kilted fencibles could not or would not understand that it was their duty to be beat. Such days as these must have been more nobly spirit-stirring than even the best specimens of the fox-chase. To the end of his life, Scott delighted to recall the details of their countermarches, ambuscades, charges, and pursuits, and in all of these his associates of the Light-Horse agree that none figured more advantageously than himself. Yet these military interludes seem only to have whetted his appetite for closet work. Indeed, nothing but a complete publication of his letters could give an adequate notion of the facility with which he already combined the conscientious magistrate, the martinet quartermaster, the speculative printer, and the ardent lover of literature for its own sake. A few specimens must suffice.

To George Ellis, Esq.

"Edinburgh, May 26, 1805.

"My dear Ellis,

"Your silence has been so long and *opinionative*, that I am quite authorized, as a Border ballad-monger, to address you with a—'Sleep you, or wake you?' What has become of the Romances, which I have expected as anxiously as my neighbours around me have watched for the rain, which was to bring the grass, which was to feed the new-calved cows, and to us little purpose, for both Heaven and you have obstinately delayed your favours. After idling away the spring months at Ashestiel, I am just returned to idle away the summer here, and I have lately lighted upon rather an interesting article in your way. If you will turn to Barbour's Bruce, (Pinkerton's edition, p. 66,) you will find that the Lord of Lorn, seeing Bruce covering the retreat of his followers, compares him to Gow MacMorn, (Macpherson's Gaul the son of Morni.) This similitude appears to Barbour a disparagement, and he says, the Lord of Lorn might more mannerly have compared the King to Gadefeir de Lawryne, who was with the mighty Duke Betys when he assailed the forayers in Gadderis, and who in the retreat did much execution among the pursuers, overthrowing Alexander and Thelomier and Danklin, although he was at length slain; and here, says Barbour, the resemblance fails. Now, by one of those chances which favour the antiquary once in an age, a single copy of the romance alluded to has been discovered, containing the whole history of this Gadefeir, who had hitherto been a stumbling-block to the critics. The book was printed by Arbuthnot, who flourished at Edinburgh in the seventeenth century. It is a metrical romance, called 'The Buik of the Most Noble and Vailliant Conquerour, Alexander the Grit.' The first part is called the Foray of Gadderis, an incident supposed to have taken place while Alexander was besieging Tyre; Gadefeir is one of the principal champions, and after exerting himself in the manner mentioned by Barbour, unhorsing the persons whom he named, he is at length slain by Emynedus, the Earl-Marshal of the Macedonian conqueror. The second part is called the Avowis of Alexander, because it introduces the oaths which he and others made to the peacock in the 'chalmer of Venus,' and gives an account of the mode in which they accomplished them. The third is the Great Battell of Effesoun, in which Porus makes a distinguished figure. This you are to understand is not *the* Porus of India, but one of his sons. The work is in decided Scotch, and adds something to our ancient poetry, being by no means despicable in point of composition. The author says he translated it from the *Fyanch*, or *Romance*, and that he accomplished his work in 1438-9. Barbour must therefore have quoted from the French Alexander, and perhaps his praises of the work excited the Scottish translator. Will you tell me what you think of all this, and whether any transcripts will be of use to you? I am pleased with the accident of its casting up, and hope it may prove the forerunner of mere discoveries in the dusty and ill-arranged libraries of our country gentlemen.

"I hope you continue to like the Lay. I have had a flattering assurance of Mr. Fox's approbation, mixed with a censure of my eulogy on the Viscount of Dundee. Although my Tory principles prevent my coinciding with his political opinions, I am very proud of his approbation in a literary sense.

"Charlotte joins me, &c. &c. W. S."

In his answer, Ellis says—

"Longman lately informed me that you have projected a General Edition of our Poets. I expressed to him my anxiety that the booksellers, who certainly can ultimately sell what they please, should for once undertake something calculated to please intelligent readers, and that they should confine themselves to the selection of paper, types, &c. (which they possibly may understand,) and by no means interfere with the literary part of the business, which, if popularity be the object, they must leave exclusively to you. I am talking, as you perceive, about your plan, without knowing its extent, or any of its details; for these, therefore, I will wait—after confessing that, much as I wish for a *corpus poetarum*, edited as you would edit it, I should like still better another Minstrel Lay by the last and best Minstrel; and the general demand for the poem seems to prove that the public are of my opinion. If, however, you don't feel disposed to take a second ride on Pegasus, why not undertake something far less *infra dig.* than a mere edition of our poets? Why not undertake what Gibbon once undertook—an edition of our historians? I have never been able to look at a volume of the Benedictine edition of the early French historians without envy."

Mr. Ellis appears to have communicated all his notions on this subject to Messrs. Longman, for Scott writes to Ballantyne, (Ashestiel, September 8,) "I have had a visit from Rees yesterday. He is anxious about a *corpus historiarum*, or full edition of the Chronicles of England, an immense work. I proposed to him beginning with Hollinshed, and

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I think the work will be secured for your press. I congratulate you on Clarendon, which, under Thomson's direction, will be a glorious publication."*

The printing-office in the Canongate was by this time in very great request; and the letter I have been quoting contains evidence that the partners had already found it necessary to borrow fresh capital—on the personal security, it need not be added, of Scott himself. He says, "As I have full confidence in your applying the accommodation received from Sir William Forbes in the most convenient and prudent manner, I have no hesitation to return the bonds subscribed, as you desire. This will put you in cash for great matters."

But to return. To Ellis himself, he says, "I have had booksellers here in the plural number. You have set little Rees's head agog about the Chronicles, which would be an admirable work, but should, I think, be edited by an Englishman who can have access to the MSS. of Oxford and Cambridge, as one cannot trust much to the correctness of printed copies. I will, however, consider the matter, so far as a decent edition of Hollinshed is concerned, in case my time is not otherwise taken up. As for the British Poets, my plan was greatly too liberal to stand the least chance of being adopted by the trade at large, as I wished them to begin with Chaucer. The fact is, I never expected they would agree to it. The Benedictines had an infinite advantage over us, in that *esprit du corps* which led them to set labour and expense at defiance, when the honour of the order was at stake. Would to God your English Universities, with their huge endowments, and the number of learned men to whom they give competence and leisure, would but imitate the monks in their literary plans. My present employment is an edition of John Dryden's Works, which is already gone to press. As for riding on Pegasus, depend upon it, I will never again cross him in a serious way, unless I should by some strange accident reside so long in the Highlands, and make myself master of their ancient manners, so as to paint them with some degree of accuracy in a kind of *companion* to the Minstrel Lay. . . . . I am interrupted by the arrival of two *gentil bachelors*, whom, like the Count of Artois, I must despatch upon some adventure till dinner time. Thank Heaven, that will not be difficult, for although there are neither dragons nor boars in the vicinity, and men above six feet are not only scarce, but pacific in their habits, yet we have a curious breed of wild-cats, who have eaten all Charlotte's chickens, and against whom I have declared a war at *outrance*, in which the assistance of these *gents demoiseaux* will be fully as valuable as that of Don Quixote to Pentalopin with the naked arm. So, if Mrs. Ellis takes a fancy for cat-skin fur, now is the time."

Already, then, he was seriously at work on Dryden. During the same summer, he drew up for the Edinburgh Review an admirable article on Todd's Edition of Spenser; another, on Godwin's Fleetwood; a third, on the Highland Society's Report concerning the Poems of Ossian; a fourth, on Johnes's Translation of Froissart; a fifth, on Col. Thornton's Sporting Tour—and a sixth, on some cookery books—the two last being excellent specimens of his humour. He had, besides, a constant succession of minor cares in the superintendence of multifarious works passing through the Ballantyne press. But there is yet another important item to be included in the list of his literary labours of this period. The General Preface to his Novels informs us, that "about 1805" he wrote the opening chapters of Waverley; and the second title, *'Tis Sixty Years since*, selected, as he says, "that the actual date of publication might correspond with the period in which the scene was laid," leaves no doubt that he had begun the work so early in 1805 as to contemplate publishing it before Christmas.† He adds, in the same page, that he was induced, by the favourable reception of the Lady of the Lake, to think of giving some of his recollections of Highland scenery and customs in prose; but this is only one instance of the inaccuracy as to matters of date which pervades all those delightful Prefaces. The Lady of the Lake was not published until five years after the first chapters of Waverley were written; its success, therefore, could have had no share in suggesting the original design of a Highland novel, though no doubt it principally influenced him to take up that design after it had been long suspended, and almost forgotten. Thus early, then, had Scott meditated deeply such a portraiture of Highland manners as might "make a sort of companion" to that of the old Border life in the "Minstrel Lay;" and he had probably begun and suspended his Waverley, before he expressed to Ellis his feeling that he ought to reside for some considerable time in the country to be delineated, before seriously committing himself in the execution of such a task.

"Having proceeded," he says, "as far as I think the seventh chapter, I showed my work to a critical friend, whose opinion was unfavourable; and having then some poetical reputation, I was unwilling to risk the loss of it by attempting a new style of composition. I therefore then threw aside the work I had commenced, without either reluctance or remonstrance. I ought to add, that though my ingenuous friend's sentence was afterwards reversed, on appeal to the public, it cannot be considered as any imputation on his good taste; for the specimen subjected to his criticism did not extend beyond the departure of the hero for Scotland, and consequently had not entered upon the part of the story which was finally found most interesting." A letter to be quoted under the year 1810 will, I believe, satisfy the reader that the first critic of the opening chapters of Waverley was William Erskine.

The following letter must have been written in the course of this autumn. It is in every respect a very interesting one; but I introduce it here as illustrating the course of his reflections on Highland subjects in general, at the time when the first outlines both of the Lady of the Lake and Waverley must have been floating about in his mind:—

To Miss Seward, Lichfield.

"Ashestiel [1805.]

"My dear Miss Seward,

"You recall to me some very pleasant feelings of my boyhood, when you ask my opinion of Ossian. His works were first put into my hands by old Dr. Blacklock, a blind poet, of whom you may have heard; he was the worthiest and kindest of human beings, and particularly delighted in encouraging the pursuits, and opening the minds, of the young people by whom he was surrounded. I, though at the period of our intimacy a very young boy, was fortunate enough to attract his notice and kindness; and if I have been at all successful in the paths of literary pursuit, I am sure I owe much of that success to the books with which he supplied me, and his own instructions. Ossian and Spenser were two books which the good old bard put into my hands, and which I devoured rather than perused. Their tales were for a long time so much my delight, that I could repeat without remorse whole cantos of the one and duans of the other; and woe to the unlucky wight who undertook to be my auditor, for in the height of my enthusiasm I was apt to disregard all hints that my recitations became tedious. It was a natural consequence of progress in taste that my fondness for these authors should experience some abatement. Ossian's poems, in particular, have more charms for youth than for a more advanced stage. The eternal repetition of the same ideas and imagery, however beautiful in themselves, is apt to pall upon a reader whose taste has become somewhat fastidious; and, although I agree entirely with you that the question of their authenticity ought not to be confounded with that of their literary merit, yet scepticism on that head takes away their claim for indulgence as the productions of a barbarous and remote age; and, what is perhaps more natural, it destroys that feeling of reality which we should otherwise combine with our sentiments of admiration. As for the great dispute, I should be no Scottishman if I had not very attentively considered it at some period of my studies; and, indeed, I have gone some lengths in my researches, for I have

* An edition of Clarendon had been, it seems, contemplated by Scott's friend, Mr. Thomas Thomson.

† I have ascertained since this page was written, that a small part of the MS. of Waverley is on paper bearing the watermark of 1805—the rest on paper of 1813.

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beside me translations of some twenty or thirty of the unquestioned originals of Ossian's poems. After making every allowance for the disadvantages of a literal translation, and the possible debasement which those *now* collected may have suffered in the great and violent change which the Highlands have undergone since the researches of Macpherson, I am compelled to admit that incalculably the greater part of the English Ossian must be ascribed to Macpherson himself, and that his whole introductions, notes, &c. &c. are an absolute tissue of forgeries.

"In all the ballads I ever saw or could hear of, Fin and Ossin are described as natives of Ireland, although it is not unusual for the reciters sturdily to maintain that this is a corruption of the text. In point of merit I do not think these Gaelic poems much better than those of the Scandinavian Scalds; they are very unequal, often very vigorous and pointed, often drivelling and crawling in the very extremity of tenuity. The manners of the heroes are those of Celtic savages; and I could point out twenty instances in which Macpherson has very cunningly adopted the beginning, the names, and the leading incidents, &c. of an old tale, and dressed it up with all those ornaments of sentiment and sentimental manners, which first excite our surprise, and afterwards our doubt of its authenticity. The Highlanders themselves, recognising the leading features of tales they had heard in infancy, with here and there a tirade really taken from an old poem, were readily seduced into becoming champions for the authenticity of the poems. How many people, not particularly addicted to poetry, who may have heard Chevy-Chase in the nursery or at school, and never since met with the ballad, might be imposed upon by a new Chevy-Chase, bearing no resemblance to the old one, save in here and there a stanza or an incident? Besides, there is something in the severe judgment passed on my countrymen—'that if they do not prefer Scotland to truth, they will always prefer it to inquiry.' When once the Highlanders had adopted the poems of Ossian as an article of national faith, you would far sooner have got them to disavow the Scripture than to abandon a line of the contested tales. *Only* they all allow that Macpherson's translation is very unfaithful, and some pretend to say inferior to the original; by which they can only mean, if they mean any thing, that they miss the charms of the rhythm and vernacular idiom, which pleases the Gaelic natives; for in the real attributes of poetry, Macpherson's version is far superior to any I ever saw of the fragments which he seems to have used.

"The Highland Society have lately set about investigating, or rather, I should say, collecting materials to defend, the authenticity of Ossian. Those researches have only proved that there were no real originals—using that word as is commonly understood—to be found for them. The oldest tale they have found seems to be that of Darthula; but it is perfectly different, both in diction and story, from that of Macpherson. It is, however, a beautiful specimen of Celtic poetry, and shows that it contains much which is worthy of preservation. Indeed, how should it be otherwise, when we know that, till about fifty years ago, the Highlands contained a race of hereditary poets? Is it possible to think, that, among perhaps many hundreds, who for such a course of centuries have founded their reputation and rank on practising the art of poetry in a country where the scenery and manners gave such effect and interest and imagery to their productions, there should not have been some who attained excellence? In searching out those genuine records of the Celtic Muse, and preserving them from oblivion, with all the curious information which they must doubtless contain, I humbly think our Highland antiquaries would merit better of their country, than by confining their researches to the fantastic pursuit of a chimera.

"I am not to deny that Macpherson's inferiority in other compositions is a presumption that he did not actually compose these poems. But we are to consider his advantage when on his own ground. Macpherson was a Highlander, and had his imagination fired with the charms of Celtic poetry from his very infancy. We know, from constant experience, that most Highlanders, after they have become complete masters of English, continue to *think* in their own language; and it is to me demonstrable that Macpherson *thought* almost every word of Ossian in Gaelic, although he wrote it down in English. The specimens of his early poetry which remain are also deeply tinged with the peculiarities of the Celtic diction and character; so that, in fact, he might be considered as a Highland poet, even if he had not left us some Earse translations (or originals of Ossian) unquestionably written by himself. These circumstances gave a great advantage to him in forming the style of Ossian, which, though exalted and modified according to Macpherson's own ideas of modern taste, is in great part cut upon the model of the tales of the Seanachies and Bards. In the translation of Homer, he not only lost these advantages, but the circumstances on which they were founded were a great detriment to his undertaking; for although such a dress was appropriate and becoming for Ossian, few people cared to see their old Grecian friend disguised in a tartan plaid and philabeg. In a word, the style which Macpherson had formed, however admirable in a Highland tale, was not calculated for translating Homer; and it was a great mistake in him, excited, however, by the general applause his first work received, to suppose that there was any thing homogeneous betwixt his own ideas and those of Homer. Macpherson, in his way, was certainly a man of high talents, and his poetic powers as honourable to his country, as the use which he made of them, and I fear his personal character, in other respects, was a discredit to it.

"Thus I have given you with the utmost sincerity my creed on the great national question of Ossian; it has been formed after much deliberation and inquiry. I have had for some time thoughts of writing a Highland poem, somewhat in the style of the Lay, giving as far as I can a real picture of what that enthusiastic race actually were before the destruction of their patriarchal government. It is true, I have not quite the same facilities as in describing Border manners, where I am, as they say, more at home. But to balance my comparative deficiency in knowledge of Celtic manners, you are to consider that I have from my youth delighted in all the Highland traditions which I could pick from the old Jacobites who used to frequent my father's house; and this will, I hope, make some amends for my having less immediate opportunities of research than in the Border tales.

"Agreeably to your advice, I have actually read over Madoc a second time, and I confess have seen much beauty which escaped me in the first perusal. *Yet* (which yet, by the way, is almost as vile a monosyllable as *but*) I cannot feel quite the interest I would wish to do. The difference of character which you notice, reminds me of what by Ben Jonson and other old comedians were called *humours*, which consisted rather in the personification of some individual passion or propensity than of an actual individual man. Also, I cannot give up my objection, that what was strictly true of Columbus, becomes an unpleasant falsehood when told of some one else. Suppose I was to write a fictitious book of travels, I should certainly, do ill to copy exactly the incidents which befel Mungo Park or Bruce of Kinnaird. What was true of them would incontestably prove at once the falsehood and plagiarism of my supposed journal. It is not but what the incidents are natural—but it is their having already happened, which strikes us when they are transferred to imaginary persons. Could any one bear the story of a second city being taken by a wooden horse?

"Believe me, I shall not be within many miles of Lichfield without paying my personal respects to you; and yet I should not do it in prudence, because I am afraid you have formed a higher opinion of me than I deserve; you would expect to see a person who had dedicated himself much to literary pursuits, and you would find me a rattle-sculled half-lawyer, half-sportsman, through whose head a regiment of horse has been exercising since he was five years old; half-educated, half-crazy, as his friends sometimes tell him; half every thing, but *entirely* Miss Seward's much obliged, affectionate, and faithful servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

His correspondence shows how largely he was exerting himself all this while in the service of authors less fortunate than himself. James Hogg, among others, continued to occupy from time to time his attention; and he assisted regularly and assiduously throughout this and the succeeding year Mr. Robert Jameson, an industrious and intelligent antiquary, who had engaged in editing a collection of ancient popular ballads before the third volume of the Minstrelsy appeared, and who at length published his very curious work in 1807. Mean time, Ashestiel, in place of being less resorted to by literary strangers than Lasswade cottage had been, shared abundantly in the fresh attractions of the Lay, and "booksellers in the plural number" were preceded and followed by an endless variety of enthusiastic "gentil bachelors," whose main temptation from the south had been the hope of seeing the Borders in company with their Minstrel. He still writes of himself as "idling away his hours;" he had already learned to appear as if he were doing so, to all who had no particular right to confidence respecting the details of his privacy.

But the most agreeable of all his visitants were his

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own old familiar friends, and one of these has furnished me with a sketch of the autumn life of Ashestiel, of which I shall now avail myself. Scott's invitation was in these terms:—

To James Skene, Esq. of Rubislaw.

"Ashestiel, 18th August, 1805.

"Dear Skene,

"I have prepared another edition of the Lay, 1500 strong, moved thereunto by the faith, hope, and charity of the London booksellers. . . . . If you could, in the interim, find a moment to spend here, you know the way, and the ford is where it was; which, by the way, is more than I expected after Saturday last, the most dreadful storm of thunder and lightning I ever witnessed. The lightning broke repeatedly in our immediate vicinity, *i. e.* betwixt us and the Peel wood. Charlotte resolved to die in bed like a good Christian. The servants said it was the preface to the end of the world, and I was the only person that maintained my character for stoicism, which I assure you had some merit, as I had no doubt that we were in real danger. It was accompanied with a flood so tremendous, that I would have given five pounds you had been here to make a sketch of it. The little Glenkinnon brook was impassable for all the next day, and indeed I have been obliged to send all hands to repair the ford, which was converted into a deep pool. Believe me ever yours affectionately,

W. S."

Mr. Skene says, "I well remember the ravages of the storm and flood described in this letter. The ford of Ashestiel was never a good one, and for some time after this it remained not a little perilous. He was himself the first to attempt the passage on his favourite black horse *Captain*, who had scarcely entered the river when he plunged beyond his depth, and had to swim to the other side with his burden. It requires a good horseman to swim a deep and rapid stream, but he trusted to the vigour of his steady trooper, and in spite of his lameness kept his seat manfully. A cart bringing a new kitchen *range* (as I believe the grate for that service is technically called) was shortly after upset in this ugly ford. The horse and cart were with difficulty got out, but the grate remained for some time in the middle of the stream to do duty as a horse-trap, and furnish subject for many a good joke when Mrs. Scott happened to complain of the imperfection of her kitchen appointments."

Mr. Skene soon discovered an important change which had recently been made in his friend's distribution of his time. Previously it had been his custom, whenever professional business or social engagements occupied the middle part of his day, to seize some hours for study after he was supposed to have retired to bed. His physician suggested that this was very likely to aggravate his nervous headaches, the only malady he was subject to in the prime of his manhood; and, contemplating with steady eye a course not only of unremitting but of increasing industry, he resolved to reverse his plan, and carried his purpose into execution with unflinching energy. In short, he had now adopted the habits in which, with very slender variation, he ever after persevered when in the country. He rose by five o'clock, lit his own fire when the season required one, and shaved and dressed with great deliberation —for he was a very martinet as to all but the mere coxcombries of the toilet, not abhorring effeminate dandyism itself so cordially as the slightest approach to personal slovenliness, or even those "bedgown and slipper tricks," as he called them, in which literary men are so apt to indulge. Arrayed in his shooting-jacket, or whatever dress he meant to use till dinner time, he was seated at his desk by six o'clock, all his papers arranged before him in the most accurate order, and his books of reference marshalled around him on the floor, while at least one favourite dog lay watching his eye just beyond the line of circumvallation. Thus, by the time the family assembled for breakfast between nine and ten, he had done enough (in his own language) "*to break the neck of the day's work.*" After breakfast a couple of hours more were given to his solitary tasks, and by noon he was, as he used to say, "his own man." When the weather was bad he would labour incessantly all the morning; but the general rule was to be out and on horseback by one o'clock at the latest; while, if any more distant excursion had been proposed over night, he was ready to start on it by ten; his occasional rainy days of unintermitted study forming, as he said, a fund in his favour, out of which he was entitled to draw for accommodation whenever the sun shone with special brightness.

It was another rule, that every letter he received should be answered that same day. Nothing else could have enabled him to keep abreast with the flood of communications that in the sequel put his good nature to the severest test—but already the demands on him in this way also were numerous; and he included attention to them among the necessary business which must be despatched before he had a right to close his writing-box, or, as he phrased it, "to say *out damned spot*, and be a gentleman." In turning over his enormous mass of correspondence, I have almost invariably found some indication that, when a letter had remained more than a day or two unanswered, it had been so because he found occasion for inquiry or deliberate consideration.

I ought not to omit that in those days Scott was far too zealous a dragoon not to take a principal share in the stable duty. Before beginning his deskwork in the morning, he uniformly visited his favourite steed, and neither *Captain* nor *Lieutenant*, nor the lieutenant's successor, *Brown Adam*, (so called after one of the heroes of the Minstrelsy,) liked to be fed except by him. The latter charger was indeed altogether intractable in other hands, though in his the most submissive of faithful allies. The moment he was bridled and saddled, it was the custom to open the stable door as a signal that his master expected him, when he immediately trotted to the side of the *leaping-on-stone*, of which Scott from his lameness found it convenient to make use, and stood there, silent and motionless as a rock, until he was fairly in his seat, after which he displayed his joy by neighing triumphantly through a brilliant succession of curvettings. Brown Adam never suffered himself to be backed but by his master. He broke, I believe, one groom's arm and another's leg in the rash attempt to tamper with his dignity.

Camp was at this time the constant parlour dog. He was very handsome, very intelligent, and naturally very fierce, but gentle as a lamb among the children. As for the more locomotive Douglas and Percy, he kept one window of his study open, whatever might be the state of the weather, that they might leap out and in as the fancy moved them. He always talked to Camp as if he understood what was said—and the animal certainly did understand not a little of it; in particular, it seemed as if he perfectly comprehended on all occasions that his master considered him as a sensible and steady friend, the greyhounds as volatile young creatures whose freaks must be borne with.

"Every day," says Mr. Skene, "we had some hours of coursing with the greyhounds, or riding at random over the hills, or of spearing salmon in the Tweed by sunlight; which last sport, moreover, we often renewed at night by the help of torches. This amusement of *burning the water*, as it is called, was not without some hazard, for the large salmon generally lie in the pools, the depths of which it is not easy to estimate with precision by torchlight,—so that not unfrequently, when the sportsman makes a determined thrust at a fish apparently within reach, his eye has grossly deceived him, and instead of the point of the weapon encountering the prey, he finds himself launched with corresponding vehemence heels over head into the pool, both spear and salmon gone, the torch thrown out by the concussion of the boat, and quenched in the stream, while the boat itself has of course receded to some distance. I remember the first time I accompanied our friend he went right over the gunwale in this manner, and had I not accidentally been close at his side, and made a successful grasp at the skirt of his jacket as he plunged overboard,

he must at least have had an awkward dive for it. Such are the contingencies of *burning the water*. The pleasures consist in being penetrated with cold and wet, having your shins broken against the stones in the dark, and perhaps mastering one fish out of every twenty you take aim at."

In all these amusements, but particularly in the *burning of the water*, Scott's most regular companion at this time was John, Lord Somerville, who united with many higher qualities a most enthusiastic love for such sports, and consummate address in the prosecution of them. This amiable nobleman then passed his autumns at his pretty seat of Allwyn, or the Pavilion, situated on the Tweed, some eight or nine miles below Ashestiel. They interchanged visits almost every week; and Scott did not fail to profit largely by his friend's matured and well-known skill in every department of the science of rural economy. He always talked of him, in particular, as his master in the art of planting.

The laird of Rubislaw seldom failed to spend a part of the summer and autumn at Ashestiel, as long as Scott remained there, and during these visits they often gave a wider scope to their expeditions. "Indeed," says Mr. Skene, "there are few scenes at all celebrated either in the history, tradition, or romance of the Border counties, which we did not explore together in the course of our rambles. We traversed the entire vales of the Yarrow and Ettrick, with all their sweet tributary glens, and never failed to find a hearty welcome from the farmers at whose houses we stopped, either for dinner or for the night. He was their chief-magistrate, extremely popular in that official capacity, and nothing could be more gratifying than the frank and hearty reception which every where greeted our arrival, however unexpected. The exhilarating air of the mountains, and the healthy exercise of the day, secured our relishing homely fare, and we found inexhaustible entertainment in the varied display of character which the affability of the Sheriff drew forth on all occasions in genuine breadth and purity. The beauty of the scenery gave full employment to my pencil, with the free and frequent exercise of which he never seemed to feel impatient. He was at all times ready and willing to alight when any object attracted my notice, and used to seat himself beside me on the brae to con over some ballad appropriate to the occasion, or narrate the tradition of the glen—sometimes, perhaps, to note a passing idea in his pocket-book; but this was rare, for in general he relied with confidence on the great storehouse of his memory. And much amusement we had, as you may suppose, in talking over the different incidents, conversations, and traits of manners that had occurred at the last hospitable fireside where we had mingled with the natives. Thus the minutes glided away until my sketch was complete, and then we mounted again with fresh alacrity.

"These excursions derived an additional zest from the uncertainty that often attended the issue of our proceedings; for, following the game started by the dogs, our unfailing comrades, we frequently got entangled and bewildered among the hills, until we had to trust to mere chance for the lodging of the night. Adventures of this sort were quite to his taste, and the more for the perplexities which on such occasions befell our attendant squires, mine a lanky Savoyard, his a portly Scotch butler, both of them uncommonly bad horsemen, and both equally sensitive about their personal dignity, which the ruggedness of the ground often made it a matter of some difficulty for either of them to maintain, but more especially for my poor foreigner, whose seat resembled that of a pair compasses astride. Scott's heavy lumbering *beauffelier* had provided himself against the mountain showers with a huge cloak, which, when the cavalcade were at gallop, streamed at full stretch from his shoulders, and kept flapping in the other's face, who, having more than enough to do in preserving his own equilibrium, could not think of attempting at any time to control the pace of his steed, and had no relief but fuming and *pesting* at the *sacré manteau*, in language happily unintelligible to its wearer. Now and then some ditch or turf-fence rendered it indispensable to adventure on a leap, and no farce could have been more amusing than the display of politeness which then occurred between these worthy equestrians, each courteously declining in favour of his friend the honour of the first experiment, the horses fretting impatient beneath them, and the dogs clamouring encouragement. The horses generally terminated the dispute by renouncing allegiance, and springing forward without waiting the pleasure of the riders, who had to settle the matter with their saddles as they best could.

"One of our earliest expeditions was to visit the wild scenery of the mountainous tract above Moffat, including the cascade of the 'Gray Mare's Tail,' and the dark tarn called 'Loch Skene.' In our ascent to the lake we got completely bewildered in the thick fog which generally envelopes the rugged features of that lonely region; and, as we were groping through the maze of bogs, the ground gave way, and down went horse and horsemen pell-mell into a slough of peaty mud and black water, out of which, entangled as we were with our plaids and floundering nags, it was no easy matter to get extricated. Indeed, unless we had prudently left our gallant steeds at a farm-house below, and borrowed hill ponies for the occasion, the result might have been worse than laughable. As it was, we rose like the spirits of the bog, covered *cap-à-pie* with slime, to free themselves from which our wily ponies took to rolling about on the heather, and we had nothing for it but following their example. At length as we approached the gloomy loch, a huge eagle heaved himself from the margin, and rose right over us, screaming his scorn of the intruders; and altogether it would be impossible to picture any thing more desolately savage than the scene which opened, as if raised by enchantment on purpose to gratify the poet's eye; thick folds of fog rolling incessantly over the face of the inky waters, but rent asunder now in one direction, and then in another—so as to afford us a glimpse of some projecting rock or naked point of land, or island bearing a few scraggy stumps of pine—and then closing again in universal darkness upon the cheerless waste. Much of the scenery of Old Mortality was drawn from that day's ride.

"It was also in the course of this excursion that we encountered that amusing personage introduced into Guy Mannering as 'Tod Gabbie,' though the appellation by which he was known in the neighbourhood was 'Tod Willie.' He was one of those itinerants who gain a subsistence among the moorland farmers by relieving them of foxes, polecats, and the like depredators—a half-witted, stuttering, and most original creature.

"Having explored all the wonders of Moffatdale, we turned ourselves towards *Blackhouse Tower*, to visit Scott's worthy acquaintances the Laidlaws, and reached it after a long and intricate ride, having been again led off our course by the greyhounds, who had been seduced by a strange dog that joined company, to engage in full pursuit upon the track of what we presumed to be either a fox or a roe-deer. The chase was protracted and perplexing, from the mist that skirted the hill tops; but at length we reached the scene of slaughter, and were much distressed to find that a stately old he-goat had been the victim. He seemed to have fought a stout battle for his life, but now lay mangled in the midst of his panting enemies, who betrayed, on our approach, strong consciousness of delinquency and apprehension of the lash, which was administered accordingly to soothe the manes of the luckless Capricorn—though, after all, the dogs were not so much to blame in mistaking his game flavour, since the fogs must have kept him out of view till the last moment. Our visit to Blackhouse was highly interesting;—the excellent old tenant being still in life, and the whole family group presenting a perfect picture of innocent and simple happiness, while the animated, intelligent, and original conversation of our friend William was quite charming.

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"Sir Adam Fergusson and the Ettrick Shepherd were of the party that explored Loch Skene and hunted the unfortunate he-goat.

"I need not tell you that Saint Mary's Loch, and the Loch of the Lowes, were among the most favourite scenes of our excursions, as his fondness for them continued to his last days, and we have both visited them many times together in his company. I may say the same of the Teviot, and the Aill, Borthwick-water, and the lonely towers of Buccleuch and Harden, Minto, Roxburgh, Gilnockie, &c. I think it was either in 1805 or 1806 that I first explored the Borthwick with him, when on our way to pass a week at Langholm with Lord and Lady Dalkeith, upon which occasion the otterhunt, so well described in Guy Mannering, was got up by our noble host; and I can never forget the delight with which Scott observed the enthusiasm of the high-spirited yeomen, who had assembled in multitudes to partake the sport of their dear young chief, well mounted, and dashing about from rock to rock with a reckless ardour, which recalled the alacrity of their forefathers in following the Buccleuchs of former days through adventures of a more serious order.

"Whatever the banks of the Tweed, from its source to its termination, presented of interest, we frequently visited; and I do verily believe there is not a single ford in the whole course of that river which we have not traversed together. He had an amazing fondness for fords, and was not a little adventurous in plunging through, whatever might be the state of the flood, and this even though there happened to be a bridge in view. If it seemed possible to scramble through, he scorned to go ten yards about, and in fact preferred the ford; and it is to be remarked, that most of the heroes of his tales seem to have been endued with similar propensities—even the White Lady of Avenel delights in the ford. He sometimes even attempted them on foot, though his lameness interfered considerably with his progress among the slippery stones. Upon one occasion of this sort I was assisting him through the Ettrick, and we had both got upon the same tottering stone in the middle of the stream, when some story about a kelpie occurring to him, he must needs stop and tell it with all his usual vivacity—and then, laughing heartily at his own joke, he slipped his foot, or the stone shuffled beneath him, and down he went headlong into the pool, pulling me after him. We escaped, however, with no worse than a thorough drenching and the loss of his stick, which floated down the river; and he was as ready as ever for a similar exploit before his clothes were half dried upon his back."

About this time Mr. and Mrs. Scott made a short excursion to the Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and visited some of their finest scenery in company with Mr. Wordsworth. I have found no written narrative of this little tour, but I have often heard Scott speak with enthusiastic delight of the reception he met with in the humble cottage which his brother poet then inhabited on the banks of Grasmere; and at least one of the days they spent together was destined to furnish a theme for the verse of each, namely, that which they gave to the ascent of Helvellyn, where, in the course of the preceding spring, a young gentleman having lost his way, and perished by falling over a precipice, his remains were discovered, three months afterwards, still watched by "a faithful terrier-bitch, his constant attendant during frequent rambles among the wilds."* This day they were accompanied by an illustrious philosopher, who was also a true poet—and might have been one of the greatest of poets had he chosen; and I have heard Mr. Wordsworth say, that it would be difficult to express the feelings with which he, who so often had climbed Helvellyn alone, found himself standing on its summit with two such men as Scott and Davy.

After leaving Mr. Wordsworth, Scott carried his wife to spend a few days at Gilsland, among the scenes where they had first met; and his reception by the company at the wells was such as to make him look back with something of regret, as well as of satisfaction, to the change that had occurred in his circumstances since 1797. They were, however, enjoying themselves much there, when he received intelligence which induced him to believe that a French force was about to land in Scotland:—the alarm indeed had spread far and wide; and a mighty gathering of volunteers, horse and foot, from the Lothian and the Border country, took place in consequence at Dalkeith. He was not slow to obey the summons. He had luckily chosen to accompany on horseback the carriage in which Mrs. Scott travelled. His good steed carried him to the spot of rendezvous, full a hundred miles from Gilsland, within twenty-four hours; and on reaching it, though no doubt to his disappointment, the alarm had already blown over, he was delighted with the general enthusiasm that had thus been put to the test—and, above all, by the rapidity with which the yeomen of Ettrick forest had poured down from their glens, under the guidance of his good friend and neighbour, Mr. Pringle of Torwoodlee. These fine fellows were quartered along with the Edinburgh troop when he reached Dalkeith and Musselburgh; and after some sham battling, and a few evenings of high jollity, had crowned the needless muster of the beacon fires,* he immediately turned his horse again towards the south, and rejoined Mrs. Scott at Carlisle.

By the way, it was during his fiery ride from Gilsland to Dalkeith, on the occasion above mentioned, that he composed his Bard's Incantation, first published six years afterwards in the Edinburgh Annual Register:—

"The forest of Glenmore is drear,
It is all of black pine and the dark oak-tree," &c.—

and the verses bear the full stamp of the feelings of the moment.

Shortly after he was re-established at Ashestiel, he was visited there by Mr. Southey; this being, I believe, their first meeting. It is alluded to in the following letter; a letter highly characteristic in more respects than one.

To George Ellis, Esq. Sunninghill.

"Ashestiel, 17th October, 1805.

"Dear Ellis,

"More than a month has glided away in this busy solitude, and yet I have never sat down to answer your kind letter. I have only to plead a horror of pen and ink with which this country, in fine weather, (and ours has been most beautiful,) regularly affects me. In recompense, I ride, walk, fish, course, eat and drink, with might and main, from morning to night. I could have wished sincerely you had come to Reged this year to partake her rural amusements;—the only comfort I have is, that your visit would have been over, and now I look forward to it as a pleasure to come. I shall be infinitely obliged to you for your advice and assistance in the course of Dryden. I fear little can be procured for a Life beyond what Malone has compiled, but certainly his facts may be rather better told and arranged. I am at present busy with the dramatic department. This undertaking will make my being in London in spring a matter of absolute necessity.

"And now let me tell you of a discovery which I have made, or rather which Robert Jameson has made, in copying the MS. of 'True Thomas and the Queen of Elfland,' in the Lincoln cathedral. The queen, at parting, bestows the gifts of harping and carping upon the prophet, and mark his reply—

'To harp and carp, Tomas, where so ever ye gen—
Tomas, take thou these with thee.'—
'Harping,' he said, 'ken I nane,
For Tong is chefe of mynstrelsie.'

If poor Ritson could contradict his own system of materialism by rising from the grave to peep into this MS.,

* See notice prefixed to the song—
"I climbed the dark brow of the mighty Helvellyn," &c.,
in Scott's Poetical Works, edit. 1834, vol. i., 370; and compare the lines,
"Inmate of a mountain dwelling,
Thou hast clomb aloft, and gazed,
From the watch-towers of Helvellyn,
Awed, delighted, and amazed," &c.
Wordsworth's *Poetical Works*, 8vo. Edit. Vol. iii. p. 96.

* See Note "Alarm of Invasion," Antiquary, vol. ii. p. 288.

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he would slink back again in dudgeon and dismay. There certainly cannot be more respectable testimony than that of True Thomas, and you see he describes the tongue or recitation as the principal, or at least the most dignified, part of a minstrel's profession.

"Another curiosity was brought here a few days ago by Mr. Southey the poet, who favoured me with a visit on his way to Edinburgh. It was a MS. containing sundry metrical romances, and other poetical compositions, in the northern dialect, apparently written about the middle of the 15th century. I had not time to make an analysis of its contents, but some of them seem highly valuable. There is a tale of Sir Gowther, said to be a Breton Lay, which partly resembles the history of Robert the Devil, the hero being begot in the same way; and partly that of Robert of Sicily, the penance imposed on Sir Gowther being the same, as he kept table with the hounds, and was discovered by a dumb lady to be the stranger knight who had assisted her father the emperor in his wars. There is also a MS. of Sir Isanbras; *item*, a poem called Sir Amadas—not Amadis of Gaul, but a courteous knight who being reduced to poverty, travels to conceal his distress, and gives the wreck of his fortune to purchase the rites of burial for a deceased knight, who had been refused them by the obduracy of his creditors. The rest of the story is the same with that of Jean de Calais, in the Bibliothèque Bleue, and with a vulgar ballad called the Factor's Garland. Moreover there is a merry tale of hunting a hare, as performed by a set of country clowns, with their mastiffs, and curs with 'short legs and never a tail.' The disgraces and blunders of these ignorant sportsmen must have afforded infinite mirth at the table of a feudal baron, prizing himself on his knowledge of the mysteries of the chase performed by these unauthorized intruders. There is also a burlesque sermon, which informs us of Peter and Adam journeying together to Babylon, and how Peter asked Adam *a full great doubtful question*, saying, 'Adam, Adam, why did'st thou eat the apple unpared?' This book belongs to a lady. I would have given something valuable to have had a week of it. Southey commissioned me to say that he intended to take extracts from it, and should be happy to copy, or cause to be copied, any part that you might wish to be possessed of; an offer which I heartily recommend to your early consideration. Where dwelleth Heber the magnificent, whose library and cellar* are so superior to all others in the world? I wish to write to him about Dryden. Any word lately from Jamaica? Yours truly,

W. S."

Mr. Ellis, in his answer, says,

"Heber will, I dare say, be of service to you in your present undertaking, if indeed you want any assistance, which I very much doubt; because it appears to me that the best edition which could now be given of Dryden, would be one which should unite accuracy of text and a handsome appearance, with good critical notes. *Quoad* Malone.—I should think Ritson himself, could he rise from the dead, would be puzzled to sift out a single additional anecdote of the poet's life; but to abridge Malone, —and to render his narrative terse, elegant, and intelligible,—would be a great obligation conferred on the purchasers, (I will not say the readers, because I have doubts whether they exist in the plural number) of his very laborious compilation. The late Dr. Warton, you may have heard, had a project of editing Dryden à la Hurd; that is to say, upon the same principle as the castrated edition of Cowley. His reason was that Dryden, having written for bread, became of necessity a most voluminous author, and poured forth more nonsense of indecency, particularly in his theatrical compositions, than almost any scribbler in that scribbling age. Hence, although his transcendent genius frequently breaks out, and marks the hand of the master, his comedies seem, by a tacit but general consent, to have been condemned to oblivion; and his tragedies, being printed in such bad company, have shared the same fate. But Dr. W. conceived that by a judicious selection of these, together with his fables and prose works, it would be possible to exhibit him in a much more advantageous light than by a republication of the whole mass of his writings. Whether the Doctor (who, by the way, was by no means scrupulously chaste and delicate, as you will be aware from his edition of Pope) had taken a just view of the subject, you know better than I; but I must own that the announcement of a *general* edition of Dryden gave me some little alarm. However, if you can suggest the sort of assistance you are desirous of receiving, I shall be happy to do what I can to promote your views. . . . . And so you are not disposed to *nibble* at the bait I throw out? Nothing but 'a decent edition of Hollinshed?' I confess that my project chiefly related to the later historical works respecting this country—to the union of Gall, Twisden, Camden, Leibnitz, &c. &c., leaving the Chronicles, properly so called, to shift for themselves. . . . . I am ignorant when you are to be in Edinburgh, and in that ignorance have not desired Blackburn, who is now at Glasgow, to call on you. He has the best practical understanding I have ever met with, and I vouch that you would be much pleased with his acquaintance. And so for the present, God bless you.

G. E."

Scott's letter in reply opens thus:—

"I will not castrate John Dryden. I would as soon castrate my own father, as I believe Jupiter did of yore. What would you say to any man who would castrate Shakspeare, or Massinger, or Beaumont and Fletcher? I don't say but that it may be very proper to select correct passages for the use of boarding-schools and colleges being sensible no improper ideas can be suggested in these seminaries, unless they are intruded or smuggled under the beards and ruffs of our old dramatists. But in making an edition of a man of genius's works for libraries and collections, and such I conceive a complete edition of Dryden to be, I must give my author as I find him, and will not tear out the page, even to get rid of the blot, little as I like it. Are not the pages of Swift, and even of Pope, larded with indecency, and often of the most disgusting kind, and do we not see them upon all shelves and dressing-tables, and in all boudoirs? Is not Prior the most indecent of tale-tellers, not even excepting La Fontaine, and how often do we see his works in female hands? In fact it is not passages of ludicrous indelicacy that corrupt the manners of a people—it is the sonnets which a prurient genius like Master Little sings *virginibus puerisque*—it is the sentimental slang, half lewd, half methodistic, that debauches the understanding, inflames the sleeping passions, and prepares the reader to give way as soon as a tempter appears. At the same time, I am not at all happy when I peruse some of Dryden's comedies: they are very stupid, as well as indelicate; sometimes, however, there is a considerable vein of liveliness and humour, and all of them present extraordinary pictures of the age in which he lived. My critical notes will not be very numerous, but I hope to illustrate the political poems, as Absalom and Achitophel, the Hind and Panther, &c. with some curious annotations. I have already made a complete search among some hundred pamphlets of that pamphlet-writing age, and with considerable success, as I have found several which throw light on my author. I am told that I am to be formidably opposed by Mr. Crowe, the Professor of Poetry at Oxford, who is also threatening an edition of Dryden. I don't know whether to be most vexed that some one had not undertaken the task sooner, or that Mr. Crowe is disposed to attempt it at the same time with me:—however, I now stand committed, and will not be *crowed* over, if I can help it. The third edition of the Lay is now in the press, of which I hope you will accept a copy, as it contains some trifling improvements or additions. They are, however, very trifling.

"I have written a long letter to Rees, recommending an edition of our historians, both Latin and English; but I have great hesitation whether to undertake much of it myself. What I can I certainly will do; but I should feel particularly delighted if you would join forces with me, when I think we might do the business to purpose. Do, Lord love you, think of this *grande opus*.

"I have not been so fortunate as to hear of Mr. Blackburn. I am afraid poor Daniel has been very idly employed—*Cœlum non animum*. I am glad you still retain the purpose of visiting Reged. If you live on mutton and game, we can feast you; for, as one wittily said, I am not the hare with many friends, but the friend with many hares.—W. S."

Mr. Ellis, in his next letter, says:—

"I will not disturb you by contesting any part of your ingenious apology for your intended *complete* edition of Dryden, whose genius I venerate as much as you do, and whose negligences, as he was not rich enough to doom them to oblivion in his own lifetime, it is perhaps incumbent on his editor to transmit to the latest posterity. Most certainly I am not so squeamish as to quarrel with him for his immodesty on any moral pretence. Licentiousness in writing, when accompanied by wit, as in the case of Prior, La Fontaine, &c., is never likely to excite any *passion*, because every passion is serious; and the grave epistle of Eloisa is more likely to do moral mischief and convey infection to love-sick damsels, than five hundred stories of Hans Carvel and Paulo Purgante; but whatever is in point of expression vulgar—whatever disgusts the taste—whatever might have been written by any fool,

* Ellis had mentioned, in a recent letter, Heber's buying wines to the value of £1100, at some sale he happened to attend this autumn.

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and is therefore unworthy of Dryden—whatever might have been suppressed, without exciting a moment's regret in the mind of any of his admirers—*ought*, in my opinion, to be suppressed by any editor who should be disposed to make an appeal to the public taste upon the subject; because a man who was perhaps the best poet and best prose writer in the language———but it is foolish to say so much, after promising to say nothing. Indeed I own *myself* guilty of possessing all his works in a very indifferent edition, and I shall certainly purchase a better one whenever you put it in my power. With regard to your competitors, I feel perfectly at my ease, because I am convinced that though you should generously furnish them with all the materials, they would not know how to use them: *non cuivis hominum contingit* to write critical notes that any one will read."

Alluding to the regret which Scott had expressed some time before at the shortness of his visit to the libraries of Oxford, Ellis says, in another of these letters—

"A library is like a butcher's shop; it contains plenty of meat, but it is all raw; no person living—(Leyden's breakfast was only a *tour de force* to astonish Ritson, and I except the Abyssinians, whom I never saw)—can find a meal in it till some good cook (suppose yourself) comes in and says, 'Sir, I see by your looks that you are hungry; I know your taste—be patient for a moment, and you shall be satisfied that you have an excellent appetite.'"

I shall not transcribe the mass of letters which Scott received from various other literary friends whose assistance he invoked in the preparation of his edition of Dryden; but among them there occurs one so admirable, that I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of introducing it, more especially as the views which it opens harmonize as remarkably with some, as they differ from others, of those which Scott himself ultimately expressed respecting the poetical character of his illustrious author.

"Pallerdale, Nov. 7, 1805.

"My dear Scott,

. . . "I was much pleased to hear of your engagement with Dryden: not that he is, as a poet, any great favourite of mine: I admire his talents and genius highly, but his is not a poetical genius. The only qualities I can find in Dryden that are *essentially* poetical, are a certain ardour and impetuosity of mind, with an excellent ear. It may seem strange that I do not add *to* this, great command of language: *That* he certainly has, and of such language, too, as it is most desirable that a poet should possess, or rather that he should not be without. But it is not language that is, in the highest sense of the word, poetical, being neither of the imagination nor of the passions; I mean the amiable, the ennobling, or the intense passions. I do not mean to say that there is nothing of this in Dryden, but as little, I think, as is possible, considering how much he has written. You will easily understand my meaning, when I refer to his versification of Palamon and Arcite, as contrasted with the language of Chaucer. Dryden had neither a tender heart nor a lofty sense of moral dignity. Whenever his language is poetically impassioned, it is mostly upon unpleasing subjects, such as the follies, vices, and crimes of classes of men or of individuals. That his cannot be the language of imagination, must have necessarily followed from this,—that there is not a single image from nature in the whole body of his works; and in his translation from Virgil, wherever Virgil can be fairly said to have had his *eye* upon his object, Dryden always spoils the passage.

"But too much of this; I am glad that you are to be his editor. His political and satirical pieces may be greatly benefited by illustration, and even absolutely require it. A correct text is the first object of an editor—(then such notes as explain difficult or obscure passages; and lastly, which is much less important, notes pointing out authors to whom the poet has been indebted, not in the fiddling way of phrase here and phrase there—which is detestable as a general practice)—but where he has had essential obligations either as to matter or manner.

"If I can be of any use to you, do not fail to apply to me. One thing I may take the liberty to suggest, which is, when you come to the fables, might it not be advisable to print the whole of the tales of Boccace in a smaller type in the original language? If this should look too much like swelling a book, I should certainly make such extracts as would show where Dryden has most strikingly improved upon, or fallen below, his original. I think his translations from Boccace are the best, at least the most poetical, of his poems. It is many years since I saw Boccace, but I remember that Sigismunda is not married by him to Guiscard—(the names are different in Boccace in both tales, I believe—certainly in Theodore, &c.) I think Dryden has much injured the story by the marriage, and degraded Sigismunda's character by it. He has also, to the best of my remembrance, degraded her still more by making her love absolute sensuality and appetite; Dryden had no other notion of the passion. With all these defects, and they are very gross ones, it is a noble poem. Guiscard's answer, when first reproached by Tancred, is noble in Boccace,—nothing but this: *Amor può molto più che ne voi ne io possiamo.* This, Dryden has spoiled. He says first very well, 'the faults of love by love are justified,' and then come four lines of miserable rant, quite à la *Maximin*. Farewell, and believe me ever your affectionate friend,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH."

CHAPTER XV.

AFFAIR OF THE CLERKSHIP OF SESSION—LETTERS TO ELLIS AND LORD DALKEITH—VISIT TO LONDON—EARL SPENCER AND MR. FOX—CAROLINE, PRINCESS OF WALES—JOANNA BAILLIE—APPOINTMENT A CLERK OF SESSION—LORD MELVILLE'S TRIAL—SO ON HIS ACQUITTAL.—1806.

While the first volumes of his Dryden were passing through the press, the affair concerning the clerkship of the Court of Session, opened about nine or ten months before, had not been neglected by the friends on whose counsel and assistance Scott had relied. In one of his Private Memoranda of 1830, he briefly tells the issue of this negotiation, which he justly describes as "an important circumstance in his life, of a nature to relieve him from the anxiety which he must otherwise have felt as one upon the precarious tenor of whose own life rested the principal prospects of his family, and especially as one who had necessarily some dependence on the proverbially capricious favour of the public." Whether Mr. Pitt's hint to Mr. William Dundas, that he would willingly find an opportunity to promote the interests of the author of the Lay, or some conversation between the Duke of Buccleuch and Lord Melville, first encouraged him to this direction of his views, I am not able to state distinctly; but I believe that the desire to see his fortunes placed on some more substantial basis, was at this time partaken pretty equally by the three persons who had the principal influence in the distribution of the crown patronage in Scotland; and as his object was rather to secure a future than an immediate increase of official income, it was comparatively easy to make such an arrangement as would satisfy his ambition. George Home of Wedderburn, in Berwickshire, a gentleman of considerable literary acquirements, and an old friend of Scott's family, had now served as Clerk of Session for upwards of thirty years. In those days there was no system of retiring pensions for the worn-out functionary of this class, and the usual method was, either that he should resign in favour of a successor, who advanced a sum of money according to the circumstances of his age and health, or for a coadjutor to be associated with him in his patent, who undertook the duty on condition of a division of salary. Scott offered to relieve Mr. Home of all the labours of his office, and to allow him, nevertheless, to retain its emoluments entire during his life time; and the aged clerk of course joined his exertions to procure a conjoint-patent on these very advantageous terms. Mr. Home resigned, and a new patent was drawn out accordingly; but, by a clerical inadvertency, it was drawn out solely in Scott's favour, no mention of Mr. Home being inserted in the instrument. Although, therefore, the sign-manual had been affixed, and there remained nothing but to pay the fees and take out the commission, Scott, on discovering this omission, could not of course proceed in the business; since, in the event of his dying before Mr. Home, that gentleman would have lost the vested interest which he had stipulated to retain. A pending charge of pecuniary corruption had compelled Lord Melville to retire from office some time before Mr. Pitt's death; and the cloud of popular obloquy under which he now laboured, rendered it impossible that

Scott should expect assistance from the quarter to which, under any other circumstances, he would naturally have turned for extrication from this difficulty. He therefore, as soon as the Fox and Grenville Cabinet had been nominated, proceeded to London, to make in his own person such representations as might be necessary to secure the issuing of the patent in the shape originally intended.

It seems wonderful that he should ever have doubted for a single moment of the result; since, had the new Cabinet been purely Whig, and had he been the most notorious and violent of Tory partizans, neither of which was the case, the arrangement had been not only virtually, but with the exception of an evident official blunder, formally completed; and no Secretary of State, as I must think, could have refused to rectify the paltry mistake in question, without a dereliction of every principle of honour. The seals of the Home Office had been placed in the hands of a nobleman of the highest character—moreover an ardent lover of literature;—while the chief of the new ministry was one of the most generous as well as tasteful of mankind; and accordingly, when the circumstances were explained, there occurred no hesitation whatever on their parts. "I had," says Scott, "the honour of an interview with Earl Spencer, and he, in the most handsome manner, gave directions that the commission should issue as originally intended; adding, that the matter having received the royal assent, he regarded only as a claim of justice what he would willingly have done as an act of favour." He adds, "I never saw Mr. Fox on this or any other occasion, and never made any application to him, conceiving, that in doing so, I might have been supposed to express political opinions different from those which I had always professed. In his private capacity, there is no man to whom I would have been more proud to owe an obligation—had I been so distinguished."*

In January, 1806, however, Scott had by no means measured either the character, the feelings, or the arrangements of great public functionaries, by the standard with which observation and experience subsequently furnished him. He had breathed hitherto, as far as political questions of all sorts were concerned, the hot atmosphere of a very narrow scene,—and seems to have pictured to himself Whitehall and Downing Street, as only a wider stage for the exhibition of the bitter and fanatical prejudices that tormented the petty circles of the Parliament House at Edinburgh; the true bearing and scope of which no man in after days more thoroughly understood, or more sincerely pitied. The variation of his feelings, while his business still remained undetermined, will, however, be best collected from the correspondence about to be quoted. It was, moreover, when these letters were written, that he was tasting, for the first time, the full cup of fashionable blandishment as a *London Lion*; nor will the reader fail to observe how deeply, while he supposed his own most important worldly interests to be in peril on the one hand, and was surrounded with so many captivating flatteries on the other, he continued to sympathize with the misfortunes of his early friend and patron, now hurled from power, and subjected to a series of degrading persecutions, from the consequences of which that lofty spirit was never entirely to recover.

To George Ellis, Esq., Sunninghill.

"Edinburgh, January 25th, 1806.

"My dear Ellis,

"I have been too long in letting you hear of me, and my present letter is going to be a very selfish one, since it will be chiefly occupied by an affair of my own, in which, probably, you may find very little entertainment. I rely, however, upon your cordial good wishes and good advice, though, perhaps, you may be unable to afford me any direct assistance without more trouble than I would wish you to take on my account. You must know, then, that with a view of withdrawing entirely from the bar, I had entered into a transaction with an elderly and infirm gentleman, Mr. George Home, to be associated with him in the office which he holds as one of the principal clerks to our supreme Court of Session; I being to discharge the duty gratuitously during his life, and to succeed him at his decease. This could only be carried into effect by a new commission from the crown to him and me jointly, which has been issued in similar cases very lately, and is in point of form quite correct. By the interest of my kind and noble friend and chief, the Duke of Buccleuch, the countenance of government was obtained to this arrangement, and the affair, as I have every reason to believe, is now in the Treasury. I have written to my solicitor, Alexander Mundell, Fludyer Street, to use every despatch in hurrying through the commission; but the news of to-day giving us every reason to apprehend Pitt's death, if that lamentable event has not already happened,* makes me get nervous on a subject so interesting to my little fortune. My political sentiments have been always constitutional and open, and although they were never rancorous, yet I cannot expect that the Scottish Opposition party, should circumstances bring them into power, would consider me as an object of favour; nor would I ask it at their hands. Their leaders cannot regard me with malevolence, for I am intimate with many of them; but they must provide for the Whiggish children before they throw their bread to the Tory dogs; and I shall not fawn on them because they have in their turn the superintendence of the larder. At the same time, if Fox's friends come into power, it must be with Windham's party, to whom my politics can be no exception,—if the politics of a private individual ought at any time to be made the excuse for intercepting the bounty of his sovereign, when it is in the very course of being bestowed.

"The situation is most desirable, being £900 a-year, besides being consistent with holding my sheriffdom; and I could afford very well to wait till it opened to me by the death of my colleague, without wishing a most worthy and respectable man to die a moment sooner than ripe nature demanded. The duty consists in a few hours' labour in the forenoons when the Court sits, leaving the evenings and whole vacation open for literary pursuits. I will not relinquish the hope of such an establishment without an effort, if it is possible, without dereliction of my principles, to attain the accomplishment of it. As I have suffered in my professional line by addicting myself to the profane and unprofitable art of poem-making, I am very desirous to indemnify myself by availing myself of any prepossession which my literary reputation may, however unmeritedly, have created in my favour. I have found it useful when I applied for others, and I see no reason why I should not try if it can do any thing for myself.

"Perhaps, after all, my commission may be got out before a change of Ministry, if such an event shall take place, as it seems not far distant. If it is otherwise, will you be so good as to think and devise some mode in which my case may be stated to Windham or Lord Grenville, supposing them to come in? If it is not deemed worthy of attension, I am sure I shall be contented; but it is one thing to have a right to ask a favour, and another to hope that a transaction, already fully completed by the private parties, and approved of by an existing administration, shall be permitted to take effect in favour of an unoffending individual. I believe I shall see you very shortly, unless I hear from Mundell that the business can be done for certain without my coming up. I will not, if I can help it, be flayed like a sheep for the benefit of some pettifogging lawyer or attorney. I have stated the matter to you very bluntly; indeed, I am not asking a favour, but, unless my self-partiality blinds me, merely fair play. Yours ever,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.

"Bath, 6th February, 1806.

"My dear Scott,

"You must have seen by the lists of the new Ministry already published in all the papers, that, although the death of our excellent Minister has been certainly a most unfortunate event, in as far as it must tend to delay the object of your present wishes, there is no cause for your alarm on account of the change, excepting as far as that change is very extensive, and thus, perhaps, much time may elapse, before the business of every kind which was in arrears can be expedited by the new Administration. There is no change of principle (as far as we can yet judge) in the new Cabinet—or rather, the new Cabinet has no general political creed. Lord Grenville, Fox, Lord Lansdowne, and Addington, were the four nominal heads of four distinct parties, which must now by some chemical process be amalgamated; all must forget, if they

* Introduction to Marmion, 1808.

* Mr. Pitt died January 23d, two days before this letter was written.

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on their peculiar hauhts and opinions, and unite in the pursuit of a common object. How far this is possible, time will show; to what degree this medley Ministry can, by their joint influence, command a majority in the House of Commons; how far they will, *as a whole*, be assisted by the secret influence and power of the Crown; whether, if not so seconded, they will be able to appeal some time hence to the people, and dissolve the Parliament—all these, and many other questions, will receive very different answers from different speculators. But in the meantime it is self-evident, that every individual will be extremely jealous of the patronage of his individual department; that individually, as well as conjointly, they will be cautious of provoking enmity; and that a measure patronized by the Duke of Buccleuch is not very likely to be opposed by any member of such a Cabinet.

"If, indeed, the object of your wishes were a sinecure, and at the disposal of the Chancellor (Erskine), or of the President of the Board of Control (Lord Minto), you might have strong cause, perhaps, for apprehension; but what you ask would suit few candidates, and there probably is not one whom the Cabinet, or any person in it, would feel any *interest* in obliging to your disadvantage. But farther, we know that Lord Sidmouth is in the Cabinet, so is Lord Ellenborough, and these two are notoriously the *King's* Ministers. Now we may be very sure that they, or some other of the King's friends, will possess one department, which has no name, but is not the less real; namely, the supervision of the King's influence both here and in Scotland. I therefore much doubt whether there is any man in the Cabinet, who, as Minister, has it in his power to prevent your attainment of your object. Lord Melville, we know, *was* in a great measure the representative of the King's personal influence in Scotland, and I am by no means sure that he is no longer so; but be that as it may, it will, I am well persuaded, continue in the hands of some one who has not been forced upon his Majesty as one of his confidential servants.

"Upon the whole, then, the only consolation that I can confidently give you is, that what you represent as a principal difficulty is *quite imaginary*, and that your own political principles are exactly those which are most likely to be serviceable to you. I need not say how happy Anne and myself would be to see you, (we shall spend the month of March in London,) nor that, if you should be able to point out any means by which I can be of the slightest use in advancing your interests, you may employ me without reserve. I must go to the Pump-room for my glass of water—so God bless you. Ever truly yours,

G. Ellis."

To George Ellis, Esq., Bath.

"London, Feb. 20, 1806.

"My dear Ellis,

"I have your kind letter, and am infinitely obliged to you for your solicitude in my behalf. I have indeed been rather fortunate, for the gale which has shattered so many goodly argosies, has blown my little bark into the creek for which she was bound, and left me only to lament the misfortunes of my friends. To vary the simile, while the huge frigates, the Moira and Lauderdale, were fiercely combating for the dominion of the Caledonian main, I was fortunate enough to get on board the good ship Spencer, and leave them to settle their disputes at leisure. It is said to be a violent ground of controversy in the New Ministry, which of those two noble lords is to be St. Andrew for Scotland. I own I tremble for the consequences of so violent a temper as Lauderdale's, irritated by long disappointed ambition and ancient feud with all his brother nobles. It is a certain truth that Lord Moira insists upon his claim, backed by all the friends of the late administration in Scotland, to have a certain weight in that country; and it is equally certain that the Hamiltons and Lauderdales have struck out. So here are people who have stood in the rain without doors for so many years, quarrelling for the nearest place to the fire, as soon as they have set their feet on the floor. Lord Moira, as he always has been, was highly kind and courteous to me on this occasion.

"Heber is just come in, with your letter waving in his hand. I am ashamed of all the trouble I have given you, and at the same time flattered to find your friendship even equal to that greatest and most disagreeable of all trials, the task of solicitation. Mrs. Scott is *not* with me, and I am truly concerned to think we should be so near, without the prospect of meeting. Truth is, I had half a mind to make a run up to Bath, merely to break the spell which has prevented our meeting for these two years. But Bindley, the collector, has lent me a parcel of books, which he insists on my consulting within the liberties of Westminster, and which I cannot find elsewhere, so that the fortnight I propose to stay will be fully occupied by examination and extracting. How long I may be detained here is very uncertain, but I wish to leave London on Saturday se'ennight. Should I be so delayed as to bring my time of departure any thing near that of your arrival, I will stretch my furlough to the utmost, that I may have a chance of seeing you. Nothing is minded here but domestic politics, and if we are not clean swept, there is no want of new brooms to perform that operation. I have heard very bad news of Leyden's health since my arrival here—such, indeed, as to give room to apprehend the very worst. I fear he has neglected the precautions which the climate renders necessary, and which no man departs from with impunity. Remember me kindly and respectfully to Mrs. Ellis; and believe me ever yours faithfully,

Walter Scott.

"P. S. Poor Lord Melville! How does he look? We have had miserable accounts of his health in London. He was the architect of my little fortune, from circumstances of personal regard merely; for any of my trifling literary acquisitions were out of his way. My heart bleeds when I think on his situation—

'Even when the sage of battle ceased,
The victor's soul was not appeased.'"*

To the Earl of Dalkeith.

"London, 11th Feb. 1806.

"My dear Lord,

"I cannot help flattering myself—for perhaps it is flattering myself—that the noble architect of the Border Minstrel's little fortune has been sometimes anxious for the security of that lowly edifice, during the tempest which has overturned so many palaces and towers. If I am right in my supposition, it will give you pleasure to learn that, notwithstanding some little rubs, I have been able to carry through the transaction which your lordship sanctioned by your influence and approbation, and that in a way very pleasing to my own feelings. Lord Spencer, upon the nature of the transaction being explained in an audience with which he favoured me, was pleased to direct the commission to be issued, as an act of justice, regretting, he said, it had not been from the beginning his own deed. This was doing the thing handsomely, and like an English nobleman. I have been very much feted and caressed here, almost indeed to suffocation, but have been made amends by meeting some old friends. One of the kindest was Lord Somerville, who volunteered introducing me to Lord Spencer, as much, I am convinced, from respect to your lordship's protection and wishes, as from a desire to serve me personally. He seemed very anxious to do any thing in his power which might evince a wish to be of use to your protegé. Lord Minto was also infinitely kind and active, and his influence with Lord Spencer would, I am convinced, have been stretched to the utmost in my favour, had not Lord Spencer's own view of the subject been perfectly sufficient.

"After all, a little literary reputation is of some use here. I suppose Solomon, when he compared a good name to a pot of ointment, meant that it oiled the hinges of the halldoors into which the possessors of that inestimable treasure wished to penetrate. What a *good* name was in Jerusalem, a *known* name seems to be in London. If you are celebrated, for writing verses or for slicing cucumbers, for being two feet taller or two feet less than any other biped, for acting plays when you should be whipped at school, or for attending schools and institutions when you should be preparing for your grave, your notoriety becomes a talisman—an 'Open Sesame' before which every thing gives way—till you are voted a bore, and discarded for a new plaything. As this is a consummation of notoriety which I am by no means ambitious of experiencing, I hope I shall be very soon able to shape my course northward, to enjoy my good fortune at my leisure, and snap my fingers at the bar and all its works.

"There is, it is believed, a rude scuffle betwixt our late commander-in-chief and Lord Lauderdale, for the patronage of Scotland. If there is to be an exclusive administration, I hope it will not be in the hands of the latter. Indeed, when one considers that, by means of Lords Sidmouth and Ellenborough, the King possesses the actual power of casting the balance betwixt the five Grenvillites and four Foxites who compose the Cabinet, I cannot think they will find it an easy matter to force upon his Majesty any one to whom he has a personal dislike. I should therefore suppose that the disposal of St. Andrew's Cross will be delayed till the new Ministry is a little consolidated, *if that time shall ever come*. There is much loose gunpowder amongst them, and one spark

* These lines are from Smollett's *Tears of Caledonia*.

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would make a fine explosion. Pardon these political effusions; I am infected by the atmosphere which I breathe, and cannot restrain my pen from discussing state affairs. I hope the young ladies and my dear little chief are now recovering from the hooping-cough, if it has so turned out to be. If I can do any thing for any of the family here, you know your right to command, and the pleasure it will afford me to obey. Will your lordship be so kind as to acquaint the Duke, with every grateful and respectful acknowledgment on my part, that I have this day got my commission from the Secretary's office? I dine to-day at Holland-house; I refused to go before, lest it should be thought I was soliciting interest in that quarter, as I abhor even the shadow of changing or turning with the tide.

"I am ever, with grateful acknowledgment, your Lordship's much indebted, faithful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

To George Ellis, Esq.

"London, Saturday, March 3, 1806.

"My dear Ellis,

"I have waited in vain for the happy dissolution of the spell which has kept us asunder at a distance less by one quarter than in general divides us; and since I am finally obliged to depart for the north to-morrow, I have only to comfort myself with the hope that Bladud will infuse a double influence into his tepid springs, and that you will feel emboldened, by the quantity of reinforcement which the radical heat shall have received, to undertake your expedition to the *tramontane* region of Reged this season. My time has been spent very gayly here, and I should have liked very well to have remained till you came up to town, had it not been for the wife and bairns at home, whom I confess I am now anxious to see. Accordingly I set off early to-morrow morning—indeed I expected to have done so to-day, but my companion, Ballantyne, our Scottish Bodoni, was afflicted with a violent diarrhœa, which, though his physician assured him it would serve his health in general, would certainly have contributed little to his accomplishments as an agreeable companion in a post-chaise, which are otherwise very respectable. I own Lord Melville's misfortunes affect me deeply. He, at least his nephew, was my early patron, and gave me countenance and assistance when I had but few friends. I have seen when the streets of Edinburgh were thought by the inhabitants almost too vulgar for Lord Melville to walk upon; and now I fear that, with his power and influence gone, his presence would be accounted by many, from whom he has deserved other thoughts, an embarrassment, if not something worse. All this is very vile—it is one of the occasions when Providence, as it were, industriously turns the tapestry, to let us see the ragged ends of the worsted which compose its most beautiful figures. God grant your prophecies may be true, which I fear are rather dictated by your kind heart than your experience of political enmities and the fate of fallen statesmen. Kindest compliments to Mrs. Ellis. Your next will find me in Edinburgh.

WALTER SCOTT."

To George Ellis, Esq.

"Ashestiel, April 7, 1806.

"My dear Ellis,

"Were I to begin by telling you all the regret I had at not finding you in London, and at being obliged to leave it before your return, this very handsome sheet of paper, which I intend to cover with more important and interesting matters, would be entirely occupied by such a Jeremiade as could only be equalled by Jeremiah himself. I will therefore waive that subject, only assuring you that I hope to be in London next spring, but have much warmer hopes of seeing you here in summer. I hope Bath has been of service; if not so much as you expected, try easy exercise in a northward direction, and make proof of the virtues of the Tweed and Yarrow. We have been here these two days, and I have been quite rejoiced to find all my dogs, and horses, and sheep, and cows, and two cottages full of peasants and their children, and all my other stock, human and animal, in great good health—we want nothing but Mrs. Ellis and you to be the strangers within our gates, and our establishment would be complete on the patriarchal plan. I took possession of my new office on my return. The duty is very simple, consisting chiefly in signing my name; and as I have five colleagues, I am not obliged to do duty except in turn, so my task is a very easy one, as my name is very short.

"My principal companion in this solitude is John Dryden. After all, there are some passages in his translations from Ovid and Juvenal that will hardly bear reprinting, unless I would have the Bishop of London and the whole corps of Methodists about my ears. I wish you would look at the passages I mean. One is from the fourth book of Lucretius; the other from Ovid's Instructions to his Mistress. They are not only double-entendres, but good plain single-entendres—not only broad, but long, and as coarse as the mainsail of a first-rate. What to make of them I know not, but I fear that, without absolutely gelding the bard, it will be indispensable to circumcise him a little, by leaving out some of the most obnoxious lines. Do pray look at the poems and decide for me. Have your seen my friend Tom Thomson, who is just now in London? He has, I believe, the advantage of knowing you, and I hope you will meet, as he understands more of old books, old laws, and old history, than any man in Scotland. He has lately received an appointment under the Lord Register of Scotland, which puts all our records under his immediate inspection and control, and I expect many valuable discoveries to be the consequence of his investigation, if he escapes being smothered in the cloud of dust which his researches will certainly raise about his ears. I sent your card instantly to Jeffrey, from whom you had doubtless a suitable answer.* I saw the venerable economist and antiquary, Macpherson, when in London, and was quite delighted with the simplicity and kindness of his manners. He is exactly like one of the old Scotchmen whom I remember twenty years ago, before so close a union had taken place between Edinburgh and London. The mail-coach and the Berwick smacks have done more than the Union in altering our national character, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse.

"I met with your friend, Mr. Canning, in town, and claimed his acquaintance as a friend of yours, and had my claim allowed; also Mr. Frere,—both delightful companions, far too good for politics, and for winning and losing places. When I say I was more pleased with their society than I thought had been possible on so short an acquaintance, I pay them a very trifling compliment, and myself a very great one. I had also the honour of dining with a fair friend of yours at Blackheath, an honour which I shall very long remember. She is an enchanting princess, who dwells in an enchanted palace, and I cannot help thinking that her prince must labour under some malignant spell when he denies himself her society. The very Prince of the Black Isles, whose bottom was marble, would have made an effort to transport himself to Montague House. From all this you will understand I was at Montague House.

"I am quite delighted at the interest you take in poor Lord Melville. I suppose they are determined to hunt him down. Indeed, the result of his trial must be ruin from the expense, even supposing him to be honourably acquitted. Will you, when you have time to write, let me know how that matter is likely to turn. I am deeply interested in it; and the reports here are so various, that one knows not what to trust to. Even the common rumour of London is generally more authentic than the 'from good authority' of Edinburgh. Besides, I am now in the wilds, (alas! I cannot say *woods* and wilds,) and hear little of what passes. Charlotte joins me in a thousand kind remembrances to Mrs. Ellis; and I am ever yours most truly.

WALTER SCOTT."

I shall not dwell at present upon Scott's method of conduct in the circumstances of an eminently popular author, beleaguered by the importunities of fashionable admirers: his bearing, when first exposed to such influences, was exactly what it was to the end, and I shall have occasion in the sequel to produce the evidence of more than one deliberate observer.

Caroline, Princess of Wales, was in those days considered among the Tories, whose politics her husband had uniformly opposed, as the victim of unmerited misfortune, cast aside, from the mere wantonness of caprice, by a gay and dissolute voluptuary; while the Prince's Whig associates had espoused his quarrel, and were already, as the event showed, prepared to act publicly as well as privately, as if they believed her to be among the most abandoned of her sex. I know not by whom Scott was first introduced to her little Court at Blackheath; but I think it was probably through Mrs. Hayman, a lady of her bedchamber, several of whose notes and letters occur about this time in the

* Mr. Ellis had written to Mr. Jeffrey, through Scott, proposing to write an article for the Edinburgh Review on the Annals of Commerce, then recently published by Mr. David Macpherson.

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collection of his correspondence. The careless levity of the Princess's manner was observed by him, and have heard him say, with much regret, as likely to bring the purity of heart and mind, for which he gave her credit, into suspicion. For example, when, in the course of the evening, she conducted him by himself to admire some flowers in a conservatory, and, the place being rather dark, his lameness occasioned him to hesitate for a moment in following her down some steps which she had taken at a skip, she turned round, and said, with mock indignation, "Ah! false and faint-heart troubadour! you will not trust yourself with me for fear of your neck!"

I find from one of Mrs. Hayman's letters, that on being asked, at Montague House, to recite some verses of his own, he replied that he had none unpublished which he thought worthy of her Royal Highness's attention, but introduced a short account of the Ettrick Shepherd, and repeated one of the ballads of the *Mountain Bard*, for which he was then endeavouring to procure subscribers. The Princess appears to have been interested by the story, and she affected, at all events, to be pleased with the lines; she desired that her name might be placed on the Shepherd's list, and thus he had at least one gleam of royal patronage.

It was during the same visit to London that Scott first saw Joanna Baillie, of whose Plays on the Passions he had been, from their first appearance, an enthusiastic admirer. The late Mr. Sotheby, the translator of Oberon, &c. &c. was the mutual friend who introduced him to the poetess of Hampstead. Being asked very lately what impression he made upon her at this interview—"I was at first," she answered, "a little disappointed, for I was fresh from the Lay, and had pictured to myself an ideal elegance and refinement of feature; but I said to myself, If I had been in a crowd, and at a loss what to do, I should have fixed upon that face among a thousand, as the sure index of the benevolence and the shrewdness that would and could help me in my strait. We had not talked long, however, before I saw in the expressive play of his countenance far more even of elegance and refinement than I had missed in its mere lines." The acquaintance thus begun, soon ripened into a most affectionate intimacy between him and this remarkable woman; and thenceforth she and her distinguished brother, Dr. Matthew Baillie, were among the friends to whose intercourse he looked forward with the greatest pleasure when about to visit the metropolis.

I ought to have mentioned before, that he had known Mr. Sotheby at a very early period of life, that amiable and excellent man having been stationed for some time at Edinburgh while serving his Majesty as a captain of dragoons. Scott ever retained for him a sincere regard; he was always, when in London, a frequent guest at his hospitable board, and owed to him the personal acquaintance of not a few of their most eminent contemporaries in various departments of literature and art.

When the Court opened after the spring recess, Scott entered upon his new duties as one of the Principal Clerks of Session; and as he continued to discharge them with exemplary regularity, and to the entire satisfaction both of the Judges and the Bar, during the long period of twenty-five years, I think it proper to tell precisely in what they consisted, the more so because, in his letter to Ellis of the 25th January, he has himself (characteristically enough) understated them.

The Court of Session sits at Edinburgh from the 12th of May to the 12th of July, and again from the 12th of November, with a short interval at Christmas, to the 12th of March. The Judges of the Inner Court took their places on the Bench, in his time, every morning not later than ten o'clock, and remained according to the amount of business ready for despatch, but seldom for less than four or more than six hours daily; during which space the Principal Clerks continued seated at a table below the Bench to watch the progress of the suits, and record the decisions—the cases, of all classes, being equally apportioned among their number. The Court of Session, however, does not sit on Monday, that day being reserved for the criminal business of the High Court of Justiciary; and there is also another blank day every other week,—the *Teind Wednesday*, as it is called, when the Judges are assembled for the hearing of tithe questions, which belong to a separate jurisdiction, of comparatively modern creation, and having its own separate establishment of officers. On the whole, then, Scott's attendance in Court may be taken to have amounted, on the average, to from four to six hours daily during rather less than six months out of the twelve.

Not a little of the Clerk's business in Court is merely formal, and indeed mechanical; but there are few days in which he is not called upon for the exertion of his higher faculties, in reducing the decisions of the Bench, orally pronounced, to technical shape; which, in a new, complex, or difficult case, cannot be satisfactorily done, without close attention to all the previous proceedings and written documents, an accurate understanding of the principles or precedents on which it has been determined, and a thorough command of the whole vocabulary of legal forms. Dull or indolent men, promoted through the mere wantonness of political patronage, might, no doubt, contrive to devolve the harder part of their duty upon humbler assistants: but, in general, the office had been held by gentlemen of high character and attainments; and more than one among Scott's own colleagues enjoyed the reputation of legal science that would have done honour to the Bench. Such men, of course, prided themselves on doing well, whatever it was their proper function to do; and it was by their example, not that of the drones who condescended to lean upon unseen and irresponsible inferiors, that Scott uniformly modelled his own conduct as a Clerk of Session. To do this required, of necessity, constant study of law-papers and authorities at home. There was also a great deal of really base drudgery, such as the authenticating of registered deeds, by signature, which he had to go through out of Court; he had, too, a Shrievalty, though not a heavy one, all the while upon his hands;—and, on the whole, it forms one of the most remarkable features in his history, that, throughout the most active period of his literary career, he must have devoted a large proportion of his hours, during half at least of every year, to the conscientious discharge of professional duties.

Henceforth, then, when in Edinburgh, his literary work was performed chiefly before breakfast—with the assistance of such evening hours as he could contrive to rescue from the consideration of Court papers, and from those social engagements in which, year after year, as his celebrity advanced, he was of necessity more and more largely involved; and of those entire days during which the Court of Session did not sit—days which, by most of those holding the same official station, were given to relaxation and amusement. So long as he continued quartermaster of the Volunteer Cavalry, of course he had, even while in Edinburgh, some occasional horse exercise; but in general, his town life henceforth was in that respect as inactive as his country life ever was the reverse. He scorned for a long while to attach any consequence to this complete alternation of habits; but we shall find him confessing in the sequel, that it proved highly injurious to his bodily health.

I may here observe, that the duties of his clerkship brought him into close daily connexion with a set of gentlemen, most of whom were soon regarded by him with the most cordial affection and confidence. Among his fellow-clerks were David Hume, (the nephew of the historian,) whose lectures on the Law of Scotland are characterized with just eulogy in the Ashestiel Memoir, and who subsequently became a Baron of the Exchequer; a man as virtuous and amiable as conspicuous for masculine vigour of intellect and variety of knowledge. Another was Hector Macdonald Buchanan of Drummakiln, a frank-hearted and generous gentleman, not the less

acceptable to Scott for the Highland prejudices which he inherited with the high blood of Clanranald; at whose beautiful seat of Ross Priory, on the shores of Lochlomond, he was henceforth almost annually a visiter—a circumstance which has left many traces in the Waverley Novels. A third, (though I believe of later appointment,) with whom his intimacy was not less strict, was the late excellent Sir Robert Dundas, of Beechwood, Bart.; and a fourth, was the friend of his boyhood, one of the dearest he ever had, Colin Mackenzie of Portmore. With these gentlemen's families, he and his lived in such constant familiarity of kindness, that the children all called their fathers' colleagues *uncles*, and the mothers of their little friends, *aunts*; and in truth, the establishment was a brotherhood.

Scott's nomination as Clerk of Session, appeared in the same Gazette, (March 8, 1806,) which announced the instalment of the Hon. Henry Erskine and John Clerk of Eldin as Lord Advocate and Solicitor-General for Scotland. The promotion at such a moment, of a distinguished Tory, might well excite the wonder of the Parliament House, and even when the circumstances were explained, the inferior local adherents of the triumphant cause were far from considering the conduct of their superiors in this matter with feelings of satisfaction. The indication of such humours was deeply resented by his haughty spirit; and he in his turn showed his irritation in a manner well calculated to extend to higher quarters the spleen with which his advancement had been regarded by persons wholly unworthy of his attention. In short, it was almost immediately after a Whig Ministry had gazetted his appointment to an office which had for twelve months formed a principal object of his ambition, that, rebelling against the implied suspicion of his having accepted something like a personal obligation at the hands of adverse politicians, he for the first time put himself forward as a decided Tory partisan.

The impeachment of Lord Melville was among the first measures of the new government; and personal affection and gratitude graced as well as heightened the zeal with which Scott watched the issue of this, in his eyes, vindictive proceeding; but, though the ex-minister's ultimate acquittal was, as to all the charges involving his personal honour, complete, it must now be allowed, that the investigation brought out many circumstances by no means creditable to his discretion; and the rejoicings of his friends ought not, therefore, to have been scornfully jubilant. Such they were, however—at least in Edinburgh; and Scott took his share in them by inditing a song, which was sung by James Ballantyne, and received with clamorous applauses, at a public dinner given in honour of the event on the 27th of June, 1806. I regret that this piece was inadvertently omitted in the late collective edition of his poetical works; but since such is the case, I consider myself bound to insert it here. However he may have regretted it afterwards, he authorized its publication in the newspapers of the time, and my narrative would fail to convey a complete view of the man, if I should draw a veil over the expression, thus deliberate, of some of the strongest personal feelings that ever animated his verse.

"HEALTH TO LORD MELVILLE.

AIR—*Carrickfergus.*

"Since here we are set in array round the table,
Five hundred good fellows well met in a hall,
Come listen, brave boys, and I'll sing as I'm able
How innocence triumphed and pride got a fall.
But push round the claret—
Come, stewards, don't spare it—
With rapture you'll drink to the toast that I give:
Here, boys,
Off with it merrily—
MELVILLE for ever, and long may he live!

"What were the Whigs doing when, boldly pursuing,
Pitt banished Rebellion, gave Treason a string?
Why, they swore, on their honour, for ARTHUR O'-
CONNOR, [king.
And fought hard for DESPARD against country and
Well, then, we knew, boys,
PITT and MELVILLE were true boys,
And the tempest was raised by the friends of Reform.
Ah, wo!
Weep to his memory,
Low lies the pilot that weathered the storm!

"And pray, don't you mind when the Blues first were raising,
And we scarcely could think the house safe o'er our heads?
When villains and coxcombs, French politics praising,
Drove peace from our tables and sleep from our beds!
Our hearts they grew bolder
When, musket on shoulder,
Stepp'd forth our old Statesman example to give.
Come, boys, never fear,
Drink the Blue grenadier—
Here's to old HARRY, and long may he live!

"They would turn us adrift; though rely, sir, upon it,
Our own faithful chronicles warrant us that
The free mountaineer and his bonny blue bonnet
Have oft gone as far as the regular's hat.
We laugh at their taunting,
For all we are wanting
Is license our life for our country to give.
Off with it merrily,
Horse, foot, and artillery,—
Each loyal Volunteer, long may he live.

"'Tis not us alone, boys—the Army and Navy
Have each got a slap 'mid their politic pranks;
CORNWALLIS cashier'd, that watched winters to save ye,
And the Cape called a bauble, unworthy of thanks.
But vain is their taunt,
No soldier shall want
The thanks that his country to valour can give:
Come, boys,——
Drink it off merrily,—
Sir DAVID and POPHAM, and long may they live!

"And then our revenue—Lord knows how they viewed it
While each petty Statesman talked lofty and big;
But the beer-tax was weak, as if Whitbread had brewed it,
And the pig-iron duty a shame to a pig.
In vain is their vaunting,
Too surely there's wanting
What judgment, experience, and steadiness give;
Come, boys,
Drink about merrily.
Health to sage MELVILLE, and long may he live!

"Our King, too—our Princess—I dare not say more, sir,—
May Providence watch them with mercy and might!
While there's one Scottish hand that can wag a claymore, sir,
They shall ne'er want a friend to stand up for their right.
Be damn'd he that dare not,—
For my part, I'll spare not
To beauty afflicted a tribute to give:
Fill it up steadily,
Drink it off readily,—
Here's to the Princess, and long may she live.

"And since we must not set Auld Reikie in glory,
And make her brown visage as light as her heart;*
Till each man illumine his own upper story,
Nor law-book nor lawyer shall force us to part.
In GRENVILLE and SPENCER,
And some few good men, sir,
High talents we honour, slight difference forgive;
But the Brewer we'll hoax,
Tallyho to the FOX,
And drink MELVILLE for ever, as long as we live!"

This song gave great offence to the many sincere personal friends whom Scott numbered among the upper ranks of the Whigs; and, in particular, it created a marked coldness towards him on the part of the accomplished and amiable Countess of Rosslyn, (a very intimate friend of his favourite patroness, Lady Dalkeith,) which, as his letters show, wounded his feelings severely,—the more so, I have no doubt, because a little reflection must have made him repent not a few of its allusions. He was consoled, however, by abundant testimonies of Tory

* The Magistrates of Edinburgh had rejected an application for illumination of the town, on the arrival of the news of Lord Melville's acquittal.

approbation; and, among others, by the following note from Mr. Canning:—

To Walter Scott, Esq. Edinburgh.

"London, July 14, 1806.

"Dear Sir,

"I should not think it necessary to trouble you with a direct acknowledgment of the very acceptable present which you were so good as to send me through Mr. William Rose, if I had not happened to hear that some of those persons who could not indeed be expected to be pleased with your composition, have thought proper to be very loud and petulant in the expression of their disapprobation. Those, therefore, who approve and are thankful for your exertions in a cause which they have much at heart, owe it to themselves, as well as to you, that the expressions of their gratitude and pleasure should reach you in as direct a manner as possible. I hope that, in the course of next year, you are likely to afford your friends in this part of the world an opportunity of repeating these expressions to you in person; and I have the honour to be, dear sir, with great truth, your very sincere and obedient servant,

GEORGE CANNING."

Scott's Tory feelings appear to have been kept in a very excited state during the whole of this short reign of the Whigs. He then, for the first time, mingled keenly in the details of county politics,—canvassed electors—harangued meetings; and, in a word, made himself conspicuous as a leading instrument of his party—more especially as an indefatigable local manager, wherever the parliamentary interest of the Buccleuch family was in peril. But he was, in truth, earnest and serious in his belief that the new rulers of the country were disposed to abolish many of its most valuable institutions; and he regarded with special jealousy certain schemes of innovation with respect to the courts of law and the administration of justice, which were set on foot by the crown officers for Scotland. At a debate of the Faculty of Advocates on some of these propositions, he made a speech much longer than any he had ever before delivered in that assembly; and several who heard it have assured me, that it had a flow and energy of eloquence for which those who knew him best had been quite unprepared. When the meeting broke up, he walked across *the Mound*, on his way to Castle Street, between Mr. Jeffrey and another of his reforming friends, who complimented him on the rhetorical powers he had been displaying, and would willingly have treated the subject matter of the discussion playfully. But his feelings had been moved to an extent far beyond their apprehension: he exclaimed, "No, no—'tis no laughing matter: little by little, whatever your wishes may be, you will destroy and undermine, until nothing of what makes Scotland shall remain." And so saying, he turned round to conceal his agitation—but not until Mr. Jeffrey saw tears gushing down his cheek—resting his head until he recovered himself on the wall of the Mound. Seldom, if ever, in his more advanced age, did any feelings obtain such mastery.

CHAPTER XVI.

DRYDEN—CRITICAL PIECES—EDITION OF SLINGSBY'S MEMOIRS, &c.—MARMION BEGUN—VISIT TO LONDON—ELLIS—ROSE—CANNING—MISS SEWARD—SCOTT SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION ON SCOTCH JURISPRUDENCE—LETTERS TO SOUTHEY, &c.—PUBLICATION OF MARMION—ANECDOTES—THE EDINBURGH REVIEW ON MARMION.—1806—1808.

DURING the whole of 1806 and 1807, Dryden continued to occupy the greater share of Scott's literary hours; but in the course of the former year he found time, and, notwithstanding all these political bickerings, inclination, to draw up three papers for the Edinburgh Review, viz. one on the poems and translations of the Hon. William Herbert; a second, more valuable and elaborate, in which he compared the "*Specimens* of Early English Romances" by Ellis, with the "*Selection* of Ancient English Metrical Romances" by Ritson; and, lastly, that exquisite piece of humour, his article on the Miseries of Human Life, to which Mr. Jeffrey added some, if not all, of the *Reviewers' Groans* with which it concludes. It was in September, 1806, too, that Messrs. Longman put forth, in a separate volume, those of his own Ballads which, having been included in the Minstrelsy, were already their property, together with a collection of his "Lyrical Pieces;" for which he received £100. This publication, obviously suggested by the continued popularity of the Lay, was highly successful, seven thousand copies having been disposed of before the first collective edition of his poetical works appeared. He had also proposed to include the House of Aspen in the same volume, but on reflection once more laid his prose tragedy aside. About the same time he issued, though without his name, a miscellaneous volume, entitled, "Original Memoirs written during the Great Civil Wars; being the Life of Sir Henry Slingsby, and Memoirs of Captain Hodgson, with Notes," &c. Scott's preface consists of a brief but elegant and interesting biography of the gallant cavalier Slingsby; his notes are few and unimportant. This volume (by which he gained nothing as editor) was put forth in October by Messrs. Constable; and in November, 1806, he began *Marmion*, the publication of which was the first important business of his in which that enterprising firm had a primary part.

He was at this time in frequent communication with several leading booksellers, each of whom would willingly have engrossed his labours; but from the moment that his literary undertakings began to be serious, he seems to have resolved against forming so strict a connexion with any one publisher, as might at all interfere with the freedom of his transactions. I think it not improbable that his interests as the partner of Ballantyne may have had some influence in this part of his conduct; at all events, there can be little doubt that the hope of sharing more and more in the profits of Scott's original works, induced the competing booksellers to continue and extend their patronage of the Edinburgh printer, who had been introduced to their notice as the personal friend of the most rising author of the day. But, nevertheless, I can have no doubt that Scott was mainly guided by his love of independence. It was always his maxim, that no author should ever let any one house fancy that they had obtained a right of monopoly over his works—or, as he expressed it, in the language of the Scotch feudalists, "that they had completely thirled him to their mill;" and through life, as we shall see, the instant he perceived the least trace of this feeling, he asserted his freedom, not by word, but by some decided deed, on whatever considerations of pecuniary convenience the step might make it necessary for him to trample. Of the conduct of Messrs. Longman, who had been principally concerned in the publication of the Minstrelsy, the Lay, Sir Tristrem, and the Ballads, he certainly could have had no reason to complain; on the contrary, he has in various places attested that it was liberal and handsome beyond his expectation; but, nevertheless, a negotiation which they now opened proved fruitless, and ultimately they had no share whatever in the second of his original works.

Constable offered a thousand guineas for the poem very shortly after it was begun, and without having seen one line of it; and Scott, without hesitation, accepted this proposal. It may be gathered from the Introduction of 1830, that private circumstances of a delicate nature rendered it highly desirable for him to obtain the immediate command of such a sum; the price was actually paid long before the poem was published; and it suits very well with Constable's character, to suppose that his readiness to advance the money may have outstripped the calculations of more established dealers, and thus cast the balance in his favour. He was not, however, so unwise as to keep the whole adventure to himself. His bargain being fairly concluded, he tendered one fourth of the copyright to Mr. Miller of Albemarle Street, and another to Mr. Murray, then of Fleet Street, London; and both these booksellers appear

to have embraced his proposition with eagerness. "I am," Murray wrote to Constable, on the 6th February, 1807, "truly sensible of the kind remembrance of me in your liberal purchase. You have rendered Mr. Miller no less happy by your admission of him; and we both view it as honourable, profitable, and glorious to be concerned in the publication of a new poem by Walter Scott." The news that a thousand guineas had been paid for an unseen and unfinished MS. appeared in those days portentous; and it must be allowed that the writer who received such a sum for a performance in embryo, had made a great step in the hazards, as well as in the honours, of authorship.

The private circumstances which he alludes to as having precipitated his re-appearance as a poet, were connected with his brother Thomas's final withdrawal from the profession of a Writer to the Signet, which arrangement seems to have become quite necessary towards the end of 1806; but it is extremely improbable that, in the absence of any such occurrence, a young, energetic, and ambitious man, would have long resisted the cheering stimulus of such success as had attended the Lay of the Last Minstrel.

"I had formed," he says, "the prudent resolution to bestow a little more labour than I had yet done on my productions, and to be in no hurry again to announce myself as a candidate for literary fame. Accordingly, particular passages of a poem which was finally called 'Marmion' were laboured with a good deal of care by one by whom much care was seldom bestowed. Whether the work was worth the labour or not, I am no competent judge; but I may be permitted to say, that the period of its composition was a very happy one in my life; so much so, that I remember with pleasure at this moment (1830) some of the spots in which particular passages were composed. It is probably owing to this that the introductions to the several cantos assumed the form of familiar epistles to my intimate friends, in which I alluded, perhaps more than was necessary or graceful, to my domestic occupations and amusements—a loquacity which may be excused by those who remember that I was still young, light-headed, and happy, and that *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*"*

The first four of the Introductory Epistles are dated Ashestiel, and they point out very distinctly some of the "spots" which, after the lapse of so many years, he remembered with pleasure, for their connexion with particular passages of Marmion. There is a knoll with some tall old ashes on the adjoining farm of the Peel, where he was very fond of sitting by himself, and it still bears the name of the *Sheriff's knowe*. Another favourite seat was beneath a huge oak hard by the Tweed, at the extremity of the *haugh* of Ashestiel. It was here, that while meditating his verses, he used

> "to stray,
> And waste the solitary day
> In plucking from yon fen the reed,
> And watch it floating down the Tweed;
> Or idly list the shrilling lay
> With which the milkmaid cheers her way.
> Marking it cadence rise and fall,
> As from the field, beneath her pail,
> She trips it down the uneven dale."

He frequently wandered far from home, however, attended only by his dog, and would return late in the evening, having let hours after hours slip away among the soft and melancholy wildernesses where Yarrow creeps from her fountains. The lines,

> "Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,
> By lone Saint Mary's silent lake," &c.,

paint a scene not less impressive than what Byron found amidst the gigantic pines of the forest of Ravenna; and how completely does he set himself before us in the moment of his gentler and more solemn inspiration, by the closing couplet,

> "Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
> So stilly is the solitude."

But when the theme was of a more stirring order, he enjoyed pursuing it over brake and fell at the full speed of his *Lieutenant*. I well remember his saying, as I rode with him across the hills from Ashestiel to Newark one day in his declining years—"Oh, man, I had many a grand gallop among these braes when I was thinking of Marmion, but a trotting canny pony must serve me now." His friend, Mr. Skene, however, informs me that many of the more energetic descriptions, and particularly that of the battle of Flodden, were struck out while he was in quarters again with his cavalry, in the autumn of 1807. "In the intervals of drilling," he says, "Scott used to delight in walking his powerful black steed up and down by himself upon the Portobello sands, within the beating of the surge; and now and then you would see him plunge in his spurs and go off as if at the charge, with the spray dashing about him. As we rode back to Musselburgh, he often came and placed himself beside me to repeat the verses that he had been composing during these pauses of our exercise."

He seems to have communicated fragments of the poem very freely during the whole of its progress. As early as the 22d February, 1807, I find Mrs. Hayman acknowledging, in the name of the Princess of Wales, the receipt of a copy of the Introduction to Canto III., in which occurs the tribute to Her Royal Highness's heroic father, mortally wounded the year before at Jena—a tribute so grateful to her feelings, that she herself shortly after sent the poet an elegant silver vase as a memorial of her thankfulness. And about the same time the Marchioness of Abercorn expresses the delight with which both she and her lord had read the generous verses on Pitt and Fox, in another of those epistles. But his connexion with this noble family was no new one; for his father, and afterwards his brother Thomas, had been the auditors of their Scotch rental.

In March his researches concerning Dryden carried him again to the south. During several weeks he gave his day pretty regularly to the pamphlets and MSS. of the British Museum, and the evening to the brilliant societies that now courted him whenever he came within their sphere. His recent political demonstrations during the brief reign of the Whigs, seem to have procured for him on this occasion a welcome of redoubled warmth among the leaders of his own now once more victorious party. "As I had," he writes to his brother-in-law, in India, "contrary to many who avowed the same opinions in sunshine, held fast my integrity during the Foxites' interval of power, I found myself of course very well with the new administration." But he uniformly reserved his Saturday and Sunday either for Mr. Ellis, at Sunninghill, or Lord and Lady Abercorn, at their beautiful villa near Stanmore; and the press copy of Cantos I. and II. of Marmion attests that most of it reached Ballantyne in sheets, franked by the Marquis, or his son-in-law, Lord Aberdeen, during April, 1807.

Before he turned homeward, he made a short visit to his friend William Stewart Rose, at his cottage of Gundimore, in Hampshire, and enjoyed in his company various long rides in the New Forest, a day in the dockyard of Portsmouth, and two or three more in the Isle of Wight.* Several sheets of the MS., and corrected proofs of Canto III., are also

* Introduction to *Marmion*, 1830.

* I am sure I shall gratify every reader by extracting some lines, alluding to Scott's visit at Mr Rose's Marine Villa, from an unpublished poem, entitled "Gundimore, kindly placed at my disposal by his host.

> "Here Walter Scott has woo'd the northern muse,
> Here he with me has joy'd to walk or cruise;
> And hence has pricked through Yten's holt, where we
> Have called to mind how under greenwood tree,
> Pierced by the partner of his woodland craft,
> King Rufus fell by Tyrrell's random shaft.
> Hence have we ranged by Celtic camps and barrows,
> Or climbed the expectant bark, to thread the Narrows
> Of Hurst, bound westward to the gloomy bower
> Where Charles was prisoned in yon Island tower;
> Or from a longer flight alighted where
> Our navies to recruit their strength repair—

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under covers franked from Gundimore by Mr. Rose; and I think I must quote the note which accompanied one of these detachments, as showing the good-natured buoyancy of mind and temper with which the Poet received in every stage of his progress the hints and suggestions of his watchful friends, Erskine and Ballantyne. The latter having animadverted on the first draught of the song, "Where shall the Lover rest," and sketched what he thought would be a better arrangement of the stanza—Scott answers as follows :—

"Dear James,

"I am much obliged to you for the rhymes. I presume it can make no d fference as to the air if the first three lines rhyme; and I wish to know, with your leisure, if it is absolutely necessary that the fourth should be out of poetic rhythm, as 'the deserted fair one' certainly is. —For example, would this do ?

'Should my heart from thee falter,
To another love alter,
(For the rhyme we'll say Walter)
Deserting my lover.'

There is here the same number of syllables, but arranged in cadence. I return the proof, and send more copy. There will be six Cantos. Yours truly,

W. S."

In the first week of May we find him at Lichfield, having diverged from the great road to Scotland for the purpose of visiting Miss Seward. Her account of her old correspondent, whom till now she had never seen, was addressed to Mr. Cary, the translator of Dante; and it may interest the reader to compare it with other similar sketches of earlier and later date. "On Friday last," she says, "the poetically great Walter Scott came 'like a sunbeam to my dwelling.' This proudest boast of the Caledonian muse is tall, and rather robust than slender, but lame in the same manner as Mr. Hayley, and in a greater measure. Neither the contour of his face nor yet his features are elegant; his complexion healthy, and somewhat fair, without bloom. We find the singularity of brown hair and eyelashes, with flaxen eyebrows, and a countenance open, ingenuous, and benevolent. When seriously conversing or earnestly attentive, though his eyes are rather of a lightish grey, deep thought is on their lids: he contracts his brow, and the rays of genius gleam aslant from the orbs beneath them. An upper lip too long prevents his mouth from being decidedly handsome, but the sweetest emanations of temper and heart play about it when he talks cheerfully or smiles; and in company he is much oftener gay than contemplative. His conversation—an overflowing fountain of brilliant wit, apposite allusion, and playful archness—while on serious themes it is nervous and eloquent; the accent decidedly Scotch, yet by no means broad. On the whole, no expectation is disappointed which his poetry must excite in all who feel the power and graces of human inspiration. . . . . Not less astonishing than was Johnson's memory is that of Mr. Scott; like Johnson, also, his recitation is too monotonous and violent to do justice either to his own writings or those of others. The stranger guest delighted us all by the unaffected charms of his mind and manners. Such visits are among the most high-prized honours which my writings have procured for me." Miss Seward adds, that she showed him the passage in Cary's Dante where Michael Scott occurs, and that though he admired the spirit and skill of the version, he confessed his inability to find pleasure in the Divina Comedia. "The plan," he said, "appeared to him unhappy; the personal malignity and strange mode of revenge presumptuous and uninteresting."

And there have seen the ready shot and gun;
Seen in red steam the molten copper run;
And massive anchor forged, whose iron teeth
Should hold the three-decked ship when billows seethe;
And when the arsenal's dark sithy rung
With the loud hammers of the Cyclop-gang,
Swallowing the darkness up, have seen with wonder,
The flashing fire, and heard fast-following thunder.
Here, witched from summer sea and softer reign,
Fosolo courted Muse of milder strain.
On these ribbed sands was Coleridge pleased to pace,
While ebbing seas have hummed a rolling base
To his rapt talk. Alas! all these are gone,
'And I and other creeping things live on.'
The flask no more, dear Walter, shall I quaff
With thee, no more enjoy thy hearty laugh.
No more shalt thou to me extend thy hand,
A welcome pilgrim to my father's land!
* * * * *
Alone such friends and comrades I deplore,
And peopled but with phantoms is the shore:
Hence have I fled my haunted beach; yet so
Would not alike a sylvan home forego.
Though wakening fond regrets its sere and yellow
Leaves, and sweet inland murmur, serve to mellow
And soothe the sobered sorrow they recall,
When mantled in the faded garb of fall;—
But wind and wave—unlike the sighing sedge
And murmuring leaf—gave grief a coarser edge:
And in each howling blast my fancy hears
'The voices of the dead, and songs of other years.'"

By the 12th of May he was at Edinburgh for the commencement of the summer session, and the printing seems thenceforth to have gone on at times with great rapidity, at others slowly and irregularly; the latter Cantos having no doubt been merely blocked out when the first went to press, and his professional avocations, but above all, his Dryden, occasioning frequent interuptions. Just a year had elapsed from his beginning the poem when he penned the Epistle for Canto IV. at Ashestiel; who that considers how busily his various pursuits and labours had been crowding the interval, can wonder to be told that

"Even now, it scarcely seems a day
Since first I tuned this idle lay—
A task so often laid aside
When leisure graver cares denied—
That now November's dreary gale,
Whose voice inspired my opening tale,
That same November gale once more
Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow shore."

The fifth Introducnon was written in Edinburgh in the month following; that to the last Canto, during the Christmas festivities of Merton-house, where, from the first days of his ballad rhyming, down to the close of his life, he, like his bearded ancestor, usually spent that season with the immediate head of the race. The bulky appendix of notes, including a mass of curious antiquarian quotations, must have moved somewhat slowly through the printers' hands; but Marmion was at length ready for publication by the middle of February, 1808.

Among the "graver cares" which he alludes to as having interrupted his progress in the poem, the chief were, as has been already hinted, those arising from the pecuniary embarrassments of his brother. These are mentioned in a letter to Miss Seward, dated in August, 1807. The lady had, among other things, announced her pleasure in the prospect of a visit from the author of "Madoc," expressed her admiration of "Master Betty, the young Roscius," and lamented the father's design of placing that "miraculous boy" for three years under a certain "schoolmaster of eminence at Shrewsbury."* Scott says in answer :—

"Since I was favoured with your letter, my dear Miss Seward, I have brought the unpleasant transactions to which my last letter alluded pretty near to a conclusion, much more fortunate than I had ventured to hope. Of my brother's creditors, those connected with him by blood or friendship, showed all the kindness which those ties are in Scotland peculiarly calculated to produce; and what is here much more uncommon, those who had no personal connexion with him or his family, showed a liberality which would not have misbecome the generosity of the English. Upon the whole, his affairs are put in a course of management which I hope will enable him to begin life anew with renovated hopes, and not entirely destitute of the means of recommencing business.

"I am very happy—although a little jealous withal—that you are to have the satisfaction of Southey's personal acquaintance. I am certain you will like the Epic bard exceedingly. Although he does not deign to enter into the mere trifling intercourse of society, yet when a sympathetic spirit calls him forth, no man talks with more animation on literary topics; and perhaps no man in England has read and studied so much, with the same powers of making use of the information which he is so indefatigable in acquiring. I despair of reconciling you to my

* See Miss Seward's Letters, vol. vi. p. 364.

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little friend Jeffrey, although I think I could trust to his making some impression on your prepossession, were you to converse with him. I think Southey does himself injustice in supposing the Edinburgh Review, or any other, could have sunk Madoc, even for a time. But the size and price of the work, joined to the frivolity of an age which must be treated as nurses humour children, are sufficient reasons why a poem, on so chaste a model, should not have taken immediately. We know the similar fate of Milton's immortal work, in the witty age of Charles II., at a time when poetry was much more fashionable than at present. As to the division of the profits, I only think that Southey does not understand the gentlemen of *the trade*, emphatically so called, as well as I do. Without any greater degree of *fourberie* than they conceive the long practice of their brethren has rendered matter of prescriptive right, they contrive to clip the author's proportion of profits down to a mere trifle. It is the tale of the fox that went a hunting with the lion, upon condition of equal division of the spoil; and yet I do not quite blame the booksellers, when I consider the very singular nature of their *mystery*. A butcher generally understands something of black cattle, and wo betide the jockey who should presume to exercise his profession without a competent knowledge of horse-flesh. But who ever heard of a bookseller pretending to understand the commodity in which he deals? They are the only tradesmen in the world who professedly, and by choice, deal in what is called 'a pig in a poke.' When you consider the abominable trash which, by their sheer ignorance, is published every year, you will readily excuse them for the indemnification which they must necessarily obtain at the expense of authors of some value. In fact, though the account between an individual bookseller and such a man as Southey may be iniquitous enough, yet I apprehend that upon the whole the account between *the trade* and the authors of Britain at large is pretty fairly balanced; and what these gentlemen gain at the expense of one class of writers, is lavished, in many cases, in bringing forward other works of little value. I do not know but this, upon the whole, is favourable to the cause of literature. A bookseller publishes twenty books, in hopes of hitting upon one good speculation, as a person buys a parcel of shares in a lottery, in hopes of gaining a prize. Thus the road is open to all, and if the successful candidate is a little fleeced, in order to form petty prizes to console the losing adventurers, still the cause of literature is benefited, since none is excluded from the privilege of competition. This does not apologize for Southey's carelessness about his interest—for,

> ——'his name *is* up, and may go
> From Toledo to Madrid.'

"Pray, don't trust Southey too long with Mr. White. He is even more determined in his admiration of old *ruins* than I am. You see I am glad to pick a hole in his jacket, being more jealous of his personal favour in Miss Seward's eyes than of his poetical reputation.

"I quite agree with you about the plan of young Betty's education, and am no great idolator of the learned languages, excepting for what they contain. We spend in youth that time in admiring the wards of the key, which we should employ in opening the cabinet and examining its treasures. A prudent and accomplished friend, who would make instruction acceptable to him for the sake of the amusement it conveys, would be worth an hundred schools. How can so wonderfully premature a genius, accustomed to excite interest in thousands, be made a member of a class with other boys!"

To return to Scott's own "graver cares" while Marmion was in progress—among them were those of preparing himself for an office to which he was formally appointed soon afterwards, namely, that of Secretary to a Parliamentary Commission for the improvement of Scottish Jurisprudence. This Commission, at the head of which was Sir Islay Campbell, Lord President of the Court of Session, continued in operation for two or three years. Scott's salary, as secretary, was a mere trifle; but he had been led to expect that his exertions in this capacity would lead to better things. In giving a general view of his affairs to his brother-in-law in India, he says: "The Clerk of Session who retired to make way for me, retains the appointments, while I do the duty. This was rather a hard bargain, but it was made when the Administration was going to pieces, and I was glad to swim ashore on a plank of the wreck; or, in a word, to be provided for any how, before the new people came in. To be sure, nobody could have foreseen that in a year's time my friends were all to be in again. . . . I am principally pleased with my new appointment, as being conferred on me by our chief law lords and King's counsel, and consequently an honourable professional distinction. The employment will be but temporary, but may have consequences important to my future lot in life, if I give due satisfaction in the discharge of it." He appears accordingly to have submitted to a great deal of miserable drudgery in mastering beforehand the details of the technical controversies which had called for legislatorial interference: and he discharged his functions, as usual, with the warm approbation of his superiors; but no result followed. This is alluded to, among other things, in his correspondence with Mr. Southey, during the printing of Marmion. I shall now go back to extract some of these letters; they will not only enable the reader to fill up the outline of the preceding narrative, as regards Scott's own various occupations at this period, but illustrate very strikingly the readiness with which, however occupied, he would turn aside, whenever he saw any opportunity of forwarding the pursuits and interests of other literary men.

Mr. Southey had written to Scott, on the 27th September, 1807, informing him that he had desired his booksellers to forward a copy of "Palmerin of England," then on the eve of publication—announcing also his "Chronicle of the Cid;" and adding, "I rejoice to hear that we are to have another Lay, and hope we may have as many Last Lays of the Minstrel, as our ancestors had Last Words of Mr. Baxter." Scott's answer was this:—

To Robert Southey, Esq.

"Ashestiel, 1st October, 1807.

"My dear Southey,

"It will give me the most sincere pleasure to receive any token of your friendly remembrance, more especially in the shape of a romance of knight-errantry. You know so well how to furbish the arms of a preux chevalier, without converting him à *la Tressan* into a modern light dragoon, that my expectations from Palmerin are very high, and I have given directions to have him sent to this retreat so soon as he reaches Edinburgh. The half-guinea for Hogg's poems was duly received. The uncertainty of your residence prevented the book being sent at the time proposed—it shall be forwarded from Edinburgh to the bookseller at Carlisle, who will probably know how to send it safe. I hope very soon to send you my Life of Dryden, and eke my *last* Lay,—(by the way, the former ditty was only proposed as the lay of the *last* Minstrel, not his *last* fitt.) I grieve that you have renounced the harp; but still I confide, that, having often touched it so much to the delight of the hearers, you will return to it again after a short interval. As I don't much admire compliments, you may believe me sincere when I tell you, that I have read Madoc three times since my first cursory perusal, and each time with increased admiration of the poetry. But a poem whose merits are of that higher tone does not immediately take with the public at large. It is even possible that during your own life—and may it be as long as every real lover of literature can wish—you must be contented with the applause of the few whom nature has gifted with the rare taste for discriminating in poetry. But the mere *readers of verse* must one day come in, and then Madoc will assume his real place at the feet of Milton. Now this opinion of mine was not that (to speak frankly) which I formed on reading the poem at first, though I then felt much of its merit. I hope you have not and don't mean to part with the copyright. I do not think Wordsworth and you understand the bookselling animal well enough, and wish you would one day try my friend Constable, who would give any terms for a connexion with you. I am most anxious to see the Cid. Do you know I committed a theft upon you, (neither of gait, kine, nor horse, nor outside nor inside plenishing, such as my forefathers sought in Cumberland,) but of many verses of the Queen Aurgua,* or howsoever you spell her name? I repeated them to a very great lady, (the Princess of Wales,) who was so much delighted with them, that I think she got them by heart also. She asked a copy, but that I declined to give, under pretence I could not give an accurate one; but I promised to prefer her request to you. If you wish to oblige her R. H., I will get the verses transmitted to her; if not, the thing may be passed over.

* The ballad of Queen Orraca was first published in the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1809.

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"Many thanks for your invitation to Keswick, which I hope to accept, time and season permitting. Is your brother with you? if so, remember me kindly. Where is Wordsworth, and what doth he do? I wrote him a few lines some weeks ago, which I suspect never came to hand. I suppose you are possessed of all relating to the Cid, otherwise I would mention an old romance, chiefly relating to his banishment, which is in John Frere's possession, and from which he made some lively translations in a tripping Alexandrine stanza. I dare say he would communicate the original, if it could be of the least use." I am an humble petitioner that your interesting Spanish ballads be in some shape appended to the Cid. Be assured they will give him wings. Thefe is a long letter, written with a pen like a stick. I beg my respects to Mrs Southey, in which Mrs. Scott joins; and I am, very truly and affectionately, yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, November, 1807.

"My dear Southey,

"I received your letter some time, but had then no opportunity to see Constable, as I was residing at some distance from Edinburgh. Since I came to town I spoke to Constable, whom I find anxious to be connected with you. It occurs to me that the only difference between him and our fathers in the Row is on the principle contained in the old proverb:—*He that would thrive—must rise by five;—He that has thriven—may lie till seven.* Constable *would* thrive, and therefore bestows more pains than our fathers who *have* thriven. I do not speak this without book, because I know he has pushed off several books which had got aground in the Row. But, to say the truth, I have always found advantage in keeping on good terms with several of the trade, but never suffering any one of them to consider me as a monopoly. They are very like farmers, who thrive best at a high rent; and, in general, take most pains to sell a book that has cost them money to purchase. The bad sale of Thalaba is truly astonishing; it should have sold off in a twelvemonth at farthest.

"As you occasionally review, will you forgive my suggesting a circumstance for your consideration, to which you will give exactly the degree of weight you please. I am perfectly certain that Jeffrey would think himself both happy and honoured in receiving any communications which you might send him, choosing your books and expressing your own opinions. The terms of the Edinburgh Review are ten guineas a-sheet, and will shortly be advanced considerably. I question if the same unpleasant sort of work is any where else so well compensated. The only reason which occurs to me as likely to prevent your affording the Edinburgh some critical assistance, is the severity of the criticisms upon Madoc and Thalaba. I do not know if this will be at all removed by assuring you, as I can do upon my honour, that Jeffrey has, notwithstanding the flippancy of these articles, the most sincere respect both for your person and talents. The other day I designedly led the conversation on that subject, and had the same reason I always have had, to consider his attack as arising from a radical difference in point of taste, or rather feeling of poetry, but by no means from any thing approaching either to enmity or a false conception of your talents. I do not think that a difference of this sort should prevent you, if you are otherwise disposed to do so, from carrying a proportion at least of your critical labours to a much better market than the Annual.† Pray think of this, and if you are disposed to give your assistance, I am positively certain that I can transact the matter with the utmost delicacy towards both my friends. I am certain you may add £100 a-year, or double the sum, to your income in this way with almost no trouble, and, as times go, that is no trifle.

"I have to thank you for Palmerin, which has been my afternoon reading for some days. I like it very much, although it is, I think, considerably inferior to the Amadis. But I wait with double anxiety for the Cid, in which I expect to find very much information as well as amusement. One discovery I have made is, that we understand little or nothing of Don Quixote except by the Spanish romances. The English and French romances throw very little light on the subject of the doughty cavalier of La Mancha. I am thinking of publishing a small edition of the Morte Arthur, merely to preserve that ancient record of English chivalry; but my copy is so late as 1637, so I must look out for earlier editions to collate. That of Caxton is, I believe, *introuvable*. Will you give me your opinion on this project? I have written to Mr. Frere about the Spanish books, but I do not very well know if my letter has reached him. I expect to bring Constable to a point respecting the poem of Hindoo Mythology.* I should esteem myself very fortunate in being assisting in bringing forth a twin brother of Thalaba. Wordsworth is harshly treated in the Edinburgh Review, but Jeffrey gives the sonnets as much praise as he usually does to any body. I made him admire the song of Lord Clifford's minstrel, which I like exceedingly myself. But many of Wordsworth's lesser poems are *caviare*, not only to the multitude, but to all who judge of poetry by the established rules of criticism. Some of them, I can safely say, I like the better for these aberrations; in others they get beyond me—at any rate, they ought to have been more cautiously hazarded. I hope soon to send you a Life of Dryden and a Lay of former times. The latter I would willingly have bestowed more time upon; but what can I do?—my supposed poetical turn ruined me in my profession, and the least it can do is to give me some occasional assistance instead of it. Mrs Scott begs kind compliments to Mrs. Southey, and I am always kindly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

Mr. Southey, in reply to this letter, stated at length certain considerations, political, moral, and critical, which rendered it impossible for him to enlist himself on any terms in the corps of the Edinburgh Reviewers. In speaking of his friend Wordsworth's last work, which had been rather severely handled in this Review, he expresses his regret that the poet, in his magnificent sonnet on Killiecrankie, should have introduced the Viscount of Dundee without apparent censure of his character; and, passing to Scott's own affairs, he says, "Marmion is expected as impatiently by me as he is by ten thousand others. Believe me, Scott, no man of real genius was ever a puritanical stickler for correctness, or fastidious about any faults except his own. The best artists, both in poetry and painting, have produced the most. Give us more lays, and correct them at leisure for after editions,—not laboriously, but when the amendment comes naturally and unsought for. It never does to sit down doggedly to correct." The rest, Scott's answer will sufficiently explain.

To Robert Southey, Esq.

"Edinburgh, 15th December, 1807.

"Dear Southey,

"I yesterday received your letter, and can perfectly enter into your ideas on the subject of the Review:—indeed, I dislike most extremely the late stream of politics which they have adopted, as it seems, even on their own showing, to be cruelly imprudent. Who ever thought he did a service to a person engaged in an arduous conflict, by proving to him, or attempting to prove to him, that he must necessarily be beaten; and what effect can such language have but to accelerate the accomplishment of the prophecy which it contains? And as for Catholic Emancipation—I am not, God knows, a bigot in religious matters, nor a friend to persecution; but if a particular sect of religionists are *ipso facto* connected with foreign politics—and placed under the spiritual direction of a class of priests, whose unrivalled dexterity and activity are increased by the rules which detach them from the rest of the world—I humbly think that we may be excused from intrusting to them those places in the state where the influence of such a clergy, who act under the direction of a passive tool of our worst foe, is likely to be attended with the most fatal consequences. If a gentleman chooses to walk about with a couple of pounds of gunpowder in his pocket, if I give him the shelter of my roof, I may at least be permitted to exclude him from the seat next to the fire. So thinking, I have felt your scruples in doing any thing for the Review of late.

"As for my good friend Dundee, I cannot admit his culpability in the extent you allege; and it is scandalous of the Sunday bard to join in your condemnation, 'and yet come of a noble Græme!' I admit he was *tant soit peu* savage, but he was a noble savage; and the beastly Covenanters against whom he acted, hardly had any claim to be called men, unless what was founded on their walking upon their hind feet. You can hardly conceive the perfidy, cruelty, and stupidity of these people, according to the accounts they have themselves preserved. But I admit I had many cavalier prejudices instilled into me, as my ancestor was a Killiecrankie man.

* Mr. Southey introduced, in the appendix to his Chronicle of the Cid, some specimens of Mr. Frere's admirable translation of the ancient *Poema del Cid*, to which Scott here alludes.

† The Annual Review, conducted by Dr. Arthur Aikin, commenced in 1802, and was discontinued in 1808.

* The Curse of Kehama was published by Longman and Co. in 1810.

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"I am very glad the Morte Arthur is in your hands; it has been long a favourite of mine, and I intended to have made it a handsome book, in the shape of a small antique-looking quarto, with wooden vignettes of costume. I wish you would not degrade him into a squat 12mo; but admit the temptation you will probably feel to put it into the same shape with Palmerin and Amadis. If on this, or any occasion, you can cast a job in the way of my friend Ballantyne, I should consider it as a particular personal favour, and the convenience would be pretty near the same to you, as all your proofs must come by post at any rate. If I can assist you about this matter, command my services. The late Duke of Roxburghe once showed me some curious remarks of his own upon the genealogy of the Knights of the Round Table. He was a curious and unwearied reader of romance, and made many observations in writing; whether they are now accessible or no I am doubtful. Do you follow the metrical or the printed books in your account of the Round Table, and would your task be at all facilitated by the use of a copy of Sir Lancelot, from the press of Jehan Dennis, which I have by me?

"As to literary envy, I agree with you, dear Southey, in believing it was never felt by men who had any powers of their own to employ to better purpose than in crossing or jostling their companions; and I can say with a safe conscience, that I am most delighted with praise from those who convince me of their good taste by admiring the genius of my contemporaries. Believe me ever, dear Southey, with best compliments to Mrs.-S., yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

The following letter to another accomplished and attached friend, will bring us back to the completion of Marmion.

To the Right Hon. the Lady Louisa Stuart, London.

"Edinburgh, 19th January, 1808.

"I am much flattered, dear Lady Louisa, by your kind and encouraging remembrance. Marmion is, at this instant, gasping upon Flodden field, and there I have been obliged to leave him for these few days in the death pangs. I hope I shall find time enough this morning to knock him on the head with two or three thumping stanzas. I thought I should have seen Lady Douglas while she was at Dalkeith, but all the Clerks of Session, (excepting myself, who have at present no salary,) are subject to the gout, and one of them was unluckily visited with a fit on the day I should have been at the Duke's, so I had his duty and my own to discharge. Pray, Lady Louisa, don't look for Marmion in Hawthornden or any where else, excepting in the too thick quarto which bears his name. As to the fair * * * * * * I beg her pardon with all my heart and spirit; but I rather think that the habit of writing novels or romances, whether in prose or verse, is unfavourable to rapid credulity; at least these sort of folks know that they can easily make fine stories themselves, and will be therefore as curious in examining those of other folks, as a cunning vintner in detecting the sophistication of his neighbour's claret by the help of his own experience. Talking of fair ladies and fables reminds me of Mr. Sharpe's ballads,* which I suppose Lady Douglas carried with her to Bothwell. They exhibit, I think, a very considerable portion of imagination, and occasionally, though not uniformly, great flow of versification. There is one verse, or rather the whole description of a musical ghost lady sitting among the ruins of her father's tower, that pleased me very much. But his language is too flowery and even tawdry, and I quarrelled with a lady in the first poem who yielded up her affection upon her lover showing his white teeth. White teeth ought to be taken great care of, and set great store by, but I cannot allow them to be an object of passionate admiration—it is too like subduing a lady's heart by grinning. Grieved am I for Lady Douglas's indisposition, which I hope will be short, and I am sure will be tolerable with such stores of amusement around her. Last night I saw all the Dalkeith family presiding in that happy scene of mixed company and Babylonian confusion, the Queen's Assembly. I also saw Mr. Alison there. I hope your ladyship has not renounced your intention of coming to Edinburgh for a day or two, and that I shall have the honour to see you. We have here a very diverting lion and sundry wild beasts; but the most meritorious is Miss Lydia White, who is what Oxonians call a lioness of the first order, with stockings nineteen times nine dyed blue, very lively, very good-humoured, and extremely absurd. It is very diverting to see the sober Scotch ladies staring at this phenomenon. I am, with great respect, your ladyship's honoured and obliged

WALTER SCOTT."

Marmion was published on the 23d of February. The letter which accompanied the presentation copy to Sunninghill, had been preceded a few weeks before by one containing an abstract of some of Weber's German researches, which were turned to account in the third edition of Sir Tristrem; but Mr. Ellis was at this time in a very feeble state of health, and that communication had elicited no reply.

To George Ellis, Esq.

"Edinburgh, February 23, 1808.

'Sleepest thou, wakest thou, George Ellis?'

"Be it known that this letter is little better than a *fehde brief*,—as to the meaning of which, is it not written in Wachter's Thesaurus and the Lexicon of Adelung? To expound more vernacularly, I wrote you, I know not how long ago, a swinging epistle of and concerning German Romances, with some discoveries not of my own discovering, and other matter not furiously to the present purpose. And this I caused to be conveyed to you by *ane gentil knizt, Sir William Forbes, knizt*, who assures me he left it as directed, at Sir Peter Parker's. 'Since,' to vary my style to that of the leger, 'none of yours.' To avenge myself of this unusual silence, which is a manifest usurpation of my privileges, (being the worst correspondent in the world, Heber excepted,) I have indited to you an epistle in verse, and that I may be sure of its reaching your hands, I have caused to be thrown off 2000 copies thereof, that you may not plead ignorance.

"This is oracular, but will be explained by perusing the Introduction to the 5th canto of a certain dumpy quarto, entitled Marmion, a Tale of Flodden-field, of which I have to beg your acceptance of a copy. 'So wonder on till time makes all things plain.' One thing I am sure you will admit, and that is, that—'the hobby-horse is not forgot;' nay, you will see I have paraded in my introductions a plurality of hobby-horses—a whole stud, on each of which I have, in my day, been accustomed to take an airing. This circumstance will also gratify our friend Douce, whose lucubrations have been my study for some days. They will, I fear, be *caviare* to the multitude, and even to the *soi-disant* connoisseurs, who have never found by experience what length of time, of reading, and of reflection, is necessary to collect the archæological knowledge of which he has displayed such profusion. The style would also, in our Scotch phrase, *thole a mends*, i. e. admit of improvement. But his extensive and curious researches place him at the head of the class of black-letter antiquaries; and his knowledge is communicated without the manifest irritation—which his contemporaries have too often displayed in matters of controversy,—without ostentation, and without self-sufficiency. I hope the success of his work will encourage this modest and learned antiquary to give us more collectanea. There are few things I read with more pleasure. Charlotte joins in kindest respects to Mrs. Ellis. I have some hopes of being in town this spring, but I fear you will be at Bath. When you have run over Marmion, I hope you will remember how impatient I shall be to hear your opinion *sans phrase*. I am sensible I run some risk of being thought to fall below my former level, but those that will play for the gammon must take their chance of this. I am also anxious to have particular news of your health. Ever yours faithfully,

W. S."

The letter reached Ellis before the book; but how well he anticipated the immediate current of criticism, his answer will show. "Before I have seen the stranger," he says, "and while my judgment is unwarped by her seduction, I think I can venture, from what I remember of the Lay, to anticipate the fluctuations of public opinion concerning her. The first decision respecting the Last Minstrel was, that he was evidently the production of a strong and vivid mind, and not quite unworthy the author of Glenfinlas and the Eve of St. John; but that it was difficult to eke out so long a poem with uniform spirit; that success generally emboldens writers to become more careless in a second production; that ——— in short, months elapsed, before one tenth of our wise critics had discovered that a long poem, which no one reader could bring himself to lay down till he had arrived at the last line, was a compos-

* A small volume, entitled "Metrical Legends, and Other Poems," was published in 1807 by Scott's friend, Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq.

* Mr. Douce's Illustrations of Shakspeare were published late in 1807.

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tion destined perhaps to suggest new rules of criticism, but certainly not amenable to the tribunal of taste formed on the previous examination of models of a perfectly different nature. That Minstrel is now in its turn become a standard; Marmion will therefore be compared with this *metre*, and will most probably be in the first instance pronounced too long, or too short, or improperly divided, or &c. &c. &c., till the sage and candid critics are compelled, a second time, by the united voice of all who can read at all, to confess that '*aut prodesse aut delectare*' is the only real standard of poetical merit. One of my reasons for liking your Minstrel was, that the subject was purely and necessarily *poetical*; whereas my sincere and sober opinion of all the *epic poems* I have ever read, the Odyssey perhaps excepted, is, that they ought to have been written in prose; and hence, though I think with Mackintosh, that '*forte epos acer ut nemo Varius scribit*,' I rejoice in your choice of a subject which cannot be considered as epic, or conjure up in the memory a number of fantastic rules, which, like Harpies, would spoil the banquet offered to the imagination. A few days, however, will, I hope, enable me to write *avec connaissance de cause*."

I have, I believe, alluded, in a former chapter of this narrative, to a remark which occurs in Mr. Southey's Life of Cowper, namely, that a man's character may be judged of even more surely by the letters which his friends addressed to him, than by those which he himself penned; and I cannot but think that—freely as Scott's own feelings and opinions were poured from his head and heart to all whom he considered as worthy of a wise and good man's confidence—the openness and candour with which the best and most sagacious of his friends wrote to him about his own literary productions, will be considered hereafter, (when all the glories of this age shall, like him, have passed away,) as affording a striking confirmation of the truth of the biographer's observation. It was thus, for example, that Mr. Southey himself, who happened to be in London when Marmion came out, expressed himself to the author, on his return to Keswick—"Half the poem I had read at Heber's before my own copy arrived. I went punctually to breakfast with him, and he was long enough dressing to let me devour so much of it. The story is made of better materials than the Lay, yet they are not so well fitted together. As a whole, it has not pleased me so much—in parts, it has pleased me more. There is nothing so finely conceived in your former poem as the death of Marmion: there is nothing finer in its conception any where. The introductory epistles I did not wish away, because, as poems, they gave me great pleasure; but I wished them at the end of the volume, or at the beginning—any where except where they were. My taste is perhaps peculiar in disliking all interruptions in narrative poetry. When the poet lets his story sleep, and talks in his own person, it has to me the same sort of unpleasant effect that is produced at the end of an act. You are alive to know what follows, and lo—down comes the curtain, and the fiddles begin with their abominations. The general opinion, however, is with me, in this particular instance. . . . . ." I have no right to quote the rest of Mr. Southey's letter, which is filled chiefly with business of his own; but towards its close, immediately after mentioning a princely instance of generosity on the part of his friend Mr. Walter Savage Landor to a brother poet, he has a noble sentence, which I hope to be pardoned for extracting, as equally applicable to his own character and that of the man he was addressing—"Great poets," says the author of Thalaba, "have no envy; little ones are full of it! I doubt whether any man ever criticised a good poem maliciously, who had not written a bad one himself." I must not omit to mention, that on his way from London down to Keswick, Mr. Southey had visited at Stamford the late industrious antiquary Octavius Gilchrist, who was also at this time one of Scott's frequent correspondents. Mr. Gilchrist writes (May 21) to Scott, "Southey pointed out to me a passage in Marmion, which he thought finer than any thing he remembered."

Mr. Wordsworth knew Scott too well not to use the same masculine freedom.

"Thank you," he says "for Marmion. I think your end has been attained. That it is not the end which I should wish you to propose to yourself, you will be well aware, from what you know of my notions of composition, both as to matter and manner. In the circle of my acquaintance, it seems as well liked as the Lay, though I have heard that in the world it is not so. Had the poem been much better than the Lay, it could scarcely have satisfied the public, which has too much of the monster, the moral monster, in its composition. The spring has burst out upon us all at once, and the vale is now in exquisite beauty; a gentle shower has fallen this morning, and I hear the thrush, who has built in my orchard, singing amain. How happy we should be to see you here again! Ever, my dear Scott, your sincere friend,

W. W."

I pass over a multitude of the congratulatory effusions of inferior names, but must not withhold part of a letter on a folio sheet, written not in the first hurry of excitement, but on the 2d of May, two months after Marmion had reached Sunninghill.

"I have," says Ellis, "been endeavouring to divest myself of those prejudices to which the impression on my own palate would naturally give rise, and to discover the sentiments of those who have only tasted the general compound, after seeing the sweetmeats picked out by my comrades and myself. I have severely questioned all my friends whose critical discernment I could fairly trust, and mean to give your the honest result of their collective opinions; for which reason, inasmuch as I shall have a good deal to say, besides which, there seems to be a natural connexion between foolscap and criticism, I have ventured on this expanse of paper. In the first place, then, all the world are agreed that you are like the elephant mentioned in the Spectator, who was the greatest elephant in the world except himself, and consequently, that the only question at issue is, whether the Lay or Marmion shall be reputed the most pleasing poem in our language—save and except one or two of Dryden's fables. But, with respect to the two rivals, I think the Lay is, on the whole, the greatest favourite. It is admitted that the fable of Marmion is greatly superior—that it contains a greater diversity of character—that it inspires more interest—and that it is by no means inferior in point of poetical expression; but it is contended that the incident of Deloraine's journey to Melrose surpasses any thing in Marmion, and that the personal appearance of the Minstrel, who, though the last, is by far the most charming of all minstrels, is by no means compensated by the idea of an author shorn of his picturesque beard, deprived of his harp, and writing letters to his intimate friends. These introductory epistles, indeed, though excellent in themselves, are in fact only interruptions to the fable; and accordingly, nine out of ten have perused them separately, either after or before the poem—and it is obvious that they cannot have produced, in either case, the effect which was proposed—viz., of relieving the readers' attention, and giving variety to the whole. Perhaps, continue these critics, it would be fair to say that Marmion delights us in spite of its introductory epistles—while the Lay owes its principal charms to the venerable old minstrel:—the two poems may be considered as equally respectable to the talents of the author; but the first, being a more perfect whole, will be more constantly preferred. Now, all this may be very true—but it is no less true that every body has already read Marmion *more than once*—that it is the subject of general conversation—that it delights all ages and all tastes, and that it is universally allowed to improve upon a second reading. My own opinion is, that both the productions are equally good in their different ways; yet, upon the whole, I had rather be the author of Marmion than of the Lay, because I think its species of excellence of much more difficult attainment. What degree of bulk may be essentially necessary to the corporeal part of an Epic poem, I know not; but sure I am that the story of Marmion might have furnished twelve books as easily as six—that the masterly character of Constance would not have been less bewitching had it been much more minutely painted—and that De Wilton might have been dilated with great ease, and even to considerable advantage;—in short, that had it been your intention merely to exhibit a spirited romantic story, instead of making that story subservient to the delineation of the manners which prevailed at a certain period of our history, the number and variety of your characters would have suited any scale of painting. Marmion is to Deloraine what Tom Jones is to Joseph Andrews—the varnish of high breed-

.ng nowhere diminishes the prominence of the features —and the minion of a king is as light and sinewy a cavalier as the Borderer,—rather less ferocious, more wicked, less fit for the hero of a ballad, and far more for the hero of a regular poem. On the whole, I can sincerely assure you, '*sans phrase*,' that, had I seen Marmion without knowing the author, I should have ranked it with Theodore and Honoria,—that is to say, on the very top shelf of English poetry. Now for faults." . . . . . .

Mr. Ellis proceeds to notice some minor blemishes, which he hoped to see erased in a future copy; but as most, if not all, of these were sufficiently dwelt on by the professional critics, whose strictures are affixed to the poem in the last collective edition, and as, moreover, Scott did not avail himself of any of the hints thus publicly, as well as privately, tendered for his guidance, I shall not swell my page by transcribing more of this elegant letter. The part I have given may no doubt be considered as an epitome of the very highest and most refined of London table-talk on the subject of Marmion, during the first freshness of its popularity, and before the Edinburgh Review, the only critical journal of which any one in those days thought very seriously, had pronounced its verdict.

When we consider some parts of that judgment, together with the author's personal intimacy with the editor, and the aid which he had of late been affording to the Journal itself, it must be allowed that Mr. Jeffrey acquitted himself on this occasion in a manner highly creditable to his courageous sense of duty; and that he relied on being considered as doing so by the poet himself, illustrates equally his sagacity, and the manly candour and strength of mind, for which Scott had all along been esteemed and honoured, the most by those who knew him the best. The number of the Edinburgh Review containing the article on Marmion, was accompanied by this note:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Castle Street.

"Queen Street, Tuesday.

"Dear Scott—If I did not give you credit for more magnanimity than any other of your irritable tribe, I should scarcely venture to put this into your hands. As it is, I do it with no little solicitude, and earnestly hope that it will make no difference in the friendship which has hitherto subsisted between us. I have spoken of your poem exactly as I think, and though I cannot reasonably suppose that you will be pleased with every thing I have said, it would mortify me very severely to believe I had given you pain. If you have any amity left for me, you will not delay very long to tell me so. In the mean time, I am very sincerely yours,

F. JEFFREY."

The reader who has the Edinburgh Review for April, 1808, will I hope pause here and read the article as it stands; endeavouring to put himself into the situation of Scott when it was laid upon his desk, together with this ominous billet from the critic, who, as it happened, had been for some time engaged to dine that same Tuesday at his table in Castle Street. I have not room to transcribe the whole; but no unfair notion of its spirit and tenor may be gathered from one or two of the principal paragraphs. After an ingenious little dissertation on epic poetry in general, the reviewer says—

"We are inclined to suspect that the success of the work now before us will be less brilliant than that of the author's former publication, though we are ourselves of opinion that its intrinsic merits are nearly, if not altogether equal; and that, if it had the fate to be the elder born, it would have inherited as fair a portion of renown as has fallen to the lot of its predecessor. It is a good deal longer, indeed, and somewhat more ambitious; and it is rather clearer, that it has greater faults than that it has greater beauties—though, for our own parts, we are inclined to believe in both propositions. It has more flat and tedious passages, and more ostentation of historical and antiquarian lore; but it has also greater richness and variety, both of character and incident; and if it has less sweetness and pathos in the softer passages, it has certainly more vehemence and force of colouring in the loftier and busier representations of action and emotion. The place of the prologuising minstrel is but ill supplied, indeed, by the epistolary dissertations which are prefixed to each book of the present poem; and the ballad-pieces and mere episodes which it contains have less finish and poetical beauty; but there is more airiness and spirit in the higher delineations; and the story, if not more skilfully conducted, is at least better complicated, and extended through a wider field of adventure. The characteristics of both, however, are evidently the same; a broken narrative—a redundancy of minute description—bursts of unequal and energetic poetry—and a general tone of spirit and animation, unchecked by timidity or affectation, and unchastened by any great delicacy of taste or elegance of fancy."

. . . . . .

"But though we think this last romance of Mr. Scott's about as good as the former, and allow that it affords great indications of poetical talent, we must remind our readers that we never entertained much partiality for this sort of composition, and ventured on a former occasion to express our regret that an author endowed with such talents should consume them in imitations of obsolete extravagance, and in the representation of manners and sentiments in which none of his readers can be supposed to take much interest, except the few who can judge of their exactness. To write a modern romance of chivalry, seems to be much such a phantasy as to build a modern abbey or an English pagoda. For once, however, it may be excused as a pretty caprice of genius; but a second production of the same sort is entitled to less indulgence, and imposes a sort of duty to drive the author from so idle a task, by a fair exposition of the faults which are, in a manner, inseparable from its execution. His genius, seconded by the omnipotence of fashion, has brought chivalry again into temporary favour. Fine ladies and gentlemen now talk indeed of donjons, keeps, tabards, escutcheons, treasures, caps of maintenance, portcullises, wimples, and we know not what besides; just as they did in the days of Dr. Darwin's popularity of gnomes, sylphs, oxygen, gossamer, polygynia, and polyandria. That fashion, however, passed rapidly away, and Mr. Scott should take care that a different sort of pedantry does not produce the same effects."

The detailed exposition of faults follows; and it is, I am sure, done in a style on which the critic cannot now reflect with perfect equanimity, any more than on the lofty and decisive tone of the sweeping paragraphs by which it was introduced. All this, however, I can suppose Scott to have gone through with great composure; but he must, I think, have wondered, to say the least, when he found himself accused of having "throughout neglected Scottish feelings and Scottish characters!" —He who had just poured out all the patriotic enthusiasm of his soul in so many passages of Marmion, which every Scotchman to the end of time will have by heart; painted the capital, the court, the camp, the heroic old chieftains of Scotland in colours instinct with a fervour that can never die; and dignified the most fatal of her national misfortunes by a celebration as loftily pathetic as ever blended pride with sorrow,—a battle-piece which even his critic had pronounced to be the noblest save in Homer! But not even this injustice was likely to wound him very deeply. Coming from one of the recent witnesses of his passionate agitation on *the Mound*, perhaps he would only smile at it.

At all events, Scott could make allowance for the petulancies into which men the least disposed to injure the feelings of others will sometimes be betrayed, when the critical rod is in their hands. He assured Mr. Jeffrey that the article had not disturbed his digestion, though he hoped neither his booksellers nor the public would agree with the opinions it expressed; and begged he would come to dinner at the hour previously appointed. Mr. Jeffrey appeared accordingly, and was received by his host with the frankest cordiality; but had the mortification to observe that the mistress of the house, though perfectly polite, was not quite so easy with him as usual. She, too, behaved herself with exemplary civility during the dinner; but could not help saying, in her broken English when her guest was departing, "Well, good night, Mr. Jeffrey—dey tell me you have abused Scott in de Review, and I hope Mr. Constable has paid *you* very well for writing it." This anecdote was not perhaps worth giving; but it has been printed already in an exaggerated shape, so I thought it as well to present the edition which

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I have derived from the lips of all the three persons concerned. No one, I am sure, will think the worse of any of them for it,—least of all of Mrs. Scott. She might well be pardoned, if she took to herself more than her own share in the misadventures as well as the successes of the most affectionate of protectors. It was, I believe, about this time when, as Scott has confessed, "the popularity of Marmion gave him such a *heeze* he had for a moment almost lost his footing," that a shrewd and sly observer, Mrs. Grant of Laggan, said wittily enough, upon leaving a brilliant assembly where the poet had been surrounded by all the buzz and glare of fashionable ecstasy,—"Mr. Scott always seems to me like a glass, through which the rays of admiration pass without sensibly affecting it; but the bit of paper that lies beside it will presently be in a blaze—and no wonder."

I shall not, after so much of and about criticism, say any thing more of Marmion in this place, than that I have always considered it as, on the whole, the greatest of Scott's poems. There is a certain light, easy, virgin charm about the Lay, which we look for in vain through the subsequent volumes of his verse; but the superior strength, and breadth, and boldness both of conception and execution in the Marmion appear to me indisputable. The great blot, the combination of *mean felony* with so many noble qualities in the character of the hero, was, as the poet says, severely commented on at the time by the most ardent of his early friends, Leyden; but though he admitted the justice of that criticism, he chose "to let the tree lie as it had fallen." He was also sensible that many of the subordinate and connecting parts of the narrative are flat, harsh, and obscure—but would never make any serious attempt to do away with these imperfections; and perhaps they, after all, heighten by contrast the effect of the passages of high-wrought enthusiasm which alone he considered, in after days, with satisfaction. As for the "epistolary dissertations," it must, I take it, be allowed that they interfered with the flow of the story, when readers were turning the leaves with the first ardour of curiosity; and they were not, in fact, originally intended to be interwoven in any fashion with the romance of Marmion. Though the author himself does not allude to, and had perhaps forgotten the circumstance, when writing the Introductory Essay of 1830—they were announced, by an advertisement early in 1807, as "Six Epistles from Eltrick Forest," to be published in a separate volume, similar to that of the Ballads and Lyrical Pieces; and perhaps it might have been better that this first plan had been adhered to. But however that may be, are there any pages, among all he ever wrote, that one would be more sorry he should not have written? They are among the most delicious portraitures that genius ever painted of itself,—buoyant, virtuous, happy genius—exulting in its own energies, yet possessed and mastered by a clear, calm, modest mind, and happy only in diffusing happiness around it.

With what gratification those Epistles were read by the friends to whom they were addressed it would be superfluous to show. He had, in fact, painted them almost as fully as himself; and who might not have been proud to find a place in such a gallery? The tastes and habits of six of those men, in whose intercourse Scott found the greatest pleasure when his fame was approaching its meridian splendour, are thus preserved for posterity; and when I reflect with what avidity we catch at the least hint which seems to afford us a glimpse of the intimate circle of any great poet of former ages, I cannot but believe that posterity would have held this record precious, even had the individuals been in themselves far less remarkable than a Rose, an Ellis, a Heber, a Skene, a Marriott, and an Erskine.

Many other friends, however, have found a part in these affectionate sketches; and I doubt whether any manifestation of public applause afforded the poet so much pleasure as the letter in which one of these, alluded to in the fourth Epistle as then absent from Scotland by reason of his feeble health, acknowledged the emotions that had been stirred in him when he came upon that unexpected page. This was Colin Mackenzie of Portmore, the same who beat him in a competition of rhymes at the High School, and whose ballad of *Ellandonnan Castle* had been introduced into the third volume of the Minstrelsy. This accomplished and singularly modest man, now no more, received Marmion at Lympstone. "My dear Walter," he says, "amidst the greetings that will crowd on you, I know that those of a hearty, sincere, admiring old friend, will not be coldly taken. I am not going to attempt an enumeration of beauties, but I must thank you for the elegant and delicate allusion in which you express your friendship for myself—Forbes—and above all, that sweet memorial of his late excellent father.* I find I have got the *mal du pays*, and must return to enjoy the sight and society of a few chosen friends. You are not unaware of the place you hold on my list, and your description of our *committee*† has inspired me with tenfold ardour to renew a pleasure so highly enjoyed, and remembered with such enthusiasm. Adieu, my dear friend. Ever yours,

C. M."

His next-door neighbour at Ashestiel, Mr. Pringle of Whytbank, "the long-descended lord of Yair," writes not less touchingly on the verses in the 2d Epistle, where his beautiful place is mentioned, and the poet introduces

> "those sportive boys,
> Companions of his mountain joys"—

and paints the rapture with which they had heard him "call Wallace' rampart holy ground." "Your own benevolent heart," says the good laird, "would have enjoyed the scene, could you have witnessed the countenances of my little flock grouped round your book; and perhaps you would have discovered that the father, though the least audible at that moment, was not the most insensible to the honour bestowed upon his children and his parent stream, both alike dear to his heart. May my boys feel an additional motive to act well, that they may cast no discredit upon their early friend!"

But there was one personal allusion which, almost before his ink was dry, the poet would fain have cancelled. Lord Scott, the young heir of Buccleuch, whose casual absence from "Yarrow's bowers" was regretted in that same epistle (addressed to his tutor, Mr. Marriott)—

> "No youthful baron's left to grace
> The forest sheriff's lonely chase,
> And ape in manly step and tone
> The majesty of Oberon."

—this promising boy had left Yarrow to revisit it no more. He died a few days after Marmion was published, and Scott, in writing on the event to his uncle Lord Montagu, (to whom the poem was inscribed,) signified a fear that these verses might now serve but to quicken the sorrows of the mother. Lord Montagu answers,—"I have been able to ascertain Lady Dalkeith's feelings in a manner that will, I think, be satisfactory to you, particularly as it came from herself, without my giving her the pain of being asked. In a letter I received yesterday, giving directions about some books, she writes as follows:—'And pray send me Marmion too—this may seem odd to you, but at some moments I am soothed by things which at other times drive me almost mad.'" On the 7th of April, Scott says to Lady Louisa Stuart—"The death of poor dear Lord Scott was such a stunning blow to me, that I really felt for some time totally indifferent to the labours of literary correction. I had very great hopes from that boy, who was of an age to form, on the principles of his father and grandfather, his feelings towards the numerous families who depend on them. But God's will be done. I intended to have omitted the lines referring to him in Marmion in the second edition; for as to adding any, I could as soon write the Iliad. But I am now glad I

* Mr. Mackenzie had married a daughter of Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, Bart., the biographer of Beattie.

† The supper meetings of the Cavalry Club. See *Marmion*, Introduction to Canto IV.

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altered my intention, as Lady Dalkeith has sent for the book, and dwells with melancholy pleasure on whatever recalls the memory of the poor boy. She has borne her distress like an angel, as she is, and always has been; but God only can cure the wounds he inflicts."

One word more as to these personal allusions. While he was correcting a second proof of the passage where Pitt and Fox are mentioned together, at Stanmore Priory, in April, 1807, Lord Abercorn suggested that the compliment to the Whig statesman ought to be still further heightened, and several lines—

"For talents mourn untimely lost,
When best employed, and wanted most," &c.*—

were added accordingly. I have heard, indeed, that they came from the accomplished Marquis's own pen. Ballantyne, however, from some inadvertence, had put the sheet to press before the *revise*, as it is called, arrived in Edinburgh, and some few copies got abroad in which the additional couplets were omitted. A London journal (the Morning Chronicle) was stupid and malignant enough to insinuate that the author had his presentation copies struck off with, or without, them—according as they were for Whig or Tory hands. I mention the circumstance now, only because I see by a letter of Heber's that Scott had thought it worth his while to contradict the absurd charge in the newspapers of the day.

The feelings of political partisanship find no place in this poem; but though the Edinburgh reviewers chose to complain of its "manifest neglect of *Scottish* feelings," I take leave to suspect that the boldness and energy of *British* patriotism which breathes in so many passages, may have had more share than that alleged omission in pointing the pen that criticised Marmion. Scott had sternly and indignantly rebuked and denounced the then too prevalent spirit of anti-national despondence; he had put the trumpet to his lips, and done his part, at least, to sustain the hope and resolution of his countrymen in that struggle from which it was the doctrine of the Edinburgh Review that no sane observer of the times could anticipate any thing but ruin and degradation. He must ever be considered as the "mighty minstrel" of the Antigallican war; and it was Marmion that first announced him in that character.

Be all this as it may, Scott's connexion with the Edinburgh Review was now broken off; and indeed it was never renewed, except in one instance, many years after, when the strong wish to serve poor Maturin shook him for a moment from his purpose. The loftiest and purest of human beings seldom act but under a mixture of motives, and I shall not attempt to guess in what proportions he was swayed by aversion to the political doctrines which the journal had lately been avowing with increased openness—by dissatisfaction with its judgments of his own works—or, lastly, by the feeling that, whether those judgments were or were not just, it was but an idle business for him to assist by his own pen the popularity of the vehicle that diffused them. That he was influenced more or less by all of these considerations, appears highly probable; and I fancy I can trace some indications of each of them in a letter with which I am favoured by an old friend of mine,—a warm lover of literature, and a sincere admirer both of Scott and Jeffrey, and though numbered among the Tories in the House of Commons, yet one of the most liberal section of his party,—who happened to visit Scotland shortly after the article on Marmion appeared, and has set down his recollections of the course of table-talk at a dinner where he for the first time met Scott in company with the brilliant editor of the Edinburgh Review.

"There were," he says, "only a few people besides the two lions—and assuredly I have seldom passed a more agreeable day. A thousand subjects of literature, antiquities, and manners, were started; and much was I struck, as you may well suppose, by the extent, correctness, discrimination, and accuracy of Jeffrey's information; equally so with his taste, acuteness, and wit, in dissecting every book, author, and story, that came in our way. Nothing could surpass the variety of his knowledge, but the easy rapidity of his manner of producing it. He was then in his meridian. Scott, delighted to draw him out, delighted also to talk himself, and displayed, I think, even a larger range of anecdote and illustration; remembering every thing, whether true or false, that was characteristic or impressive; every thing that was good, or lovely, or lively. It struck me that there was this great difference—Jeffrey, for the most part, entertained us, when books were under discussion, with the detection of faults, blunders, absurdities, or plagiarisms: Scott took up the matter where he left it, recalled some compensating beauty or excellence for which no credit had been allowed, and by the recitation, perhaps, of one fine stanza, set the poor victim on his legs again. I believe it was just about this time that Scott had abandoned his place in Mr. Jeffrey's corps. The journal had been started among the clever young society with which Edinburgh abounded when they were both entering life as barristers; and Jeffrey's principal coadjutors for some time were Sydney Smith, Brougham, Horner, Scott himself—and on scientific subjects, Playfair; but clever contributors were sought for in all quarters. Wit and fun were the first desiderata, and joined with general talent and literature, carried all before them. Neutrality, or something of the kind, as to party politics, seems to have been originally asserted—the plan being, as Scott understood, not to avoid such questions altogether, but to let them be handled by Whig or Tory indifferently, if only the writer could make his article captivating in point of information and good writing. But it was not long before Brougham dipped the concern deep in witty Whiggery; and it was thought at the time that some very foolish neglects on the part of Pitt had a principal share in making several of these brilliant young men decide on carrying over their weapons to the enemy's camp. Scott was a strong Tory, nay, by family recollections and poetical feelings of association, a Jacobite. Jeffrey, however, was an early friend—and thus there was a confliction of feelings on both sides. Scott, as I was told, remonstrated against the deepening Whiggery—Jeffrey alleged that he could not resist the wit. Scott offered to try his hand at a witty bit of Toryism—but the editor pleaded off, upon the danger of inconsistency. These differences first cooled—and soon dissolved their federation.—To return to our gay dinner. As the claret was taking its rounds, Jeffrey introduced some good-natured eulogy of his old supporters—Sydney Smith, Brougham, and Horner. 'Come,' says Scott, 'you can't say too much about Sydney or Brougham, but I will not admire your Horner: he always put me in mind of Obadiah's bull, who, although, as Father Shandy observed, he never produced a calf, went through his business with such a grave demeanour, that he always maintained his credit in the parish!' The fun of the illustration tempted him to this sally, I believe; but Horner's talents did not lie in humour, and his economical labours were totally uncongenial to the mind of Scott."

I shall conclude this chapter with a summary of booksellers' accounts. Marmion was first printed in a splendid quarto, price one guinea and a half. The 2000 copies of this edition were all disposed of in less than a month, when a second of 3000 copies, in 8vo, was sent to press. There followed a third and a fourth edition, each of 3000, in 1809; a fifth of 2000, early in 1810; and a sixth of 3000, in two volumes, crown 8vo, with twelve designs by Singleton, before the end of that year; a seventh of 4000, and an eighth of 5000 copies 8vo, in 1811; a ninth of 3000 in 1815; a tenth of 500, in 1820; an eleventh of 500, and a twelfth of 2000 copies, in

* In place of this couplet, and the ten lines which follow it, the original MS. of Marmion has only the following:—

"If genius high, and judgment sound,
And wit that loved to play, not wound,
And all the reasoning powers divine,
To penetrate, resolve, combine,
Could save one mortal of the herd
From error—Fox had never err'd."

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foolscap, both in 1825. The legitimate sale in this country, therefore, down to the time of its being included in the first collective edition of his poetical works, amounted to 31,000; and the aggregate of that sale down to the period at which I am writing (May, 1836) may be stated at 50,000 copies. I presume it is right for me to facilitate the task of future historians of our literature by preserving these details as often as I can. Such particulars respecting many of the great works even of the last century, are already sought for with vain regret; and I anticipate no day when the student of English civilization will pass without curiosity the contemporary reception of the Tale of Flodden Field.

CHAPTER XVII.

EDITION OF DRYDEN PUBLISHED—AND CRITICISED BY MR. HALLAM—WEBER'S ROMANCES—EDITIONS OF QUEENHOO-HALL—CAPTAIN CARLETON'S MEMOIRS—THE MEMOIRS OF ROBERT CARY, EARL OF MONMOUTH—THE SADLER PAPERS—AND THE SOMERS' TRACTS—EDITION OF SWIFT BEGUN—LETTERS TO JOANNA BAILLIE AND GEORGE ELLIS ON THE AFFAIRS OF THE PENINSULA—JOHN STRUTHERS—JAMES HOGG—VISIT OF MR. MORRITT—MR. MORRITT'S REMINISCENCES OF ASHESTIEL—SCOTT'S DOMESTIC LIFE.—1808.

Before Marmion was published, a heavy task, begun earlier than the poem, and continued throughout its progress, had been nearly completed; and there appeared in the last week of April, 1808, "The Works of John Dryden, now first collected; illustrated with notes, historical, critical, and explanatory, and a Life of the Author.—By Walter Scott, Esq. Eighteen volumes, 8vo." This was the bold speculation of William Miller of Albemarle Street, London; and the editor's fee, at forty guineas the volume, was £756. The bulk of the collection, the neglect into which a majority of the pieces included in it had fallen, the obsoleteness of the party politics which had so largely exercised the author's pen, and the indecorum, not seldom running into flagrant indecency, by which transcendent genius had ministered to the appetites of a licentious age, all combined to make the warmest of Scott's friends and admirers doubt whether even his skill and reputation would be found sufficient to ensure the success of this undertaking. It was, however, better received than any one, except perhaps the courageous bookseller himself, had anticipated. The entire work was reprinted in 1821; and more lately the Life of Dryden has been twice republished in collective editions of Scott's prose miscellanies; nor, perhaps, does that class of his writings include any piece of considerable extent that has, on the whole, obtained higher estimation.

This edition of Dryden was criticised in the Edinburgh Review for October, 1808, with great ability, and, on the whole, with admirable candour. The industry and prespicacity with which Scott had carried through his editorial researches and annotations were acknowledged in terms which, had he known the name of his reviewer, must have been doubly gratifying to his feelings; and it was confessed that, in the life of his author, he had corrected with patient honesty, and filled up with lucid and expansive detail, the sometimes careless and often naked outline of Johnson's masterly Essay on the same subject. It would be superfluous to quote in this place a specimen of critical skill which has already enjoyed such wide circulation, and which will hereafter, no doubt, be included in the miscellaneous prose works of HALLAM. The points of political faith on which that great writer dissents from the editor of Dryden, would, even if I had the inclination to pursue such a discussion, lead me far astray from the immediate object of these pages; they embrace questions on which the best and wisest of our countrymen will probably continue to take opposite sides, as long as our past history excites a living interest, and our literature is that of an active nation. On the poetical character of Dryden I think the editor and his critic will be found to have expressed substantially much the same judgment; when they appear to differ, the battle strikes me as being about words rather than things, as is likely to be the case when men of such abilities and attainments approach a subject remote from their personal passions. As might have been expected, the terse and dexterous reviewer has often the better in this logomachy; but when the balance is struck, we discover here, as elsewhere, that Scott's broad and masculine understanding had, by whatever happy hardihood, grasped the very result to which others win their way by the more cautious processes of logical investigation. While nothing has been found easier than to attack his details, his general views on critical questions have seldom, if ever, been successfully impugned.

I wish I could believe that Scott's labours had been sufficient to recall Dryden to his rightful station, not in the opinion of those who make literature the business or chief solace of their lives—for with them he had never forfeited it—but in the general favour of the intelligent public. That such has been the case, however, the not rapid sale of two editions, aided as they were by the greatest of living names, can be no proof; nor have I observed among the numberless recent speculations of the English booksellers, a single reprint of even those tales, satires, and critical essays, not to be familiar with which would, in the last age, have been considered as disgraceful in any one making the least pretension to letters. In the hope of exciting the curiosity, at least, of some of the thousands of young persons who seem to be growing up in contented ignorance of one of the greatest of our masters, I shall transcribe what George Ellis, whose misgivings about Scott's edition, when first undertaken, had been so serious, was pleased to write some months after its completion.

"Claremont, 23d September, 1808.

"I must confess that I took up the book with some degree of trepidation, considering an edition of such a writer as on every account *periculosæ plenum opus aleæ*; but as soon as I became acquainted with your plan I proceeded boldly, and really feel at this moment sincerely grateful to you for much exquisite amusement. It now seems to me that your critical remarks ought to have occurred to myself. Such a passionate admirer of Dryden's fables, the noblest specimen of versification (in my mind) that is to be found in any modern language, ought to have perused his theatrical pieces with more candour than I did, and to have attributed to the bad taste of the age, rather than to his own, the numerous defects by which those hasty compositions are certainly deformed. I ought to have considered that whatever Dryden wrote must, for some reason or other, be worth reading; that his bombast and his indelicacy, however disgusting, were not without their use to any one who took an interest in our literary history; that—in short, there are a thousand reflections which I ought to have made and never did make, and the result was that *your* Dryden was to me a perfectly new book. It is certainly painful to see a racehorse in a hackney-chaise, but when one considers that he will suffer infinitely less from the violent exertion to which he is condemned, than a creature of inferior race—and that the wretched cock-tail on whom the same task is usually imposed, must shortly become a martyr in the service, one's conscience becomes more at ease, and we are enabled to enjoy Dr. Johnson's favourite pleasure of rapid motion without much remorse on the score of its cruelty. Since, then, your hackneyman is not furnished with a whip, and you can so easily canter from post to post, go on and prosper!"

To return for a moment to Scott's Biography of Dryden—the only life of a great poet which he has left us, and also his only detailed work on the personal fortunes of one to whom literature was a profession—it was penned just when he had begun to apprehend his own destiny. On this point of view, forbidden to contemporary delicacy, we may now pause with blameless curiosity; and if I be not mistaken, it will reward our attention. Seriously as he must have in those days been revolving the hazards of literary enterprise, he could not, it is probable, have handled any subject of this class without letting out here and there thoughts and feelings proper to

his own biographer's province; but, widely as he and his predecessor may appear to stand apart as regards some of the most important both of intellectual and moral characteristics, they had nevertheless many features of resemblance, both as men and as authors; and I doubt if the entire range of our annals could have furnished a theme more calculated to keep Scott's scrutinizing interest awake, than that which opened on him as he contemplated step by step the career of Dryden.

There are grave lessons which that story was not needed to enforce upon his mind; he required no such beacon to make him revolt from paltering with the dignity of woman, or the passions of youth, or insulting by splenetic levities the religious convictions of any portion of his countrymen. But Dryden's prostitution of his genius to the petty bitternesses of political warfare, and the consequences both as to the party he served, and the antagonists he provoked, might well supply matter for serious consideration to the author of the Melville song. "Where," says Scott, "is the expert swordsman that does not delight in the flourish of his weapon? and a brave man will least of all withdraw himself from his ancient standard when the tide of battle beats against it." But he says also,—and I know enough of his own then recent experiences, in his intercourse with some who had been among his earliest and dearest associates, not to apply the language to the circumstances that suggested it—"He who keenly engages in political controversy, must not only encounter the vulgar abuse which he may justly contemn, but the altered eye of friends whose regard is chilled;" nor when he adds, that "the protecting zeal of his party did not compensate Dryden for the loss of those whom he alienated in their service," can I help connecting this reflection too with his own subsequent abstinence from party personalities, in which, had the expert swordsman's delight in the flourish of his weapon prevailed, he might have rivalled the success of either Dryden or Swift, to be repaid like them by the settled rancour of Whigs, and the jealous ingratitude of Tories.

It is curious enough to compare the hesitating style of his apology for that tinge of evanescent superstition which seems to have clouded occasionally Dryden's bright and solid mind, with the open avowal that he has "pride in recording his author's decided admiration of old ballads and popular tales;" and perhaps his personal feelings were hardly less his prompter where he dismisses with brief scorn the sins of negligence and haste, which had been so often urged against Dryden. "Nothing," he says, "is so easily attained as the power of presenting the extrinsic qualities of fine painting, fine music, or fine poetry; the beauty of colour and outline, the combination of notes, the melody of versification, may be imitated by artists of mediocrity; and many will view, hear, or peruse their performances, without being able positively to discover why they should not, since composed according to all the rules, afford pleasure equal to those of Raphael, Handel, or Dryden. The deficiency lies in the vivifying spirit which, like *alcohol*, may be reduced to the same principle in all the fine arts. The French are said to possess the best possible rules for building ships of war, although not equally remarkable for their power of fighting them. When criticism becomes a pursuit separate from poetry, those who follow it are apt to forget that the legitimate ends of the art for which they lay down rules, are instruction and delight, and that these points being attained, by what road soever, entitles a poet to claim the prize of successful merit. Neither did the learned authors of these disquisitions sufficiently attend to the general disposition of mankind, which cannot be contented even with the happiest imitations of former excellence, but demands novelty as a necessary ingredient for amusement. To insist that every epic poem shall have the plan of the Iliad, and every tragedy be modelled by the rules of Aristotle, resembles the principle of the architect who should build all his houses with the same number of windows and of stories. It happened, too, inevitably, that the critics, in the plenipotential authority which they exercised, often assumed as indispensable requisites of the drama, or epopeia, circumstances which, in the great authorities they quoted, were altogether accidental or indifferent. These they erected into laws, and handed down as essential; although the forms prescribed have often as little to do with the merit and success of the original from which they are taken, as the shape of the drinking glass with the flavour of the wine which it contains." These sentences appear, from the dates, to have been penned immediately after the biographer of Dryden (who wrote no epic) had perused the Edinburgh Review on Marmion.

I conclude with a passage, in writing which he seems to have anticipated the only serious critical charge that was ever brought against his edition of Dryden as a whole—namely, the loose and irregular way in which his own æsthetical notions are indicated, rather than expounded. "While Dryden," says Scott, "examined, discussed, admitted, or rejected the rules proposed by others, he forbore, from *prudence, indolence*, or *a regard for the freedom of Parnassus*, to erect himself into a legislator. His doctrines are scattered without system or pretence to it:—it is impossible to read far without finding some maxim for doing, or forbearing, which every student of poetry will do well to engrave upon the tablets of his memory; but the author's mode of instruction is neither harsh nor dictatorial."

On the whole, it is impossible to doubt that the success of Dryden in rapidly reaching, and till the end of a long life holding undisputed, the summit of public favour and reputation, in spite of his "brave neglect" of minute finishing, narrow laws, and prejudiced authorities, must have had a powerful effect in nerving Scott's hope and resolution for the wide ocean of literary enterprise into which he had now fairly launched his bark. Like Dryden, he felt himself to be "amply stored with acquired knowledge, much of it the fruits of early reading and application;" anticipated that, though, "while engaged in the hurry of composition, or overcome by the lassitude of continued literary labour," he should sometimes "draw with too much liberality on a tenacious memory," no "occasional imperfections would deprive him of his praise;" in short, made up his mind that "pointed and nicely-turned lines, sedulous study, and long and repeated correction and revision," would all be dispensed with, provided their place were supplied, as in Dryden, by "rapidity of conception, a readiness of expressing every idea, without losing any thing by the way," "perpetual animation and elasticity of thought;" and language "never laboured, never loitering, never (in Dryden's own phrase) *cursedly confined*."

Scott's correspondence, about the time when his Dryden was published, is a good deal occupied with a wild project of his friend Henry Weber—that of an extensive edition of our Ancient Metrical Romances, for which, in their own original dimensions, the enthusiastic German supposed the public appetite to have been set on edge by the "Specimens" of Ellis, and imperfectly gratified by the text of Sir Tristrem. Scott assured him that Ellis's work had been popular, rather in spite than by reason of the antique verses introduced here and there among his witty and sparkling prose; while Ellis told him, with equal truth, that the Tristrem had gone through two editions, simply owing to the celebrity of its editor's name; and that, of a hundred that had purchased the book, ninety-nine had read only the preface and notes, but not one syllable of True Thomas's "quaint Inglis." Weber, in reply to Ellis, alleged that Scott had not had leisure to consider his plan so fully as it deserved; that nothing could prevent its success, provided Scott would write a preliminary essay, and let his name appear in the title-page, along with his own; and though Scott wholly declined this last proposal, he persisted for some months in a negotiation with the London booksellers, which ended as both his patrons had foreseen.

"But how is this?" (Ellis writes)—"Weber tells me

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he is afraid Mr. Scott will not be able to do any thing for the recommendation of his *Romances*, because he is himself engaged in no less than five different literary enterprises, some of them of immense extent. Five? Why, no combination of blood and bone can possibly stand this; and Sir John Sinclair, however successful in pointing out the best modes of feeding common gladiators, has not discovered the means of training minds to such endless fatigue. I dare not ask you for an account of these projects, not even for a letter during the continuance of this seven years' apprenticeship, and only request that you will, after the completion of your labours, take measures to lay my head, which will infallibly be walking before that time, and suffering all the pains of unsatisfied curiosity. Seriously, I don't quite like your imposing on yourself such a series of tasks. Some *one* is, I believe, always of service—because, whatever you write at the same time *con amore*, comes in as a relaxation, and is likely to receive more spirit and gayety from that circumstance; besides which, every species of study perhaps is capable of furnishing allusions, and adding vigour and solidity to poetry. Too constant attention to what they call their art, and too much solicitude about its minutiæ, has been, I think, the fault of every poet since Pope; perhaps it was his too—perhaps the frequent and varied studies imposed upon him by his necessities contributed, in some measure, to Dryden's characteristic splendour of style. Yet, surely, the best poet of the age ought not to be incessantly employed in the drudgeries of literature. I shall lament if you are effectually distracted from the exercise of the talent in which you are confessedly without a rival."

The poet answers as follows:—

"My giving my name to Weber's Romances is out of the question, as assuredly I have not time to do any thing that can entitle it to stand in his titlepage; but I will do all I can for him in the business. By the by, I wish he would be either more chary in his communications on the subject of my employments, or more accurate. I often employ his assistance in making extracts, &c., and I may say to him as Lord Ogleby does to Canton, that he never sees me *badiner* a little with a subject, but he suspects mischief—to wit, an edition. In the mean time, suffice it to say, that I have done with poetry for some time—it is a scourging crop, and ought not to be hastily repeated. Editing, therefore, may be considered as a green crop of turnips or peas, extremely useful for those whose circumstances do not admit of giving their farm a summer fallow. Swift is my *grande opus* at present, though I am under engagements, of old standing, to write a Life of Thomson from some original materials. I have completed an edition of some State Papers of Sir Ralph Sadler, which I believe you will find curious; I have, moreover, arranged for republication the more early volumes of Somers's Tracts; but these are neither toilsome nor exhausting labours. Swift, in fact, is my only task of great importance. My present official employment leaves my time very much my own, even while the courts are sitting—and entirely so in the vacation. My health is strong, and my mind active; I will therefore do as much as I can with justice to the tasks I have undertaken, and rest when advanced age and more independent circumstances entitle me to repose."

This letter is dated Ashestiel, October 8, 1808; but it carries us back to the month of April, when the Dryden was completed. His engagements with London publishers respecting the Somers and the Sadler, were, I believe, entered into before the end of 1807; but Constable appears to have first ascertained them, when he accompanied the second cargo of Marmion to the great southern market; and, alarmed at the prospect of losing his hold on Scott's industry, he at once invited him to follow up his Dryden by an Edition of Swift on the same scale,—offering, moreover, to double the rate of payment which he had contracted for with the London publisher of the Dryden; that is to say, to give him £1500 for the new undertaking. This munificent tender was accepted without hesitation; and as early as May, I find Scott writing to his literary allies in all directions for books, pamphlets, and MSS. materials likely to be serviceable in completing and illustrating the Life and Works of the Dean of St. Patrick's. While these were accumulating about him, which they soon did in greater abundance than he had anticipated, he concluded his labours on Sadler's State Papers, characteristically undervalued in his letter to Ellis, and kept pace, at the same time, with Ballantyne, as the huge collection of the Somers' Tracts continued to move through the press. The Sadler was published in the course of 1809, in three large volumes, quarto; but the last of the thirteen equally ponderous tomes to which Somers extended, was not dismissed from his desk until towards the conclusion of 1812.

But these were not his only tasks during the summer and autumn of 1808; and if he had not "*five* different enterprises" on his hands when Weber said so to Ellis, he had more than five very soon after. He edited this year, Strutt's unfinished romance of Queenhoo-Hall, and equipped the fourth volume with a conclusion in the fashion of the original;* but how little he thought of this matter may be guessed from one of his notes to Ballantyne, in which he says, "I wish you would see how far the copy of Queenhoo-Hall, sent last night, extends, that I may not write more nonsense than enough." The publisher of this work was John Murray, of London. It was immediately preceded by a reprint of Captain Carleton's Memoirs of the War of the Spanish Succession, to which he gave a lively preface and various notes; and followed by a similar edition of the Memoirs of Robert Cary Earl of Monmouth,—each of these being a single octavo, printed by Ballantyne, and published by Constable.

The republication of Carleton,† Johnson's eulogy of which fills a pleasant page in Boswell, had probably been suggested by the lively interest which Scott took in the first outburst of Spanish patriotism consequent on Napoleon's transactions at Bayonne. There is one passage in the preface which I must indulge myself by transcribing. Speaking of the absurd recall of Peterborough, from the command in which he had exhibited such a wonderful combination of patience and prudence with military daring, he says:—"One ostensible reason was, that Peterborough's parts were of too lively and mercurial a quality, and that his letters showed more wit than became a General;—a commonplace objection, raised by the dull malignity of commonplace minds, against those whom they see discharging with ease and indifference the tasks which they themselves execute (if at all) with the sweat of their brow and in the heaviness of their hearts. There is a certain hypocrisy in business, whether civil or military, as well as in religion, which they will do well to observe who, not satisfied with discharging their duty, desire also the good repute of men." It was not long before some of the dull malignants of the Parliament House began to insinuate what at length found a dull and dignified mouthpiece in the House of Commons—that if a Clerk of Session had any real business to do, it could not be done well by a man who found time for more literary enterprises than any other author of the age undertook—"wrote more books," Lord Archibald Hamilton serenely added, "than any body could find leisure to read"—and, moreover, mingled in general society as much as many that had no pursuit but pleasure.

The eager struggling of the different booksellers to engage Scott at this time, is a very amusing feature in the voluminous correspondence before me. Had he possessed treble the energy for which it was possible to give any man credit, he could never have encountered a tithe of the projects that the post brought day after day to him, announced with extravagant enthusiasm, and urged with all the arts of conciliation. I shall mention only one out of at least a dozen gigantic schemes which were thus proposed before he had well settled himself to his Swift; and I do so, because something of the kind was a few years later carried into execution. This was a General Edition of British Novelists, beginning with De Foe, and reaching to the end of the last century; to be set forth with biographical prefaces and illustrative notes by Scott, and printed

* See General Preface to Waverley, pp. xiv—xvii. and Appendix No. II. p. lxv.

† I believe it is now pretty generally believed that Carleton's Memoirs were among the numberless fabrications of Defoe; but in this case, as in that of his *Cavalier*, he no doubt had before him the rude journal of some officer who had really served in the campaigns described with such admirable art of truth.

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of course by Ballantyne. The projector was Murray, who was now eager to start on all points in the race with Constable; but this was not, as we shall see presently, the only business that prompted my enterprising friend's first visit to Ashestiel.

Conversing with Scott, many years afterwards, about the tumult of engagements in which he was thus involved, he said, "Ay, it was enough to tear me to pieces, but there was a wonderful exhilaration about it all: my blood was kept at fever-pitch —I felt as if I could have grappled with any thing and every thing; then, there was hardly one of all my schemes that did not afford me the means of serving some poor devil of a brother author. There were always huge piles of materials to be arranged, sifted, and indexed—volumes of extracts to be transcribed—journeys to be made hither and thither, for ascertaining little facts and dates,—in short, I could commonly keep half-a-dozen of the ragged regiment of Parnassus in tolerable case." I said he must have felt something like what a locomotive engine on a railway might be supposed to do, when a score of coal wagons are seen linking themselves to it the moment it gets the steam up, and it rushes on its course regardless of the burden. "Yes," said he, laughing, and making a crashing cut with his axe, (for we were felling larches;) "but there was a cursed lot of dung carts too." He was seldom, in fact, without some of these appendages; and I admired nothing more in him than the patient courtesy, the unwearied gentle kindness with which he always treated them, in spite of their delays and blunders, to say nothing of the almost incredible vanity and presumption which more than one of them often exhibited in the midst of their fawning; and I believe, with all their faults, the worst and weakest of them repaid him by a canine fidelity of affection. This part of Scott's character recalls by far the most pleasing trait in that of his last predecessor in the plenitude of literary authority—Dr. Johnson. There was perhaps nothing (except the one great blunder) that had a worse effect on the course of his pecuniary fortunes, than the readiness with which he exerted his interest with the booksellers on behalf of inferior writers. Even from the commencement of his connexion with Constable in particular, I can trace a continual series of such applications. They stimulated the already too sanguine publisher to numberless risks; and when these failed, the result was, in one shape or another, some corresponding deduction from the fair profits of his own literary labour. "I like well," Constable was often heard to say in the sequel, "I like well Scott's *ain bairns*—but heaven preserve me from those of his fathering!"

Every now and then, however, he had the rich compensation of finding that his interference had really promoted the worldly interest of some meritorious obscure. Early in 1808 he tasted this pleasure, in the case of a poetical shoemaker of Glasgow, Mr. John Struthers, a man of rare worth and very considerable genius, whose "Poor Man's Sabbath" was recommended to his notice by Joanna Baillie, and shortly after published, at his desire, by Mr. Constable. He thus writes to Miss Baillie from *Ashestiel, on the 9th of May, 1808*:—

"Your letter found me in this quiet corner, and while it always gives me pride and pleasure to hear from you, I am truly concerned at Constable's unaccountable delays. I suppose that, in the hurry of his departure for London, his promise to write to Mr. Struthers had escaped; as for any desire to quit his bargain, it is out of the question. If Mr. Struthers will send to my house in Castle Street, the manuscript designed for the press, I will get him a short bill for the copy-money the moment Constable returns, or perhaps before he comes down. He may rely on the bargain being definitively settled, and the printing will, I suppose, be begun immediately on the great bibliopolist's return; on which occasion I shall have, according to good old phrase, 'a crow to pluck with him, and a pock to put the feathers in.' I heartily wish we could have had the honour to see Miss Agnes and you at our little farm, which is now in its glory—all the twigs bursting into leaf, and all the lambs skipping on the hills. I have been fishing almost from morning till night; and Mrs. Scott, and two ladies our guests, are wandering about on the banks in the most Arcadian fashion in the world. We are just on the point of setting out on a pilgrimage to the 'bonny bush aboon Traquhair,' which I believe will occupy us all the morning. Adieu, my dear Miss Baillie. Nothing will give me more pleasure than to hear that you have found the northern breezes fraught with inspiration. You are not entitled to spare yourself, and none is so deeply interested in your labours as your truly respectful friend and admirer,

WALTER SCOTT."

"P. S. We quit our quiet pastures to return to Edinburgh on the 10th. So Mr. Struthers' parcel will find me there, if he is pleased to intrust me with the care of it."

Mr. Struthers' volume was unfortunate in bearing a title so very like that of James Grahame's Sabbath, which, though not written sooner, had been published a year or two before. This much interfered with its success, yet it was not on the whole unsuccessful: it put some £30 or £40 into the pocket of a good man, to whom this was a considerable supply; but it made his name and character known, and thus served him far more essentially; for he wisely continued to cultivate his poetical talents without neglecting the opportunity, thus afforded him through them, of pursuing his original calling under better advantages. It is said that the solitary and meditative generation of cobblers have produced a larger list of murders and other domestic crimes than any other mechanical trade, except the butchers; but the sons of Crispin have, to balance their account, a not less disproportionate catalogue of poets; and foremost among these stands the pious author of the Poor Man's Sabbath; one of the very few that have had sense and fortitude to resist the innumerable temptations to which any measure of celebrity exposes persons of their class. I believe Mr. Struthers still survives to enjoy the retrospect of a long and virtuous life. His letters to Scott are equally creditable to his taste and his feelings, and sometime after we shall find him making a pilgrimage of gratitude to Ashestiel.*

James Hogg was by this time beginning to be generally known and appreciated in Scotland; and the popularity of his "Mountain Bard" encouraged Scott to more strenuous intercession in his behalf. I have before me a long array of letters on this subject, which passed between Scott and the Earl of Dalkeith and his brother Lord Montagu, in 1808. Hogg's prime ambition at this period was to procure an ensignсy in a militia regiment, and he seems to have set little by Scott's representations that the pay of such a situation was very small, and that, if he obtained it, he would probably find his relations with his brother officers far from agreeable. There was, however, another objection which Scott could not hint to the aspirant himself, but which seems to have been duly considered by those who were anxious to promote his views. Militia officers of that day were by no means unlikely to see their nerves put to the test; and the Shepherd's—though he wrote some capital war-songs, especially *Donald Macdonald*—were not heroically strung. This was in truth no secret among his early intimates, though he had not measured himself at all exactly on that score, and was even tempted, when he found there was no chance of the militia epaulette, to threaten that he would "list for a soldier" in a marching regiment. Notwithstanding at least one melancholy precedent, the excise, which would have suited him almost as badly as "hugging Brown Bess," was next thought of; and the Shepherd himself seems to have entered into that plan with considerable alacrity: but I know not whether he changed his mind, or what other cause prevented such an appointment from taking place. After various shiftings he at last obtained, as we shall see, from the late Duke of Buccleuch's munificence, the gratui-

* I am happy to learn, as this page passes through the press from my friend Mr. John Kerr of Glasgow, that about three years ago Mr. Struthers was appointed keeper of Stirling's Library, a collection of some consequence, in that city. The selection of him for this respectable situation reflects honour on the directors of the institution.—(December, 1836.)

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the life-rent of a small farm in the vale of Yarrow; and had he contented himself with the careful management of its fields, the rest of his days might have been easy. But he could not withstand the attractions of Edinburgh, which carried him away from Altrive for months every year; and when at home, a warm and hospitable disposition, so often stirred by vanity less pardonable than his, made him convert his cottage into an unpaid hostelrie for the reception of endless troops of thoughtless admirers; and thus, in spite of much help and much forbearance, he was never out of one set of pecuniary difficulties, before he had begun to weave the meshes of some fresh entanglement. *In pace requiescat.* There will never be such an Ettrick Shepherd again.

The following is an extract from a letter of Scott's to his brother Thomas, dated 20th June, 1808.

"Excellent news to-day from Spain—yet I wish the patriots had a leader of genius and influence. I fear the Castilian nobility are more sunk than the common people, and that it will be easier to find armies than generals. A Wallace, Dundee, or Montrose, would be the man for Spain at this moment. It is, however, a consolation that, though the grandees of the earth, when the post of honour becomes the post of danger, may be less ambitious of occupying it, there may be some hidalgo among the mountains of Asturias with all the spirit of the Cid Ruy Diaz, or Don Pelayo, or Don Quixote if you will, whose gallantry was only impeachable from the objects on which he exercised it. It strikes me as very singular to have all the places mentioned in Don Quixote and Gil Blas now the scenes of real and important events. Gaztes dated from Oviedo, and gorges fortified in the Sierra Morena, sounds like history in the land of romance.

"James Hogg has driven his pigs to a bad market. I am endeavouring, as a *pis aller*, to have him made an Excise officer, that station being, with respect to Scottish peasants, the grave of all the Capulets. Witness Adam Smith, Burns, &c."

I mentioned the name of Joanna Baillie, (for "who," as Scott says in a letter of this time, "ever speaks of Miss Sappho?") in connection with the MS. of the Poor Man's Sabbath. From Glasgow, where she had found out Struthers in April, she proceeded to Edinburgh, and took up her abode for a week or two under Scott's roof. Their acquaintance was thus knit into a deep and respectful affection on both sides; and henceforth they maintained a close epistolary correspondence, which will, I think, supply this compilation with some of the most interesting of its materials. But within a few weeks after Joanna's departure, he was to commence another intimacy not less sincere and cordial; and when I name Mr. Morritt of Rokeby, I have done enough to prepare many of my readers to expect not inferior gratification from the still more abundant series of letters in which, from this time to the end of his life, Scott communicated his thoughts and feelings to one of the most accomplished men that ever shared his confidence. He had now reached a period of life after which real friendships are but seldom formed; and it is fortunate that another English one had been thoroughly compacted before death cut the ties between him and George Ellis—because his dearest intimates within Scotland had of course but a slender part in his written correspondence.

Several mutual friends had written to recommend Mr. Morritt to his acquaintance—among others, Mr. W. S. Rose and Lady Louisa Stuart. His answer to her ladyship I must insert here, for the sake of the late inimitable Lydia White, who so long ruled without a rival in the soft realm of *blue* Mayfair.

"Edinburgh, 16th June, 1808.

"My dear Lady Louisa,

"Nothing will give us more pleasure than to have the honour of showing every attention in our power to Mr. and Mrs. Morritt, and I am particularly happy in a circumstance that at once promises me a great deal of pleasure in the acquaintance of your Ladyship's friends, and affords me the satisfaction of hearing from you again. Pray don't triumph over me too much in the case of Lydia. I stood a very respectable siege; but she caressed my wife, coaxed my children, and made, by dint of cake and pudding, some impression even upon the affections of my favourite dog;—so, when all the outworks were carried, the mere fortress had no choice but to surrender on honourable terms. To the best of my thinking, notwithstanding the cerulean hue of her stocking, and a most plentiful stock of eccentric affectation, she is really at bottom a good-natured woman, with much liveliness and some talent. She is now set out to the Highlands, where she is likely to encounter many adventures. Mrs. Scott and I went as far as Loch Catrine with her, from which jaunt I have just returned. We had most heavenly weather, which was peculiarly favourable to my fair companions' zeal for sketching every object that fell in their way, from a castle to a pigeon-house. Did your Ladyship ever travel with a *drawing* companion? Mine drew like cart-horses, as well in laborious zeal as in effect; for, after all, I could not help hinting that the cataracts delineated bore a singular resemblance to haycocks, and the rocks much correspondence to large old-fashioned cabinets with their folding-doors open. So much for Lydia, whom I left on her journey through the Highlands, but by what route she had not resolved. I gave her three plans, and think it likely she will adopt none of them: moreover, when the executive government of postilions, landlords, and Highland boatmen, devolves upon her English servant instead of me, I am afraid the distresses of the errant damsel will fall a little beneath the dignity of romances. All this nonsense is *entre nous*, for Miss White has been actively zealous in getting me some Irish correspondence about Swift, and otherwise very obliging.

"It is not with my inclination that I jag for the booksellers; but what can I do? My poverty and not my will consents. The income of my office is only reversionary, and my private fortune much limited. My poetical success fairly destroyed my prospects of professional success, and obliged me to retire from the bar; for though I had a competent share of information and industry, who would trust their cause to the author of the Lay of the Last Minstrel? Now, although I do allow that an author should take care of his literary character, yet I think the least thing that his literary character can do in return is to take some care of the author, who is unfortunately, like Jeremy in *Love for Love*, furnished with a set of tastes and appetites which would do honour to the income of a Duke if he had it. Besides, I go to work with Swift *con amore*; for, like Dryden, he is an early favourite of mine. The Marmion is nearly out, and I have made one or two alterations on the third edition, with which the press is now groaning. So soon as it is, it will make the number of copies published within the space of six months amount to eight thousand,—an immense number surely, and enough to comfort the author's wounded feelings, had the claws of the reviewers been able to reach him through the *steel jack* of true Border indifference. Your Ladyship's much obliged and faithful servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

Mr. and Mrs. Morritt reached Edinburgh soon after this letter was written. Scott showed them the lions of the town and its vicinity, exactly as if he had nothing else to attend to but their gratification; and Mr. Morritt recollects with particular pleasure one long day spent in rambling along the Esk by Roslin and Hawthornden,

"Where Jonson sat in Drummond's social shade,"

down to the old haunts of Lasswade.

"When we approached that village," says the Memorandum with which Mr. Morritt favours me, "Scott, who had laid hold of my arm, turned along the road in a direction not leading to the place where the carriage was to meet us. After walking some minutes towards Edinburgh, I suggested that we were losing the scenery of the Esk, and, besides, had Dalkeith Palace yet to see. 'Yes,' said he, 'and I have been bringing you where there is little enough to be seen—only that Scotch cottage' (one by the road side, with a small garth;) 'but, though not worth looking at, I could not pass it. It was our first country house when newly married, and many a contrivance we had to make it comfortable. I made a dining-table for it with my own hands. Look at these two miserable willow-trees on either side the gate into the enclosure; they are tied together at the top to be an arch, and a cross made of two sticks over them is not yet decayed. To be sure it is not much of a lion to show a stranger; but I wanted to see it again myself, for I assure you that after I had constructed it, *mamma*' (Mrs. Scott)

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'and I both of us thought it so fine, we turned out to see it by moonlight, and walked backwards from it to the cottage door, in admiration of our own magnificence and its picturesque effect. I did want to see if it was still there—so now we will look after the barouche, and make the best of our way to Dalkeith.' Such were the natural feelings that endeared the Author of Marmion and the Lay to those who 'saw him in his happier hours of social pleasure.' His person at that time may be exactly known from Raeburn's first picture, which had just been executed for his bookseller, Constable, and which was a most faithful likeness of him and his dog Camp. The literal fidelity of the portraiture, however, is its principal merit. The expression is serious and contemplative, very unlike the hilarity and vivacity then habitual to his speaking face, but quite true to what it was in the absence of such excitement. His features struck me at first as commonplace and heavy,—but they were almost always lighted up by the flashes of the mind within. This required a hand more masterly than Raeburn's; and indeed, in my own opinion, Chantrey alone has in his bust attained that, in his case, most difficult task of portraying the features faithfully, and yet giving the real and transient expression of the countenance when animated.

"We passed a week in Edinburgh, chiefly in his society and that of his friends the Mackenzies. We were so far on our way to Braham Castle, in Rossshire. Scott unlocked all his antiquarian lore, and supplied us with numberless *data*, such as no guidebook could have furnished, and such as his own Monkbarns might have delighted to give. It would be idle to tell how much pleasuse and instruction his advice added to a tour in itself so productive of both, as well as of private friendships and intimacies, now too generally terminated by death, but never severed by caprice or disappointment. His was added to the number by our reception now in Edinburgh, and, on our return from the Highlands, at Ashestiel—where he had made us promise to visit him, saying that the farm-house had pigeon-holes enough for such of his friends as could live, like him, on Tweed salmon and Forest mutton. There he was the cherished friend and kind neighbour of every middling Selkirkshire yeoman, just as easily as in Edinburgh he was the companion of clever youth and narrative old age in refined society. He carried us one day to Melrose Abbey or Newark—another, to course with mountain greyhounds by Yarrow braes or St. Mary's loch, repeating every ballad or legendary tale connected with the scenery—and on a third, we must all go to a farmer's *kirn*, or harvest-home, to dance with Border lasses on a barn floor, drink whisky punch, and enter with him into all the gossip and good fellowship of his neighbours, on a complete footing of unrestrained conviviality, equality, and mutual respect. His wife and happy young family were clustered round him, and the cordiality of his reception would have unbent a misanthrope.

"At this period his conversation was more equal and animated than any man's that I ever knew. It was most characterized by the extreme felicity and fun of his illustrations, drawn from the whole encyclopædia of life and nature, in a style sometimes too exuberant for written narrative, but which to him was natural and spontaneous. A hundred stories, always apposite, and often interesting the mind by strong pathos, or eminently ludicrous, were daily told, which, with many more, have since been transplanted, almost in the same language, into the Waverley novels and his other writings. These, and his recitations of poetry, which can never be forgotten by those who knew him, made up the charm that his boundless memory enabled him to exert to the wonder of the gaping lovers of wonders. But equally impressive and powerful was the language of his warm heart, and equally wonderful were the conclusions of his vigorous understanding, to those who could return or appreciate either. Among a number of such recollections, I have seen many of the thoughts which then passed through his mind embodied in the delightful prefaces annexed late in life to his poetry and novels. Those on literary quarrels and literary irritability are exactly what he then expressed. Keenly enjoying literature as he did, and indulging his own love of it in perpetual composition, he always maintained the same estimate of it as subordinate and auxiliary to the purposes of life, and rather talked of men and events than of books and criticism. Literary fame, he always said, was a bright feather in the cap, but not the substantial cover of a well-protected head. This sound and manly feeling was what I have seen described by some of his biographers as *pride*; and it will always be thought so by those whose own vanity can only be gratified by the admiration of others, and who mistake shows for realities. None valued the love and applause of others more than Scott; but it was to the love and applause of those he valued in return that he restricted the feeling—without restricting the kindness. Men who did not, or would not, understand this, perpetually mistook him—and, after loading him with undesired eulogy, perhaps in his own house neglected common attention or civility to other parts of his family. It was on such an occasion that I heard him murmur in my ear, 'Author as I am, I wish these good people would recollect that I began with being a gentleman, and don't mean to give up the character.' Such was all along his feeling, and this, with a slight prejudice common to Scotchmen in favour of ancient and respectable family descent, constituted what in Grub Street is called his *pride*. It was, at least, what Johnson would have justly called *defensive* pride. From all other, and still more from mere vanity, I never knew any man so remarkably free."

The farmer at whose annual *kirn* Scott and all his household were, in those days, regular guests, was Mr. Laidlaw, the Duke of Buccleuch's tenant on the lands of Peel, which are only separated from the eastern terrace of Ashestiel by the ravine and its brook. Mr. Laidlaw was himself possessed of some landed property in the same neighbourhood, and being considered as wealthy, and fond of his wealth, he was usually called among the country people *Laird Nippy*; an expressive designation which it would be difficult to translate. Though a very dry, demure, and taciturn old presbyterian, he could not resist the sheriff's jokes; nay, he even gradually subdued his scruples so far, as to become a pretty constant attendant at his "*English printed prayers*" on the Sunday; which, indeed, were by this time rather more popular than quite suited the capacity of the parlour-chapel. Mr. Laidlaw's wife was a woman of superior mind and manners—a great reader, and one of the few to whom Scott liked lending his books; for most strict and delicate was he always in the care of them, and indeed, hardly any trivial occurrence ever seemed to touch his temper at all, except any thing like irreverent treatment of a book. The intercourse between the family at Ashestiel and this worthy woman and her children, was a constant interchange of respect and kindness; but I remember to have heard Scott say, that the greatest compliment he had ever received in his life was from the rigid old farmer himself; for, years after he had left Ashestiel, he discovered casually that special care had been taken to keep the turf seat on *the Shirra's knowe* in good repair: and this was much from Nippy.

And here I must set down a story which, most readers will smile to be told, was often repeated by Scott; and always with an air that seemed to me, in spite of his endeavours to the contrary, as grave as the usual aspect of Laird Nippy of the Peel. This neighbour was a distant kinsman of his dear friend William Laidlaw;—so distant, that elsewhere in that condition they would scarcely have remembered any community of blood;—but they both traced their descent, in the ninth degree, to an ancestress who, in the days of John Knox, fell into troubles from a suspicion of witchcraft. In her time the Laidlaws were rich and prosperous, and held rank among the best gentry of Tweeddale; but in some

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evil hour, her husband, the head of his blood, reproached her with her addiction to the black art, and she, in her anger, cursed the name and lineage of Laidlaw. Her only son, who stood by, implored her to revoke the malediction; but in vain. Next day, however, on the renewal of his entreaties, she carried him with her into the woods, made him slay a heifer, sacrificed it to the power of evil in his presence, and then, collecting the ashes in her apron, invited the youth to see her commit them to the river. "Follow them," said she, "from stream to pool, as long as they float visible, and as many streams as you shall then have passed, for so many generations shall your descendants prosper. After that they shall, like the rest of the name, be poor, and take their part in my curse." The streams he counted were nine; and now, Scott would say, "look round you in this country, and sure enough the Laidlaws are one and all landless men, with the single exception of Auld Nippy!" Many times had I heard both him and William Laidlaw tell the story, before any suspicion got abroad that Nippy's wealth rested on insecure foundations. Year after year, we never escorted a stranger by the Peel, but I heard the tale;—and at last it came with a new conclusion;—"and now, think whatever we choose of it, my good friend Nippy is a bankrupt."

Mr. Morritt's mention of the "heppy young family clustered round him" at Laird Nippy's *kirn*, reminds me that I ought to say a few words on Scott's method of treating his children in their early days. He had now two boys and two girls;—and he never had more.* He was not one of those who take much delight in a mere infant; but no father ever devoted more time and tender care to his offspring than he did to each of his, as they successively reached the age when they could listen to him and understand his talk. Like their mute playmates, Camp and the greyhounds, they had at all times free access to his study; he never considered their tattle as any disturbance; they went and came as pleased their fancy; he was always ready to answer their questions; and when they, unconscious how he was engaged, entreated him to lay down his pen and tell them a story, he would take them on his knee, repeat a ballad or a legend, kiss them, and set them down again to their marbles or ninepins, and resume his labour as if refreshed by the interruption. From a very early age he made them dine at table, and "to sit up to supper" was the great reward when they had been "very good bairns." In short, he considered it as the highest duty as well as the sweetest pleasure of a parent to be the companion of his children; he partook all their little joys and sorrows, and made his kind unformal instructions to blend so easily and playfully with the current of their own sayings and doings, that so far from regarding him with any distant awe, it was never thought that any sport or diversion could go on in the right way, unless papa were of the party, or that the raniest day could be dull so he were at home.

Of the irregularity of his own education he speaks with considerable regret, in the autobiographical fragment written this year at Ashestiel; yet his practice does not look as if that feeling had been strongly rooted in his mind;—for he never did show much concern about regulating systematically what is usually called education in the case of his own children. It seemed, on the contrary, as if he attached little importance to any thing else, so he could perceive that the young curiosity was excited—the intellect, by whatever springs of interest, set in motion. He detested and despised the whole generation of modern children's books, in which the attempt is made to convey accurate notions of scientific minutiæ: delighting cordially, on the other hand, in those of the preceding age, which, addressing themselves chiefly to the imagination, obtain through it, as he believed, the best chance of stirring our graver faculties also. He exercised the memory, by selecting for tasks of recitation passages of popular verse the most likely to catch the fancy of children; and gradually familiarized them with the ancient history of their own country, by arresting attention, in the course of his own oral narrations, on incidents and characters of a similar description. Nor did he neglect to use the same means of quickening curiosity as to the events of sacred history. On Sunday he never rode—at least not until his growing infirmity made his pony almost necessary to him—for it was his principle that all domestic animals have a full right to their Sabbath of rest; but after he had read the church service, he usually walked with his whole family, dogs included, to some favourite spot at a considerable distance from the house—most frequently the ruined tower of Elibank—and there dined with them in the open air on a basket of cold provisions, mixing his wine with the water of the brook beside which they all were grouped around him on the turf; and here, or at home, if the weather kept them from their ramble, his Sunday talk was just such a series of biblical lessons as that which we have preserved for the permanent use of rising generations, in his Tales of a Grandfather on the early history of Scotland. I wish he had committed that other series to writing too;—how different that would have been from our thousand compilations of dead epitome and imbecile cant! He had his Bible, the Old Testament especially, by heart; and on these days inwove the simple pathos or sublime enthusiasm of Scripture, in whatever story he was telling, with the same picturesque richness as he did, in his week-day tales, the quaint Scotch of Pitscottie, or some rude romantic old rhyme from Barbour's Bruce or Blind Harry's Wallace.

By many external accomplishments, either in girl or boy, he set little store. He delighted to hear his daughters sing an old ditty, or one of his own framing; but, so the singer appeared to feel the spirit of her ballad, he was not at all critical of the technical execution. There was one thing, however, on which he fixed his heart hardly less than the ancient Persians of the Cyropædia; like them, next to love of truth, he held love of horsemanship for the prime point of education. As soon as his eldest girl could sit a pony, she was made the regular attendant of his mountain rides; and they all, as they attained sufficient strength, had the like advancement. He taught them to think nothing of tumbles, and habituated them to his own reckless delight in perilous fords and flooded streams; and they all imbibed in great perfection his passion for horses—as well, I may venture to add, as his deep reverence for the more important article of that Persian training. "Without courage," he said, "there cannot be truth; and without truth there can be no other virtue."

He had a horror of boarding-schools; never allowed his girls to learn any thing out of his own house; and chose their governess—(Miss Miller)—who about this time was domesticated with them, and never left them while they needed one,—with far greater regard to her kind good temper and excellent moral and religious principles, than to the measure of her attainments in what are called fashionable accomplishments. The admirable system of education for boys in Scotland combines all the advantages of public and private instruction; his carried their satchels to the High-School, when the family was in Edinburgh, just as he had done before them, and shared of course the evening society

*I may as well transcribe here the rest of the record in Scott's family Bible. After what was quoted in a former chapter it thus proceeds:

"21st die Octobris, 1799.—Margareta C. Scott, filiam apud Edinburgum edidit. 15to Novembris, 1799, in Ecclesiam Christianam recepta fuit per baptismum dicta filia, nomenque ei adjectum Charlotta Sophia, per virum reverendum Danielem Sandford; sponsoribus prænobili Arthuro Marchione de Downshire, Sophia Duemerge, et Anna Rutherford matre mea.

"Margareta C. Scott puerum edidit 28vo Octobris, A. D. 1801 apud Edinburgum; nomenque ei adjectum Gualterus, cum per v. rev. Doctorem Danielem Sandford baptizatus erat.

"M. C. Scott filiam edidit apud Edinburgum 30o die Februarii, 1803, quæ in Ecclesiam recepta fuit per virum reverendum Doctorem Sandford, nomenque ei adjectum Anna Scott.

"26to Decem: 1805.—M. C. Scott apud Edinburgum puerum edidit; qui baptizatus erat per virum reverendum Joannem Thomson, Ministrum de Duddingstone prope Edinburgum, nomenque Carolus III datum."

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of their happy home. But he rarely, if ever, left them in town, when he could himself be in the country; and at Ashestiel he was, for better or for worse, his eldest boy's daily tutor after he began Latin.

The following letter will serve, among other things, to supply a few more details of the domestic life of Ashestiel:—

To Miss Joanna Baillie—Hampstead.

"Sept. 20, 1808.

"My dear Miss Baillie,

"The law, you know, makes the husband answerable for the debts of his wife, and therefore gives him a right to approach her creditors with an offer of payment; so that, after witnessing many fruitless and broken resolutions of my Charlotte, I am determined, rather than she and I shall appear longer insensible of your goodness, to intrude a few lines on you to answer the letter you honoured her with some time ago. The secret reason of her procrastination is, I believe, some terror of writing in English—which you know is not her native language—to one who is as much distinguished by her command of it as by the purposes she adapts it to. I wish we had the command of what my old friend Pitscottie calls 'a blink of the sun or a whip of the whirlwind,' to transport you to this solitude before the frost has stripped it of its leaves. It is not, indeed, (even I must confess,) equal in picturesque beauty to the banks of Clyde and Evan; but it is so sequestered, so simple, and so solitary, that it seems just to have beauty enough to delight its inhabitants, without a single attraction for any visiter, except those who come for its inhabitants' sake. And in good sooth, whenever I was tempted to envy the splendid scenery of the lakes of Westmoreland, I always endeavoured to cure my fit of spleen by recollecting that they attract as many idle, insipid, and indolent gazers as any celebrated beauty in the land, and that our scene of pastoral hills and pure streams is like Touchstone's mistress, a poor thing, but mine own.' I regret, however, that these celebrated beauties should have frowned, wept, or pouted upon you, when you honoured them by your visit in summer. Did Miss Agnes Baillie and you meet with any of the poetical inhabitants of that district—Wordsworth, Southey, or Coleridge? The two former would, I am sure, have been happy in paying their respects to you; with the habits and tastes of the latter I am less acquainted.

"Time has lingered with me from day to day in expectation of being called southward; I now begin to think my journey will hardly take place till winter, or early in spring. One of the most pleasant circumstances attending it will be the opportunity to pay my homage to you, and to claim withal a certain promise concerning a certain play, of which you were so kind as to promise me a reading. I hope you do not permit indolence to lay the paring of her little finger upon you; we cannot afford the interruption to your labours which even that might occasion. And 'what are *you* doing?' your politeness will perhaps lead you to say: in answer,—Why, I am very like a certain ancient King, distinguished in the Edda, who, when Lok paid him a visit,—

> 'Was twisting of collars his dogs to hold,
> And combing the mane of his courser bold.'

If this idle man's employment required any apology, we must seek it in the difficulty of seeking food to make savoury messes for our English guests; for we are eight miles from market, and must call in all the country sports to aid the larder. We had here, two days ago, a very pleasant English family, the Morritts of Rokeby Park, in Yorkshire. The gentleman wandered over all Greece, and visited the Troad, to aid in confuting the hypothesis of old Bryant, who contended that Troy town was not taken by the Greeks. His erudition is, however, not of an overbearing kind, which was lucky for me, who am but a slender classical scholar. Charlotte's kindest and best wishes attend Miss Agnes Baillie, in which I heartily and respectfully join;—to you she offers her best apology for not writing, and hopes for your kind forgiveness. I ought perhaps to make one for taking the task off her hands, but we are both at your mercy; and I am ever your most faithful, obedient and admiring servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

"P. S. I have had a visit from the author of the Poor Man's Sabbath, whose affairs with Constable are, I hope, settled to his satisfaction. I got him a few books more than were originally stipulated, and have endeavoured to interest Lord Leven,* and through him Mr. Wilberforce, and through them both the saints in general, in the success of this modest and apparently worthy man. Lord Leven has promised his exertions; and the interest of the party, if exerted, would save a work tenfold inferior in real merit. What think you of Spain? The days of William Wallace and the Cid Ruy Diaz de Biver seem to be reviving there."

* The late Earl of Leven had married a lady of the English family of Thornton, whose munificent charities are familiar to the readers of Cowper's Life and Letters; hence, probably, his Lordship's influence with the party alluded to in the text.

CHAPTER XVIII.

QUARREL WITH MESSRS. CONSTABLE AND HUNTER—JOHN BALLANTYNE ESTABLISHED AS A BOOKSELLER IN EDINBURGH—SCOTT'S LITERARY PROJECTS—THE EDINBURGH ANNUAL REGISTER, &c.—MEETING OF JAMES BALLANTYNE AND JOHN MURRAY—MURRAY'S VISIT TO ASHESTIEL—POLITICS—THE PENINSULAR WAR—PROJECT OF THE QUARTERLY REVIEW—CORRESPONDENCE WITH ELLIS, GIFFORD, MORRITT, SOUTHEY, SHARPE, &c.—1808—1809.

THE reader does not need to be reminded, that Scott at this time had business enough on his hand besides combing the mane of Brown Adam, and twisting couples for Douglas and Percy. He was deep in Swift; and the Ballantyne press was groaning under a multitude of works, some of them already mentioned, with almost all of which his hand as well as his head had something, more or less, to do. But a serious change was about to take place in his relations with the spirited publishing house which had hitherto been the most efficient supporters of that press, and his letters begin to be much occupied with differences and disputes which, uninteresting as the details would now be, must have cost him many anxious hours in the apparently idle autumn of 1808. Mr. Constable had then for his partner Mr. Alexander Gibson Hunter, afterwards Laird of Blackness, to whose intemperate language, much more than to any part of Constable's own conduct, Scott ascribed this unfortunate alienation; which, however, as well as most of my friend's subsequent misadventures, I am inclined to trace in no small degree to the influence which a third person, hitherto unnamed, was about this time beginning to exercise over the concerns of James Ballantyne.

John Ballantyne, a younger brother of Scott's school-fellow, had been originally bred to their father's trade of a *merchant*—(that is to say, a dealer in every thing from broadcloth to children's tops)—at Kelso; but James's rise in the world was not observed by him without ambitious longings; for he too had a love, and he at least fancied that he had a talent, for literature. He left Kelso abruptly for the chances of the English metropolis. After a short residence in London, where, among other things, he officiated for a few months as clerk in a banking house, the continued intelligence of the printer's prosperity determined him to return to Scotland. Not finding any opening at the moment in Edinburgh, he again tried the shop at Kelso; but his habits had not been improved by his brief sojourn in London, and the business soon melted to nothing in his hands. His goods were disposed of by auction for the benefit of his creditors—the paternal shop was finally closed; and John again quitted his birth-place, under circumstances which, as I shall show in the sequel, had left a deep and painful trace even upon that volatile mind.

He was a quick, active, intrepid little fellow; and in society so very lively and amusing, so full of fun and merriment, such a thoroughly light-hearted droll, all-over quaintness and humorous mimicry; and, moreover, such a keen and skilful devotee to all manner of field-sports, from fox-hunting to badger-baiting inclusive, that it was no wonder he should have made a favourable impression on Scott, when he appeared in Edinburgh in this destitute plight, and offered to assist his brother in the management of a concern by which James's comparatively indolent habits were now very severely tried. The contrast between the two brothers was not the least of the amusement; indeed, that continued to amuse him to

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the last. The elder of these is painted to the life in an early letter of Leyden's, which, on the doctor's death, he, though not (I fancy) without wincing, permitted Scott to print:—"Methinks I see you with your confounded black beard, bull-neck, and upper lip turned up to your nose, while one of your eyebrows is cocked perpendicularly, and the other forms pretty well the base of a right angled triangle, opening your great gloating eyes, and crying—*But, Leyden!!!*" James was a short, stout, well-made man, and would have been considered a handsome one, but for these grotesque frowns, starts, and twistings of his features, set off by a certain mock majesty of walk and gesture, which he had perhaps contracted from his usual companions, the emperors and tyrants of the stage. His voice in talk was grave and sonorous, and he sung well, (theatrically well,) in a fine rich bass. John's tone in singing was a sharp treble—in conversation something between a croak and a squeak. Of *his* style of story-telling it is sufficient to say, that the late Charles Matthews's "old Scotch lady" was but an imperfect copy of the original, which the inimitable comedian first heard in my presence from his lips. He was shorter than James, but lean as a scarecrow, and he rather hopped than walked; his features, too, were naturally good, and he twisted them about quite as much, but in a very different fashion. The elder brother was a gourmand—the younger liked his bottle and his bowl, as well as, like Johnny Armstrong, "a hawk, a hound, and a fair woman." Scott used to call the one Aldiborontiphoscophornio, the other Rigdumfunnidos. They both entertained him; they both loved and revered him; and I believe would have shed their heart's blood in his service; but they both, as men of affairs, deeply injured him—and above all, the day that brought John into pecuniary connexion with him was the blackest in his calendar. A more reckless, thoughtless, improvident adventurer, never rushed into the serious responsibilities of business; but his cleverness, his vivacity, his unaffected zeal, his gay fancy, always seeing the light side of every thing; his imperturbable good-humour and buoyant elasticity of spirits, made and kept him such a favourite, that I believe Scott would have as soon ordered his dog to be hanged, as harboured, in his darkest hour of perplexity, the least thought of discarding "jocund Johnny."

The great bookseller of Edinburgh was a man of calibre infinitely beyond these Ballantynes. Though with a strong dash of the sanguine, without which, indeed, there can be no great projector in any walk of life, Archibald Constable was one of the most sagacious persons that ever followed his profession. A brother poet of Scott says to him, a year or two before this time, "Our butteracoous friend at the Cross turns out a deep draw-well;" and another eminent literator, still more closely connected with Constable, had already, I believe, christened him "The Crafty." Indeed, his fair and very handsome physiognomy carried a bland astuteness of expression, not to be mistaken by any who could read the plainest of nature's handwriting. He made no pretensions to literature—though he was in fact a tolerable judge of it generally, and particularly well skilled in the department of Scotch antiquities. He distrusted himself, however, in such matters, being conscious that his early education had been very imperfect; and moreover, he wisely considered the business of a critic as quite as much out of his "proper line" as authorship itself. But of that "proper line," and his own qualifications for it, his estimation was ample; and—often as I may have smiled at the lofty serenity of his self-complacence—I confess I now doubt whether he rated himself too highly as a master in the true science of the bookseller. He had, indeed, in his mercantile character, one deep and fatal flaw—for he hated accounts, and systematically refused, during the most vigorous years of his life, to examine or sign a balance-sheet; but for casting a keen eye over the remotest indications of popular taste—for anticipating the chances of success and failure in any given variety of adventure—for the planning and invention of his calling—he was not, in his own day at least, surpassed; and among all his myriad of undertakings, I question if any one that really originated with himself, and continued to be superintended by his own care, ever did fail. He was as bold as far-sighted—and his disposition was as liberal as his views were wide. Had he and Scott from the beginning trusted as thoroughly as they understood each other; had there been no third parties to step in, flattering an overweening vanity on the one hand into presumption, and on the other side spurring the enterprise that wanted nothing but a bridle, I have no doubt their joint career might have been one of unbroken prosperity. But the Ballantynes were jealous of the superior mind, bearing, and authority of Constable: and though he too had a liking for them both personally—esteemed James's literary tact, and was far too much of a humourist not to be very fond of the younger brother's company—he could never away with the feeling that they intervened unnecessarily, and left him but the shadow where he ought to have had the substantial lion's share of confidence. On his part, again, he was too proud a man to give entire confidence where that was withheld from himself; and more especially, I can well believe that a frankness of communication as to the real amount of his capital and general engagements of business, which would have been the reverse of painful to him in habitually confidential intercourse with Scott, was out of the question where Scott's proposals and suggestions were to be met in conference, not with his own manly simplicity, but the buckram pomposity of the one, or the burlesque levity of the other of his plenipotentiaries.

The disputes in question seem to have begun very shortly after the contract for the Life and Edition of Swift had been completed; and we shall presently see reason to infer that Scott to a certain degree was influenced at the moment by a soreness originating in the recent conduct of Mr. Jeffrey's Journal—that great primary source of the wealth and authority of the house of Constable. The then comparatively little-known bookseller of London, who was destined to be ultimately Constable's most formidable rival in more than one department of publishing, has told me, that when he read the article on Marmion, and another on general politics, in the same number of the Edinburgh Review, he said to himself—"Walter Scott has feelings both as a gentleman and a Tory, which these people must now have wounded. The alliance between him and the whole clique of the Edinburgh Review, its proprietor included, is shaken;" and, as far at least as the political part of the affair was concerned, John Murray's sagacity was not at fault. We have seen with what thankful alacrity he accepted a small share in the adventure of Marmion—and with what brilliant success that was crowned; nor, is it wonderful that a young bookseller, conscious of ample energies, should now have watched with eagerness the circumstances which seemed not unlikely to place within his own reach a more intimate connexion with the first great living author in whose works he had ever had any direct interest. He forthwith took measures for improving and extending his relations with James Ballantyne, through whom, as he guessed, Scott could best be approached. His tenders of employment for the Canongate press were such, that the apparent head of the firm proposed a conference at Ferrybridge, in Yorkshire; and there Murray, after detailing some of his own literary plans—particularly that already alluded to, of a Novelist's Library—in his turn sounded Ballantyne so far, as to resolve at once on pursuing his journey into Scotland. Ballantyne had said enough to satisfy him that the project of setting up a new publishing house in Edinburgh, in opposition to Constable, was already all but matured; and he, on the instant, proposed himself for its active co-operator in the metropolis. Ballantyne proceeded to open his budget, further mentioning, among other things, that the author of Marmion had "both another Scotch poem and a *Scotch novel* on the stocks;" and had, moreover,

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chalked out the design of an Edinburgh Annual Register, to be conducted in opposition to the politics and criticism of Constable's Review. These tidings might have been enough to make Murray proceed farther northward; but there was a scheme of his own which had for some time deeply occupied his mind, and the last article of this communication determined him to embrace the opportunity of opening it in person at Ashestiel. He arrived there about the middle of October. The 26th Number of the Edinburgh Review, containing Mr. Brougham's celebrated article, entitled, "Don Cevallos, on the usurpation of Spain," had just been published; and one of the first things Scott mentioned in conversation was, that he had so highly resented the tone of that essay, as to give orders that his name might be discontinued on the list of subscribers.* Mr. Murray could not have wished better auspices for the matter he had come to open; and, shortly after his departure, Scott writes as follows, to his prime political confidant :—

To George Ellis, Esq., Claremont.

"Ashestiel, Nov. 2d, 1808.

"Dear Ellis,

"We had, equally to our joy and surprise, a flying visit from Heber, about three weeks ago. He staid but three days—but, between old stories and new, we made them very merry in their passage. During his stay, John Murray, the bookseller in Fleet Street, who has more real knowledge of what concerns his business than any of his brethren—at least than any of them that I know—came to canvass a most important plan, of which I am now, in 'dern privacie,' to give you the outline. I had most strongly recommended to our Lord Advocate† to think of some counter measures against the Edinburgh Review, which, politically speaking, is doing incalculable damage. I do not mean this in a mere party view;—the present ministry are not all that I could wish them—for (Canning excepted) I doubt there is among them too much *self-seeking*, as it was called in Cromwell's time; and what is their misfortune, if not their fault, there is not among them one in the decided situation of paramount authority, both with respect to the others and to the Crown, which is, I think, necessary, at least in difficult times, to produce promptitude, regularity, and efficiency in measures of importance. But their political principles are sound English principles, and compared to the greedy and inefficient horde which preceded them, they are angels of light and of purity. It is obvious, however, that they want defenders both in and out of doors. Pitt's

——'Love and fear glued many friends to him;
And now he's fallen, those tough commixtures melt.'

Were this only to effect a change of hands, I should expect it with more indifference; but I fear a change of principles is designed. The Edinburgh Review tells you coolly, 'We foresee a speedy revolution in this country as well as Mr. Cobbett;' and, to say the truth, by degrading the person of the Sovereign—exalting the power of the French armies, and the wisdom of their counsels—holding forth that peace (which they allow can only be purchased by the humiliating prostration of our honour) is indispensable to the very existence of this country—I think, that for these two years past, they have done their utmost to hasten the accomplishment of their own prophecy. Of this work 9000 copies are printed quarterly, and no genteel family *can* pretend to be without it, because, independent of its politics, it gives the only valuable literary criticism which can be met with. Consider, of the numbers who read this work, how many are there likely to separate the literature from the politics—how many youths are there upon whose minds the flashy and bold character of the work is likely to make an indelible impression; and think what the consequence is likely to be.

"Now, I think there is balm in Gilead for all this; and that the cure lies in instituting such a Review in London as should be conducted totally independent of bookselling influence, on a plan as liberal as that of the Edinburgh, its literature as well supported, and its principles English and constitutional. Accordingly, I have been given to understand that Mr. William Gifford is willing to become the conductor of such a work, and I have written to him, at the Lord Advocate's desire, a very voluminous letter on the subject. Now, should this plan succeed, you must hang your birding-piece on its hooks, take down your old Anti-jacobin armour, and 'remember your swashing blow.' It is not that I think this projected Review ought to be exclusively or principally political—this would, in my opinion, absolutely counteract its purpose, which I think should be to offer to those who love their country, and to those whom we would wish to love it, a periodical work of criticism, conducted with equal talent, but upon sounder principle, than that which has gained so high a station in the world of letters. Is not this very possible? In point of learning, you Englishmen have ten times our scholarship; and as for talent and genius, 'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than any of the rivers in Israel?' Have we not yourself and your cousin, the Roses, Malthus, Matthias, Gifford, Heber, and his brother? Can I not procure you a score of blue-caps who would rather write for us than for the Edinburgh Review, if they got as much pay by it? 'A good plot, good friends, and full of expectation—an excellent plot, excellent friends!'

"Heber's fear was, lest we should fail in procuring regular steady contributors; but I know so much of the interior discipline of reviewing, as to have no apprehension of that. Provided we are once set a-going by a few dashing numbers, there would be no far of enlisting regular contributors; but the amateurs must bestir themselves in the first instance. From government we should be entitled to expect confidential communication as to points of fact (so far as to be made public) in our political disquisitions. With this advantage, our good cause and St. George to boot, we may at least divide the field with our formidable competitors, who, after all, are much better at cutting than parrying, and whom uninterrupted triumph has as much unfitted for resisting a serious attack, as it has done Buonaparte for the Spanish war. Jeffrey is, to be sure, a man of most uncommon versatility of talent, but what then?

'General Howe is a gallant commander,
There are others as gallant as he.'

Think of all this, and let me hear from you very soon on the subject. Canning is, I have good reason to know, very anxious about the plan. I mentioned it to Robert Dundas, who was here with his lady for two days on a pilgrimage to Melrose, and he approved highly of it. Though no literary man, he is judicious, *clair-voyant*, and uncommonly sound-headed, like his father, Lord Melville. With the exceptions I have mentioned, the thing continues a secret.

"I am truly happy you think well of the Spanish business: they have begun in a truly manly and rounded manner, and barring internal dissension, are, I think, very likely to make their part good. Buonaparte's army has come to assume such a very motley description as gives good hope of its crumbling down on the frost of adversity setting in. The Germans and Italians have deserted him in troops, and I greatly doubt his being able to assemble a very huge force at the foot of the Pyrenees, unless he trusts that the terror of his name will be sufficient to keep Germany in subjugation, and Austria in awe. The finances of your old Russian friends are said to be ruined out and out; such is the account we have from Leith.

"Enough of this talk. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The readiness with which Mr. Ellis entered into the scheme thus introduced to his notice, encouraged Scott to write still more fully; indeed, I might fill half a volume with the correspondence now before me concerning the gradual organization, and ultimately successful establishment of the Quarterly Review. But my only object is to illustrate the liberality and sagacity of Scott's views on such a subject, and the characteristic mixture of strong and playful language in which he developed them; and I conceive that this end will be sufficiently accomplished, by extracting two more letters of this bulky series. Already, as we have seen, before opening the matter even to Ellis, he had been requested to communicate his sentiments to the proposed editor of the work, and he had done so in these terms :—

To William Gifford, Esq., London.

"Edinburgh, October 25, 1808.

"Sir,

"By a letter from the Lord Advocate of Scotland,

* 'When the 26th Number appeared, Mr. Scott wrote to Constable in these terms :—"The Edinburgh Review *had* become such as to render it impossible for me to continue a contributor to it.—*Now*, it is such as I can no longer continue to receive or read it." The list of the then subscribers exhibits in an indignant dash of Constable's pen opposite Mr. Scott's name, the word—"STOPT!!!"'—*Letter from Mr. R. Cadell.*

† The Right Hon. John Campbell Colquhoun, husband of Scott's early friend, Mary Anne Erskine.

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in consequence of communication between his Lordship and Mr. Canning on the subject of a new Review to be attempted in London, I have the pleasure to understand that you have consented to become the editor, a point which, in my opinion, goes no small way to ensure success to the undertaking. In offering a few observations upon the details of such a plan, I only obey the commands of our distinguished friends, without having the vanity to hope that I can point out any thing which was not likely to have at once occurred to a person of Mr. Gifford's literary experience and eminence. I shall, however, beg permission to offer you my sentiments, in the miscellaneous way in which they occur to me. The extensive reputation and circulation of the Edinburgh Review is chiefly owing to two circumstances: First, that it is entirely uninfluenced by the booksellers, who have contrived to make most of the other Reviews merely advertising sheets to puff off their own publications; and, secondly, the very handsome recompense which the editor not only holds forth to his regular assistants, but actually forces upon those whose circumstances and rank make it a matter of total indifference to them. The editor, to my knowledge, makes a point of every contributor receiving this *bonus*, saying, that Czar Peter, when working in the trenches, received pay as a common soldier. This general rule removes all scruples of delicacy, and fires in his service a number of persons who might otherwise have felt shy in taking the price of their labours, and even the more so because it was an object of convenience to them. There are many young men of talent and enterprise who are extremely glad of a handsome apology to work for fifteen or twenty guineas, although they would not willingly be considered as hired *reviewers*. From this I deduce two points of doctrine: *first*, that the work must be considered as independent of all bookselling influence; secondly, that the labours of the contributors must be regularly and handsomely recompensed, and that it must be a rule that each one shall accept of the price of his labour. John Murray of Fleet Street, a young bookseller of capital and enterprise, and with more good sense and propriety of sentiment than fall to the share of most of the trade, made me a visit at Ashestiel a few weeks ago, and as I found he had some communication with you upon the subject, I did not hesitate to communicate my sentiments to him on these and some other points of the plan, and I thought his ideas were most liberal and satisfactory.

"The office of the editor is of such importance, that had you not been pleased to undertake it, I fear the plan would have fallen wholly to the ground. The full power of control must, of course, be vested in the editor, for selecting, curtailing, and correcting the contributions to the Review. But this is not all; for, as he is the person immediately responsible to the bookseller that the work (amounting to a certain number of pages, more or less) shall be before the public at a certain time, it will be the editor's duty to consider in due time the articles of which each number ought to consist, and to take measures for procuring them from the persons best qualified to write upon such and such subjects. But this is sometimes so troublesome, that I foresee with pleasure you will be soon obliged to abandon your resolution of writing nothing yourself. At the same time, if you will accept of my services as a sort of jackal or lion's provider, I will do all in my power to assist in this troublesome department of editorial duty. But there is still something behind, and that of the last consequence. One great resource to which the Edinburgh editor turns himself, and by which he gives popularity even to the duller articles of his Review, is accepting contributions from persons of inferior powers of writing, provided they understand the books to which the criticisms relate; and as such are often of stupifying mediocrity, he renders them palatable by throwing in a handful of spice—namely, any lively paragraph or entertaining illustration that occurs to him in reading them over. By this sort of veneering, he converts, without loss of time, or hinderance of business, articles which, in their original state, might hang in the market, into such goods as are not likely to disgrace those among which they are placed. This seems to be a point in which an editor's assistance is of the last consequence, for those who possess the knowledge necessary to review books of research or abstruse disquisition, are very often unable to put the criticism into a readable, much more a pleasant and captivating form; and as their science cannot be attained 'for the nonce,' the only remedy is to supply their deficiencies, and give their lucubrations a more popular turn.

"There is one opportunity possessed by you in a particular degree—that of access to the best sources of political information. It would not, certainly, be advisable that the work should assume, especially at the outset, a professed political character. On the contrary, the articles on science and miscellaneous literature ought to be of such a quality as might fairly challenge competition with the best of our contemporaries. But as the real reason of instituting the publication is the disgusting and deleterious doctrine with which the most popular of our Reviews disgraces its pages, it is essential to consider how this warfare should be managed. On this ground, I hope it is not too much to expect from those who have the power of assisting us, that they should on topics of great national interest furnish the reviewers, through the medium of their editor, with accurate views of points of fact, so far as they are fit to be made public. This is the most delicate, and yet most essential part of our scheme. On the one hand, it is certainly not to be understood that we are to be held down to advocate upon all occasions the cause of administration. Such a dereliction of independence would render us entirely useless for the purpose we mean to serve. On the other hand, nothing will render the work more interesting than the public learning, not from any vaunt of ours, but from their own observation, that we have access to early and accurate information in point of fact. The Edinburgh Review has profited much by the pains which the Opposition party have taken to possess the writers of all the information they could give them on public matters. Let me repeat that you, my dear sir, from enjoying the confidence of Mr. Canning and other persons in power, may easily obtain the confidential information necessary to give credit to the work, and communicate it to such as you may think proper to employ in laying it before the public.

"Concerning the mode and time of publication, I think you will be of opinion that monthly, in the present dearth of good subjects of Review, would be too often, and that a quarterly publication would both give you less trouble, and be amply sufficient for discussing all that is likely to be worth discussion. The name to be assumed is of some consequence, though any one of little pretension will do. We might, for example, revive the 'English Review,' which was the name of Gilbert Stewart's. Regular correspondents ought to be sought after, but I should be little afraid of finding such, were the reputation of the Review once decidedly established by three or four numbers of the very first order. As it would be essential to come on the public by surprise, that no unreasonable expectation or artificial misrepresentation might prejudice its success, the authors employed in the first number ought to be few and of the first rate. The choosing of subjects would also be a matter of anxious consideration; for example, a good and distinct essay on Spanish affairs would be sufficient to give a character to the work. The lucubrations of the Edinburgh Review, on that subject, have done the work great injury with the public, and I am convinced that of the many thousands of copies now distributed of each Number, the quantity might be reduced one half at least, by any work appearing, which, with the same literary talent and independent character, should speak a political language more familiar to the British ear than that of subjugation to France. At the same time, as I before hinted, it will be necessary to maintain the respect of the public by impartial disquisition; and I would not have it said, as may usually be predicated of other Reviews, that the sentiments of the critic were less determined by the value of the work than by the purpose it was written to serve. If a weak brother will unadvisedly put forth his hand to support even the ark of the constitution, I would expose his arguments, though I might approve of his intention and of his conclusions. I should think an open and express declaration of political tenets, or of opposition to works of a contrary tendency, ought for the same reason to be avoided. I think, from the little observation I have made, that the Whigs suffer most deeply from cool sarcastic reasoning and occasional ridicule. Having long had a sort of command of the press, from the neglect of all literary assistance on the part of those who thought their good cause should fight its own battle, they are apt to feel with great acuteness any assault in that quarter; and having been long accustomed to push, have in some degree lost the power to parry. It will not, therefore, be long before they make some violent retort, and I should not be surprised if it were to come through the Edinburgh Review. We might then come into close combat with a much better grace than if we had thrown down a formal defiance. I am, therefore, for going into a state of hostility without any formal declaration of war. Let our forces for a number or two consist of volunteers and amateurs, and when we have acquired some reputation, we shall soon levy and discipline forces of the line.

"After all, the matter is become very serious,—eight or nine thousand copies of the Edinburgh Review are regularly distributed, merely because there is no other respectable and independent publication of the kind. In this city, where there is not one Whig out of twenty

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men who read the work, many hundreds are sold; and how long the generality of readers will continue to dislike politics, so artfully mingled with information and amusement, is worthy of deep consideration. But it is not yet too late to stand in the breach; the first number ought, if possible, to be out in January, and if it can burst among them like a bomb, without previous notice, the effect will be more striking. Of those who might be intrusted in the first instance, you are a much better judge than I am. I think I can command the assistance of a friend or two here, particularly William Erskine, the Lord Advocate's brother-in-law, and my most intimate friend. In London you have Malthus, George Ellis, the Roses, *cum pluribus aliis*. Richard Heber was with me when Murray came to my farm, and knowing his zeal for the good cause, I let him into our counsels. In Mr. Frere we have the hopes of a potent ally. The Rev. Reginald Heber would be an excellent coadjutor, and when I come to town I will sound Matthias. As strict secrecy would of course be observed, the diffidence of many might be overcome;—for scholars you can be at no loss while Oxford stands where it did,—and I think there will be no deficiency in the scientific articles.

"Once more I have to apologize for intruding on you this hasty, and therefore long, and probably confused letter; I trust your goodness will excuse my expressing any apology for submitting to your better judgment my sentiments on a plan of such consequence. I expect to be called to London early in the winter, perhaps next month. If you see Murray, as I suppose you will, I presume you will communicate to him such of my sentiments as have the good fortune to coincide with yours. Among the works in the first Number, Fox's history, Grattan's speeches, a notable subject for a quizzing article, and any tract or pamphlet that will give an opportunity to treat of the Spanish affairs, would be desirable subjects of criticism.—I am, with great respect, sir, your most obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

On the 18th of November, Scott enclosed to Mr. Ellis "the rough scroll" (that now transcribed) of his letter to Mr. Gifford;—"this being," he says, "one of the very few epistles of which I thought it will be as well to retain a copy." He then proceeds as follows:—

"Supposing you to have read said scroll, you must know further, that it has been received in a most favourable manner by Mr. Gifford, who approves of its contents in all respects, and that Mr. Canning has looked it over, and promised such aid as is therein required. I therefore wish you to be apprised fully of what could hardly be made the subject of writing, unless in all the confidence of friendship. Let me touch a string of much delicacy—the political character of the Review. It appears to me that this should be of a liberal and enlarged nature, resting upon principles—indulgent and conciliatory as far as possible upon mere party questions—but stern in detecting and exposing all attempts to sap our constitutional fabric. Religion is another slippery station; here also I would endeavour to be as impartial as the subject will admit of. This character of impartiality, as well as the maintenance of a high reputation in literature, is of as great consequence to such of our friends as are in the Ministry, as our more direct efforts in their favour; for these will only be successful in proportion to the influence we shall acquire by an extensive circulation; to procure which, the former qualities will be essentially necessary. Now, *entre nous*, will not our editor be occasionally a little warm and pepperish?—essential qualities in themselves, but which should not quite constitute the leading character of such a publication. This is worthy of a *memento*.

"As our start is of such immense consequence, don't you think Mr. Canning, though unquestionably our Atlas, might for a day find a Hercules on whom to devolve the burthen of the globe, while he writes us a review? I know what an audacious request this is; but suppose he should, as great statesmen sometimes do, take a political fit of the gout, and absent himself from a large ministerial dinner, which might give it him in good earnest,—dine at three on a chicken and pint of wine,—and lay the foundation at least of one good article? Let us but once get afloat, and our labour is not worth talking of; but, till then, all hands must work hard.

"Is it necessary to say that I agree entirely with you in the mode of treating even delinquents? The truth is, there is policy, as well as morality, in keeping our swords clear as well as sharp, and not forgetting the gentlemen in the critics. The public appetite is soon gorged with any particular style. The common Reviews, before the appearance of the Edinburgh, had become extremely mawkish; and, unless when prompted by the malice of the bookseller or reviewer, gave a dawdling, mauding sort of applause to every thing that reached even mediocrity. The Edinburgh folks squeezed into their sauce plenty of acid, and were popular from novelty as well as from merit. The minor Reviews and other periodical publications, have *outréd* the matter still farther, and given us all abuse, and no talent. But by the time the language of vituperative criticism becomes general—(which is now pretty nearly the case)—it affects the tympanum of the public ear no more than rogue or rascal from the cage of a parrot or blood-and-wounds from a horse-barrack. This, therefore, we have to trust to, that decent, lively, and reflecting criticism, teaching men not to abuse books only, but to read and to judge them, will have the effect of novelty upon a public wearied with universal efforts at blackguard and indiscriminating satire. I have a long and very sensible letter from John Murray the bookseller, in which he touches upon this point very neatly. By the by, little Weber may be very useful upon antiquarian subjects, in the way of collecting information and making remarks; only, you or I must rewrite his lucubrations. I use him often as a pair of eyes in consulting books and collating, and as a pair of hands in making extracts. Constable, the great Edinburgh editor, has offended me excessively, by tyrannizing over this poor Teutcher, and being rather rude when I interfered. It is a chance but I may teach him that he should not kick down the scaffolding before his house is quite built. Another bomb is about to break on him besides the Review. This is an Edinburgh Annual Register, to be conducted under the auspices of James Ballantyne, who is himself no despicable composer, and has secured excellent assistance. I cannot help him, of course, very far, but I will certainly lend him a lift as an adviser. I want all my friends to befriend this work, and will send you a *prospectus* when it is published. It will be *valde* anti-Foxite. This is a secret for the present.

"For heaven's sake do not fail to hold a meeting as soon as you can. Gifford will be admirable at service, but will require, or I mistake him much, both a spur and a bridle—a spur on account of habits of literary indolence induced by weak health—and a bridle, because, having renounced in some degree general society, he cannot be supposed to have the habitual and instinctive feeling enabling him to judge at once and decidedly on the mode of letting his shafts fly down the breeze of popular opinion. But he has worth, wit, learning, and extensive information; is the friend of our friends in power, and can easily correspond with them; is in no danger of having private quarrels fixed on him for public criticism; nor very likely to be embarrassed by being thrown into action in public life alongside of the very people he has reviewed, and probably offended. All this is of the last importance to the discharge of his arduous duty. It would be cruel to add a word to this merciless epistle, excepting love to Mrs. Ellis and all friends. Leyden, by the by, is triumphant at Calcutta—a *Judge*, of all things!—and making money! He has flourished like a green bay tree under the auspices of Lord Minto, his countryman. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

Among others whom Scott endeavoured to enlist in the service of the new Review was his brother Thomas, who on the breaking up of his affairs in Edinburgh, had retired to the Isle of Man, and who shortly afterwards obtained the office in which he died, that of paymaster to the 70th regiment. The poet had a high opinion of his brother's literary talents, and thought that his knowledge of our ancient dramatists, and his vein of comic narration, might render him a very useful recruit. He thus communicates his views to Thomas Scott, on the 19th November, and, as might be expected, the communication is fuller and franker than any other on the subject.

To Thomas Scott, Esq., Douglas, Isle of Man.

"Dear Tom,

"Owing to certain pressing business, I have not yet had time to complete my collection of Shadwell* for you, though it is now nearly ready.—I wish you to have all the originals to collate with the edition in 8vo. But I have a more pressing employment for your pen, and to which I think it particularly suited. You are to be informed, but under the seal of the strictest secrecy, that

* Mr. T. Scott had meditated an edition of Shadwell's plays,—which, by the way, his brother considered as by no means meriting the utter neglect into which they have fallen, chiefly in consequence of Dryden's satire.

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a plot has been long hatching by the gentlemen who were active in the Anti-jacobin paper, to countermine the Edinburgh Review, by establishing one which should display similar talent and independence, with a better stock of politics. The management of this work was much pressed upon me;* but though great prospects of emolument were held out, I declined so arduous a task, and it has devolved upon Mr. Gifford, author of the Baviad, with whose wit and learning you are well acquainted. He made it a stipulation, however, that I should give all the assistance in my power, especially at the commencement; to which I am, for many reasons, nothing loth. Now, as I know no one who possesses more power of humour or perception of the ridiculous than yourself, I think your leisure hours might be most pleasantly passed in this way. Novels, light poetry, and quizzical books of all kinds, might be sent you by the packet; you glide back your reviews in the same way, and touch, upon the publication of the number, (quarterly,) ten guineas per printed sheet of sixteen pages. If you are shy of communicating directly with Gifford, you may, for some time at least, send your communications through me, and I will, revise them. We want the matter to be a *profound secret* till the first number is out. If you agree to try your skill, I will send you a novel or two. You must understand, as Gadshill tells the Chamberlain, that you are to be leagued with 'Trojans that thou dreamest not of, the which for sport sake are content to do the profession some grace;' and thus far I assure you that, if by paying attention to your style and subject you can distinguish yourself creditably, it may prove a means of finding you powerful friends were any thing opening in your island. Constable, or rather that Bear his partner, has behaved to me of late not very civilly, and I owe Jeffrey a flap with a fox-tail on account of his review of Marmion, and thus doth the whirligig of time bring about my revenges. The late articles on Spain have given general disgust, and many have given up the Edinburgh Review on account of them.

"My mother holds out very well, and talks of writing by this packet. Her cask of herrings, as well as ours, red and white, have arrived safe, and prove most excellent. We have been both dining and supping upon them with great gusto, and are much obliged by your kindness in remembering us. Yours affectionately,

W. S."

I suspect, notwithstanding the opinion to the contrary expressed in the following extract, that the preparations for the new journal did not long escape the notice of either the editor or the publishers of the Edinburgh Review. On receiving the celebrated *Declaration of Westminster* on the subject of the Spanish war, which bears date the 15th December, 1808, Scott says to Ellis—

"I cannot help writing a few lines to congratulate you on the royal declaration. I suspect by this time the author is at Claremont,† for, if I mistake not egregiously, this spirited composition, as we say in Scotland, fathers itself in the manliness of its style. It has appeared, too, at a most fortunate time, when neither friend nor foe can impute it to temporary motives. Tell Mr. Canning that the old women of Scotland will defend the country with their distaffs, rather than that troops enough be not sent to make good so noble a pledge. Were the thousands that have mouldered away in petty conquests or Liliputian expeditions united to those we now have in that country, what a band would Moore have under him! . . . . . Jeffrey has offered terms of pacification, engaging that no party politics should again appear in his Review. I told him I thought it was now too late, and reminded him that I had often pointed out to him the consequences of letting his work become a party tool. He said 'he did not care for the consequences—there were but four men he feared as opponents.'—'Who were these?'—'Yourself for one.'—'Certainly you pay me a great compliment; depend upon it I will endeavour to deserve it.'—'Why, you would not join against me?'—'Yes I would, if I saw a proper opportunity: not against you personally, but against your politics.'—'You are privileged to be violent.'—'I don't ask any privilege for undue violence. But who are your other foemen?'—'George Ellis and Southey.' The fourth he did not name. All this was in great good-humour; and next day I had a very affecting note from him, in answer to an invitation to dinner. He has no suspicion of the Review whatever; but I thought I could not handsomely suffer him to infer that I would be influenced by those private feelings respecting *him*, which, on more than one occasion, he has laid aside when I was personally concerned."

As to Messrs. Constable and Co., it is not to be supposed that the rumours of the rival journal would tend to soothe those disagreeable feelings between them and Scott, of which I can trace the existence several months beyond the date of Mr. Murray's arrival at Ashestiel. Something seems to have occurred before the end of 1808 which induced Scott to suspect that, among other sources of uneasiness, had been a repentant grudge in the minds of those booksellers as to their bargain about the new edition of Swift; and on 2d of January, 1809, I find him requesting, that if, on reflection, they thought they had hastily committed themselves, the deed might be forthwith cancelled. On the 11th of the same month, Messrs. Constable reply as follows:—

To Walter Scott, Esq.

"Sir,

"We are anxious to assure you that we feel no dissatisfaction at any part of our bargain about Swift. Viewing it as a safe and respectable speculation, we should be very sorry to agree to your relinquishing the undertaking, and indeed rely with confidence on its proceeding as originally arranged. We regret that you have not been more willing to overlook the unguarded expression of our Mr. Hunter about which you complain. We are very much concerned that any circumstance should have occurred that should thus interrupt our friendly intercourse; but as we are not willing to believe that we have done any thing which should prevent our being again friends, we may at least be permitted to express a hope that matters may hereafter be restored to their old footing between us, when the misrepresentations of interested persons may cease to be remembered. At any rate, you will always find us, what we trust we have ever been Sir, your faithful servants,

A. Constable & Co."

Scott answers:

To Messrs Constable and Co.

"Edinburgh, 12th January, 1809.

"Gentlemen,

"To resume, for the last time, the disagreeable subject of our difference, I must remind you of what I told Mr. Constable personally, that no *single unguarded expression*, much less the misrepresentation of any person whatever, would have influenced me to quarrel with any of my friends. But if Mr. Hunter will take the trouble to recollect the general opinion he has expressed of my undertakings, and of my ability to execute them, upon many occasions during the last five months, and his whole conduct in the bargain about Swift, I think he ought to be the last to wish his interest compromised on my account. I am only happy the breach has taken place before there was any real loss to complain of, for although I have had my share of popularity, I cannot expect it to be more lasting than that of those who have lost it after deserving it much better.

"In the present circumstances, I have only a parting favour to request of your house, which is, that the portrait for which I sat to Raeburn shall be considered as done at my debit, and for myself. It shall be of course forthcoming for the fulfilment of any engagement you may have made about engraving, if such exists. Sadler will now be soon out, when we will have a settlement of our accounts. I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

Walter Scott."

Mr. Constable declined, in very handsome terms, to give up the picture. But for the present the breach was complete. Among other negotiations which Scott had patronised twelve months before, was one concerning the publication of Miss Seward's Poems. On the 19th of March, 1809, he writes as follows to that lady:—"Constable, like many other folks who learn to undervalue the means by which they have risen, has behaved, or rather suffered his partner to behave, very uncivilly towards me. But they may both live to know that they should not have kicked down the ladder till they were sure of their footing. The very last time I

* This circumstance was not revealed to Mr. Murray. I presume, therefore, the invitation to Scott must have preceeded from Mr. Canning.

† Scott's friend had mentioned that he expected a visit from Mr. Canning, at Claremont, in Surrey; which beautiful seat continued in the possession of the Ellis family, until it was purchased by the crown, on the marriage of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, in 1816.

spoke to him on business was about your poems, which he promised faithfully to write about. I understood him to decline your terms, in which I think he acted wrong; but I had neither influence to change his opinion, nor inclination to interfere with his resolution. He is a very enterprising, and, I believe, a thoroughly honest man, but his vanity in some cases overpowers his discretion."

One word as to the harsh language in which Constable's then partner is mentioned in several of the preceding letters. This Mr. Hunter was, I am told by friends of mine who knew him well, a man of considerable intelligence and accomplishments, to whose personal connexions and weight in society the house of Constable and Co. owed a great accession of business and influence. He was, however, a very keen politician; regarded Scott's Toryism with a fixed bitterness; and, moreover, could never conceal his impression that Scott ought to have embarked in no other literary undertakings whatever, until he had completed his edition of Swift. It is not wonderful that, not having been bred regularly to the bookselling business, he should have somewhat misapprehended the obligation which Scott had incurred when the bargain for that work was made; and his feeling of his own station and consequence was no doubt such as to give his style of conversation on doubtful questions of business, a tone for which Scott had not been prepared by his previous intercourse with Mr. Constable. The defection of the poet was, however, at once regretted and resented by both these partners; and Constable, I am told, often vented his wrath in figures as lofty as Scott's own. "Ay," he would say, stamping on the ground with a savage smile, "Ay, there is such a thing as rearing the oak until it can support itself."

All this leads us to the second stage, one still more unwise and unfortunate than the first, in the history of Scott's commercial connexion with the Ballantynes. The scheme of starting a new bookselling house in Edinburgh, begun in the shortsighted heat of pique, had now been matured:—I cannot add, either with composed observation or rational forecast—for it was ultimately settled that the ostensible and chief managing partner should be a person without capital, and neither by training nor by temper in the smallest degree qualified for such a situation; more especially where the field was to be taken against long experience, consummate skill, and resources which, if not so large as all the world supposed them, were still in comparison vast, and admirably organized. The rash resolution was, however, carried into effect, and a deed, deposited, for secrecy's sake, in the hands of Scott, bound him as one third partner, James Ballantyne having also a share in this firm of John Ballantyne and Co., booksellers, Edinburgh.—"*Rigdumfunnidos*" was installed in Hanover Street as the avowed rival of "The Crafty."

The existing bond of copartnership is dated in July, 1809; but I suspect this had been a revised edition. It is certain that the new house were openly mustering their forces some weeks before Scott desired to withdraw his Swift from the hands of the old one in January. This appears from several of the letters that passed between him and Ellis, while Gifford was arranging the materials for the first number of the Quarterly Review, and also between him and his friend Southey, to whom, perhaps, more than any other single writer, that journal owed its ultimate success.

To Ellis, for example, he says, on the 13th December, 1808—

"Now let me call your earnest attention to another literary undertaking, which is, in fact, a subsidiary branch of the same grand plan. I transmit the *prospectus* of an Edinburgh Annual Register. I have many reasons for favouring this work as much as I possibly can. In the first place, there is nothing even barely tolerable of this nature, though so obviously necessary to future history. Secondly, Constable was on the point of arranging one on the footing of the Edinburgh Review, and subsidiary thereunto,—a plan which has been totally disconcerted by our occupying the vantageground. Thirdly, this work will be very well managed. The two Mackenzies,* William Erskine, *cum pluribus aliis*, are engaged in the literary department, and that of science is conducted by Professor Leslie, a great philosopher, and as abominable an animal as I ever saw. He writes, however, with great eloquence, and is an enthusiast in mathematical, chemical, and mineralogical pursuits. I hope to draw upon you in this matter, particularly in the historical department, to which your critical labours will naturally turn your attention. You will ask what I propose to do myself. In fact, though something will be expected, I cannot propose to be very active, unless the Swift is abandoned, of which I think there is some prospect, as I have reason to complain of very indifferent usage, not indeed from Constable, who is reduced to utter despair by the circumstance, but from the stupid impertinence of his partner, a sort of Whig run mad. I have some reason to believe that Ballantyne, whose stock is now immensely increased, and who is likely to enlarge it by marriage, will commence publisher. Constable threatened him with withdrawing his business from him as a printer, on account of his being a Constitutionalist. He will probably by this false step establish a formidable rival in his own line of publishing, which will be most just retribution. I intend to fortify Ballantyne by promising him my continued friendship, which I hope may be of material service to him. He is much liked by the literary people here; has a liberal spirit, and understanding business very completely, with a good general idea of literature, I think he stands fair for success.

"But, Oh! Ellis, these cursed, double cursed news, have sunk my spirits so much, that I am almost at disbelieving a Providence. God forgive me! But I think some evil demon has been permitted, in the shape of this tyrannical monster, whom God has sent on the nations visited in his anger. I am confident he is *proof against* lead and steel, and have only hopes that he may be shot with a silver bullet,† or drowned in the torrents of blood which he delights to shed. Oh! for True Thomas and Lord Soulis's cauldron.‡ Adieu, my dear Ellis. God bless you!—I have been these three days writing this by snatches."

The "cursed news" here alluded to were those of Napoleon's advance by Somosierra, after the dispersion of the armies of Blake and Castanos. On the 23d of the same month, when the Treason of Morla and the fall of Madrid were known in Edinburgh, he thus resumes:—(Probably while he wrote, some cause with which he was not concerned was occupying the Court of Session:)—

"Dear Ellis,—I have nothing better to do but to vent my groans. I cannot but feel exceedingly low. I distrust what we call thoroughbred soldiers terribly, when any thing like the formation of extensive plans, of the daring and critical nature which seems necessary for the emancipation of Spain, is required from them. Our army is a poor school for genius—for the qualities which naturally and deservedly attract the applause of our generals, are necessarily exercised upon a small scale. I would to God Wellesley were now at the head of the English in Spain. His late examination shows his acute and decisive talents for command;§ and although I believe in my conscience, that when he found himself superseded, he suffered the pigs to run through the business, when he might in some measure have prevented them—

'Yet give the haughty devil his due,
Though bold his quarterings, they are true.'

Such a man, with an army of 40,000, or 50,000 British, with the remains of the Gallician army, and the additional forces which every village would furnish in case of

* The Man of Feeling, and Colin Mackenzie of Portmore.

† See note, "Proof against shot given by Satan."—*Waverley Novels*, vol. x. p. 40.

‡ "On a circle of stones they placed the pot,
On a circle of stones but barely nine;
They heated it red and fiery hot,
Till the burnish'd brass did glimmer and shine.
They roll'd him up in a sheet of lead,
A sheet of lead for a funeral pall;
They plunged him in the cauldron red,
And melted him, lead, and bones, and all."

See the Ballad of *Lord Soulis*, and notes, *Border Minstrelsy*, vol. iv. pp. 225—236.

§ This refers to Sir Arthur Wellesley's evidence before the Court of Inquiry into the circumstances which led to the Convention (miscalled) of Cintra. For the best answer to the then popular suspicion, which Scott seems to have partaken, as to the conduct of Sir Arthur when superseded in the moment of victory at Vimiero, I refer to the contemporary despatches lately published in Colonel Gurwood's invaluable compilation.

success,' might possess himself of Burgos, open a communication with Arragon, and even Navarre, and place Bonaparte in the precarious situation of a general with 80,000 enemies between him and his supplies;—for I presume neither Castanos nor Palafox are so broken as to be altogether disembodied. But a general who is always looking over his shoulder, and more intent on saving his own army than on doing the service on which he is sent, will hardly, I fear, be found capable of forming or executing a plan which its very daring character might render successful. What would we think of an admiral who should bring back his fleet, and tell us old Keppel's story of a lee-shore, and the risk of his Majesty's vessels? Our sailors have learned that his Majesty's ships were built to be stranded, or burnt, or sunk, or at least to encounter the risk of these contingencies, when his service requires it; and I heartily wish our generals would learn to play for the gammon, and not to sit down contented with a mere saving game. What, however, can we say of Moore, or how judge of his actions, since the Supreme Junta have shown themselves so miserably incapable of the arduous exertions expected from them? Yet, like Pistol, they spoke bold words at the bridge too, and I admired their firmness in declaring O'Farrel and the rest of the Frenchified Spaniards traitors. But they may have Roman pride, and want Roman talent to support it; and in short, unless God Almighty should raise among them one of those extraordinary geniuses who seem to be created for the emergencies of an oppressed people, I confess I still incline to despondence. If Canning could send a portion of his own spirit with the generals he sends forth, my hope would be high indeed. The proclamation was truly gallant.

"As to the Annual Register, I do agree that the Prospectus is in too *stately* a tone—yet I question if a purer piece of composition would have attracted the necessary attention. We must sound a trumpet before we open a show. You will say we have added a tambourin; but the mob will the more readily stop and gaze; nor would their ears be so much struck by a sonata from Viotti. Do you know the Review begins to get wind here? An Edinburgh bookseller asked me to recommend him for the sale here, and said he heard it confidentially from London.—Ever yours,

W. S."

I may also introduce here a letter of about the same date, and referring chiefly to the same subjects, addressed by Scott to his friend, Mr. Charles Sharpe,* then at Oxford. The allusion at the beginning is to a drawing of Queen Elizabeth, as seen "dancing high and disposedly," in her private chamber, by the Scotch ambassador, Sir James Melville, whose description of the exhibition is one of the most amusing things in his Memoirs. This production of Mr. Sharpe's pencil, and the delight with which Scott used to expatiate on its merits, must be well remembered by every one that ever visited the poet at Abbotsford.—Some of the names mentioned in this letter as counted on by the projectors of the Quarterly Review will, no doubt, amuse the reader.

To Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq., Christ Church, Oxford.

"Edinburgh, 30th December, 1808.

"My dear Sharpe,

"The intimable virago came safe, and was welcomed by the inextinguishable laughter of all who looked upon her capricles. I was unfortunately out of town for a few days, which prevented me from acknowledging instantly what gave me so much pleasure, both on account of its intrinsic value, and as a mark of your kind remembrance. You have, I assure you, been upmost in my thoughts for some time past, as I have a serious design on your literary talents, which I am very anxious to engage in one or both of the two following schemes. *Imprimis*, it has been long the deckled resolution of Mr. Canning and some of his literary friends, particularly Geo. Ellis, Malthus, Frere, W. Rose, &c., that something of an independent Review ought to be started in London. This plan is now on the point of being executed, after much consultation. I have strongly advised that politics be avoided, unless in cases of great national import, and that their tone be then moderate and manly; but the general tone of the publication is to be literary. William Gifford is editor, and I have promised to endeavour to recruit for him a few spirited young men, able and willing to assist in such an undertaking. I confess you were chiefly in my thoughts when I made this promise; but it is a subject which for a thousand reasons I would rather have talked over than written about—among others more prominent, I may reckon my great abhorrence of pen and ink, for writing has been so long a matter of duty with me, that it is become as utterly abominable to me as matters of duty usually are. Let me entreat you, therefore, to lay hold of Macneill,* or any other new book you like, and give us a good hacking review of it. I retain so much the old habit of a barrister, that I cannot help adding the fee is ten guineas a sheet, which may serve to buy an odd book now and then—as good play for nothing, you know, as work for nothing; but besides this, your exertions in this cause, if you shall choose to make any, will make you more intimately acquainted with a very pleasant literary coterie than introductions of a more formal kind; and if you happen to know George Ellis already, you must, I am sure, be pleased to take any trouble likely to produce an intimacy between you. The Hebers are also engaged, *item* Rogers, Southey, Moore (Anacreon,) and others whose reputations Jeffrey has murdered, and who are rising to cry wo upon him, like the ghosts in King Richard; for your acute and perspicacious judgment must ere this have led you to suspect that this same new Review, which by the way is to be called 'the Quarterly,' is intended as a rival to the Edinburgh; and if it contains criticism not very inferior in point of talent, with the same independence on booksellers' influence, (which has ruined all the English Reviews,) I do not see why it should not divide with it the public favour. Observe carefully, this plan is altogether distinct from one which has been proposed by the veteran Cumberland, to which is annexed the extraordinary proposal that each contributor shall place his name before his article, a stipulation which must prove fatal to the undertaking. If I did not think this likely to be a very well managed business, I would not recommend it to your consideration; but you see I am engaged with no 'fool land rakers, no long staff sixpenny strikers, but with nobility and tranquillity, burgomasters, and great oneyears,' and so forth.

"The other plan refers to the enclosed prospectus, and has long been a favourite scheme of mine, of William Erskine's, and some of my other cronies here. Mr. Ballantyne, the editor, only undertakes for the inferior departments of the work, and for keeping the whole matter in train. We are most anxious to have respectable contributors, and the smallest donation in any department, poetry, antiquities, &c. &c., will be most thankfully accepted and registered. But the historical department is that in which I would chiefly wish to see you engaged. A lively luminous picture of the events of the last momentous year, as a task for the pen of a man of genius; as for materials, I could procure you access to many of a valuable kind. The appointments of our historian are £300 a-year—no deaf nuts. Another person† has been proposed, and written to, but I cannot any longer delay submitting the thing to your consideration. Of course, you are to rely on every assistance that can be afforded by your humble comdumble, as Swift says. I hope the great man will give us his answer shortly—and if his be negative, pray let yours be positive. Our politics we would wish to be constitutional, but not party. You see, my good friend, what it is to show your good parts before unquestionable judges.

"I am forced to conclude abruptly. Thine entirely,

W. Scott."

Mr. Morritt was by this time beginning to correspond with the poet pretty frequently. The first of their letters, however, that serves to throw light on Scott's personal proceedings, is the following:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park, Yorkshire.

"Edinburgh, 14th January, 1809.

"My dear Sir,

"For a long while I thought my summons to London would have been immediate, and that I should have the pleasure to wait upon you at Rokeby Park in my way to town. But, after due consideration, the commissioners on our Scottish reform of judicial proceedings resolved to begin their sittings at Edinburgh, and have been in full activity ever since last St. Andrew's day. You are not ignorant that in business of this nature, very much of

* Scott's acquaintance with Mr. Sharpe began when the latter was very young. He supplied Scott when compiling the Minstrelsy with the ballad of the "Tower of Repentance," &c. See vol. iv. pp. 307–323.

* "The Pastoral, or Lyric Muse of Scotland; in three Cantos," 4to, by Hector Macneill, appeared in Dec. 1808.

† Mr. Southey—who finally undertook the task proposed to him.

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the detail, and of preparing the materials for the various meetings, necessarily devolves upon the clerk, and I cannot say but that my time has been fully occupied.

Mean while, however, I have been concocting, at the instigation of various loyal and well disposed persons, a grand scheme of opposition to the proud critics of Edinburgh. It is now matured in all its branches, and consists of the following divisions. A new review in London, to be called the Quarterly, William Gifford to be the editor; George Ellis, Rose, Mr. Canning if possible, Frere, and all the ancient Anti-Jacobins to be concerned. The first number is now in hand, and the allies, I hope and trust, securely united to each other. I have promised to get them such assistance as I can, and most happy should I be to prevail upon you to put your hand to the ark. You can so easily run off an article either of learning or of fun, that it would be inexcusable not to afford us your assistance. Then, sir, to turn the flank of Messrs. Constable and Co., and to avenge myself of certain impertinences which, in the vehemence of their Whiggery, they have dared to indulge in towards me, I have prepared to start against them at Whitsunday first the celebrated printer, Ballantyne, (who had the honour of meeting you at Ashestiel,) in the shape of an Edinburgh publisher, with a long purse and a sound political creed, not to mention an alliance offensive and defensive with young John Murray of Fleet Street, the most enlightened and active of the London trade. By this means I hope to counterbalance the predominating influence of Constable and Co., who at present have it in their power and inclination to forward or suppress any book as they approve or dislike its political tendency. Lastly, I have caused the said Ballantyne to venture upon an Edinburgh Annual Register, of which I send you a prospectus. I intend to help him myself as far as time will admit, and hope to procure him many respectable coadjutors.

"My own motions southwards remain undetermined, but I conceive I may get to town about the beginning of March, when I expect to find you *en famille* in Portland Place. Our Heber will then most likely be in town, and altogether I am much better pleased that the journey is put off till the lively season of gayety.

"I am busy with my edition of Swift, and treasure your kind hints for my direction as I advance. In summer I think of going to Ireland to pick up any thing that may be yet recoverable of the Dean of St. Patrick's. Mrs. Scott joins me in kindest and best respects to Mrs. Morritt. I am, with great regard, dear sir, your faithful humble servant.

WALTER SCOTT."

The two following letters seem to have been written at the *clerk's table*, the first shortly before, and the second very soon after, the news of the battle of Corunna reached Scotland:—

To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick.

"Edinburgh, 14th January, 1809.

"Dear Southey,

"I have been some time from home in the course of the holidays, but immediately on my return set about procuring the books you wished to see. There are only three of them in our library, namely—

Dobrizzhoffer de Abiponibus, 3 vols.

A French translation of Gomella's History of Oronoquo.

Ramusio Navigazioni, &c. &c.

Of these I can only lay my hand immediately on Dobrizzhoffer, which I have sent off by the Carlisle coach, addressed to the care of Jollie the bookseller for you. I do this at my own risk, because we never grant license to send the books out of Scotland, and should I be found to have done so I may be censured, and perhaps my use of the library suspended. At the same time, I think it hard you should take a journey in this deadly cold weather, and trust you will make early inquiry after the book. Keep it out of sight while you use it, and return it as soon as you have finished. I suppose these same Abipones were a nation to my own heart's content, being, as the titlepage informs me, *bellicosi et equestres*, like our old Border lads. Should you think of coming hither, which perhaps might be the means of procuring you more information than I can make you aware of, I bespeak you for my guest. I can give you a little chamber in the wall, and you shall go out and in as quietly and freely as your heart can desire, without a human creature saying 'why doest thou so?' Thalaba is in parturition too, and you should in decent curiosity give an eye after him. Yet I will endeavour to recover the other books, (now lent out,) and send them to you in the same way as Dob. travels, unless you recommend another conveyance. But I expect this generosity on my part will rather stir your gallantry to make us a visit when this abominable storm has passed away. My present occupation is highly unpoetical—clouting, in short, and cobbling our old Scottish system of jurisprudence, with a view to reform. I am clerk to a commission under the authority of Parliament for this purpose, which keeps me more than busy enough.

"I have had a high quarrel with Constable and Co. The Edinburgh Review has driven them quite crazy, and its success led them to undervalue those who have been of most use to them—but they shall dearly abye it. The worst is that, being out of a publishing house, I have not interest to be of any service to Coleridge's intended paper.* Ballantyne, the printer, intends to open shop here on the part of his brother, and I am sure will do all he can to favour the work. Does it positively go on?

"I have read Wordsworth's lucubrations in the Courier,† and much agree with him. Alas! we want every thing but courage and virtue in this desperate contest. Skill, knowledge of mankind, ineffable unhesitating villany, combination of movement and combination of means, are with our adversary. We can only fight like mastiffs, boldly, blindly, and faithfully. I am almost driven to the pass of the Covenanters, when they told the Almighty in their prayers, he should no longer be their God; and I really believe, a few Gazettes more will make me turn Turk or Infidel. Believe me, in great grief of spirit, dear Southey, ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

"Mrs. Scott begs kind remembrance to Mrs. Southey. The bed in the said chamber in the wall is a double one."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, 31st January, 1809.

"My dear Southey,

"Yesterday I received your letter, and to-day I despatched Gomella and the third volume of Ramusio. The other two volumes can also be sent, if you should find it necessary to consult them. The parcel is addressed to the paternal charge of your Keswick carrier. There is no hurry in returning these volumes, so don't derange your operations by hurrying your extracts, only keep them from any profane eye. I dipped into Gomella while I was waiting for intelligence from you, and was much edified by the *bonhommie* with which the miracles of the Jesuits are introduced.

"The news from Spain gave me such a mingled feeling, that I never suffered so much in my whole life from the disorder of spirits occasioned by affecting intelligence. My mind has naturally a strong military bent, though my path in life has been so very different. I love a drum and a soldier as heartily as ever Uncle Toby did, and between the pride arising from our gallant bearing, and the deep regret that so much bravery should run to waste, I spent a most disordered and agitated night, never closing my eyes, but what I was harassed with visions of broken ranks, bleeding soldiers, dying horses—'and all the current of a heady fight.' I agree with you that we want energy in our cabinet—or rather their opinions are so different, that they come to wretched compositions between them, which are worse than the worst course decidedly followed out. Canning is most anxious to support the Spaniards, and would have had a second army at Corunna, but for the positive demand of poor General Moore that empty transports should be sent thither. So the reinforcements were disembarked. I fear it will be found that Moore was rather an excellent officer than a general of those comprehensive and daring views necessary in his dangerous situation. Had Wellesley been there, the battle of Corunna would have been fought and won at Somosierra, and the ranks of the victors would have been reinforced by the population of Madrid. Would to God we had yet 100,000 men in Spain. I fear not Buonaparte's tactics. The art of peace may do a great deal, but '*a la stoccata*,' as Mercutio says, cannot carry it away from national valour and personal strength. The Opposition have sold or bartered every feeling of patriotism for the most greedy and selfish *agiotage*.

"Ballantyne's brother is setting up here as a bookseller, chiefly for publishing. I will recommend Coleridge's paper to him as strongly as I can. I hope by the time it is commenced he will be enabled to send him a handsome order. From my great regard for his brother I shall give this young publisher what assistance I can. He is understood to start against Constable and the Reviewers, and publishes the Quarterly. Indeed he is in strict alliance, offensive and defensive, with John Murray of Fleet Street. I have also been labouring a little for the said Quarterly, which I believe you will detect. I hear very high things

* Mr. Coleridge's "Friend" was originally published in weekly papers.

† Mr. Wordsworth's Remarks on the Convention of Cintra were afterwards collected in a pamphlet.

from Gifford of your article. About your visit to Edinburgh, I hope it will be a month later than you now propose, because my present prospects lead me to think I must be in London the whole month of April. Early in May I must return, and will willingly take the lakes in my way, in hopes you will accompany me to Edinburgh, unless you positively must not think of visiting in my absence.

"Lord Advocate, who is sitting behind me, says the Ministers have resolved not to abandon the Spaniards *coute qui coute*. It is a spirited determination—but they must find a general who has, as the Turks say, *le Diable au corps*, and who, instead of standing staring to see what they mean to do, will teach them to dread those surprises and desperate enterprises by which they have been so often successful. Believe me, dear Southey, yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT.

"Mrs. Scott joins me in best compliments to Mrs. Southey. I hope she will have a happy hour. Pray, write me word when the books come safe. What is Wordsworth doing, and where the devil is his Doe? I am not sure if he will thank me for proving that all the Nortons escaped to Flanders, one excepted. I never knew a popular tradition so totally groundless as that respecting their execution at York."

CHAPTER XIX.

CASE OF A POETICAL TAILOR CONDEMNED TO DEATH AT EDINBURGH—HIS LETTERS TO SCOTT—DEATH OF CAMP—SCOTT IN LONDON—MR. MORRITT'S DESCRIPTION OF HIM AS "A LION" IN TOWN—DINNER AT MR. SOTHEBY'S—COLERIDGE'S FIRE, FAMINE, AND SLAUGHTER—THE QUARTERLY REVIEW STARTED—FIRST VISIT TO ROKEBY—THE LADY OF THE LAKE BEGUN—EXCURSION TO THE TROSSACHS AND LOCH LOMOND—LETTER ON BYRON'S ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS—DEATH OF DANIEL SCOTT—CORRESPONDENCE ABOUT MR. CANNING'S DUEL WITH LORD CASTLEREAGH—MISS BAILLIE'S FAMILY LEGEND ACTED AT EDINBURGH—THEATRICAL ANECDOTES—KEMBLE—SIDDONS—TERRY—LETTER ON THE DEATH OF MISS SEWARD.—1809—1810.

In the end of 1808, a young man, by name Andrew Stewart, who had figured for some years before as a poetical contributor to the Scots Magazine, and inserted there, among other things, a set of stanzas in honour of The Last Minstrel,* was tried, and capitally convicted, on a charge of burglary. He addressed, some weeks after his sentence had been pronounced, the following letters:—

To Walter Scott, Esq.; Castle Street.

"Edinburgh Tolbooth, 20th January, 1809.

"Sir,

"Although I am a stranger to you, yet I am not to your works, which I have read and admired, and which will continue to be read and admired as long as there remains a taste for true excellence. Previous to committing the crime for which I am now convicted, I composed several poems in the Scottish dialect, which I herewith send for your perusal, and humbly hope you will listen to my tale of misery. I have been a truly unfortunate follower of the Muses. I was born in Edinburgh, of poor, but honest parents. My father is by trade a bookbinder, and my mother dying in 1798, he was left a widower, with five small children, who have all been brought up by his own industry. As soon as I was fit for a trade, he bound me apprentice to a tailor in Edinburgh, but owing to his using me badly, I went to law. The consequence was, I got up my indentures after being only two years in his service. To my father's trade I have to ascribe my first attachment to the Muses. I perused with delight the books that came in the way; and the effusions of the poets of my country I read with rapture. I now formed the resolution of not binding myself to a trade again, as by that means I might get my propensity for reading followed. I acted as clerk to different people, and my character was irreproachable. I determined to settle in life, and for that purpose I married a young woman I formed a strong attachment to. Being out of employment these last nine months, I suffered all the hardships of want, and saw

> 'Poverty with empty hand,
> And eager look, half-naked stand.'—*Fergusson.*

Reduced to this miserable situation, with my wife almost starving, and having no friends to render me the smallest assistance, I resided in a furnished room till I was unable to pay the rent, and then I was literally turned out of doors, like poor Dermody, in poverty and rags. Having no kind hand stretched out to help me, I associated with company of very loose manners, till then strangers to me, and by them I was led to commit the crime I am condemned to suffer for. But my mind is so agitated, I can scarce narrate my tale of misery. My age is only twenty-three, and to all appearance will be cut off in the prime. I was tried along with my brother, Robert Stewart, and John M'Intyre, for breaking into the workshop of Peter More, calico-glazier, Edinburgh, and received the dreadful sentence to be executed on the 22d of February next. We have no friends to apply to for Royal mercy. If I had any kind friend to mention my case to my Lord Justice-Clerk, perhaps I might get my sentence mitigated. You will see my poems are of the humorous cast. Alas! it is now the contrary. I remain your unfortunate humble servant,

ANDREW STEWART."

To the Same.

"Tolbooth, Sunday.

"Sir, I received your kind letter last night, enclosing one pound sterling, for which I have only to request you will accept the return of a grateful heart. My prayers, while on earth, will be always for your welfare. Your letter came like a ministering angel to me. The idea of my approaching end darts across my brain; and, as our immortal bard, Shakspeare, says, 'harrows up my soul.' Some time since, when chance threw in my way Sir William Forbes's Life of Beattie, the account of the closing scene of Principal Campbell, as therein mentioned, made a deep impression on my mind. 'At a time,' says he, 'when Campbell was just expiring, and had told his wife and niece so, a cordial happened unexpectedly to give some relief. As soon as he was able to speak, he said, he wondered to see their faces so melancholy and covered with tears at the apprehension of his departure.' '*At that instant*,' said he, '*I felt my mind in such a state in the thoughts of my immediate dissolution, that I can express my feeling in no other way than by saying I was in a rapture.*' There is something awfully satisfactory in the above.

"I have to mention, as a dying man, that it was not the greed of money that made me commit the crime, but the extreme pressure of poverty and want.

> "How silent seems all—not a whisper is heard,
> Save the guardians of night when they bawl;
> How dreary and wild appears all around;
> No pitying voice near my call.
>
> "O life, what are all thy gay pleasures and cares,
> When deprived of sweet liberty's smile?
> Not hope in all thy gay charms arrayed,
> Can one heavy hour now beguile.
>
> "How sad is the poor convict's sorrowful lot,
> Condemned in these walls to remain,
> When torn from those that are nearest his heart,
> Perhaps ne'er to view them again.
>
> "The beauties of morning now burst on my view,
> Remembrance of scenes that are past,
> When contentment sat smiling, and happy my lot,
> Scenes, alas! formed not for to last.
>
> "Now fled are the hours I delighted to roam
> Scotia's hills, dales, and valleys among,
> And with rapture would list to the songs of her bards,
> And love's tale as it flowed from the tongue.
>
> "Nought but death now awaits me, how dread, but true,
> How ghastly its form does appear;
> Soon silent the muse that delighted to view
> And sing of the sweets of the year.

"You are the first gentleman I ever sent my poems to, and I never corrected any of them, my mind has been in such a state. I remain, sir, your grateful unfortunate servant,

ANDREW STEWART."

It appears that Scott, and his good-natured old friend, Mr. Manners the bookseller, who happened at this time to be one of the bailies of Edinburgh, exerted their joint influence in this tailor-poet's be-

* One verse of this production will suffice.

> "Sweetest Minstrel that e'er sung
> Of valorous deeds by Scotia done,
> Whose wild notes warbled in the wild',
> Delightful strain!
> O'er hills and dales, and vales among,
> We've heard again," &c.

half, and with such success, that his sentence was commuted for one of transportation for life. A thin octavo pamphlet, entitled, "Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect, by Andrew Stewart; printed for the benefit of the Author's Father, and sold by Manners and Miller, and A. Constable and Co., 1809," appeared soon after the convict's departure for Botany Bay. But as to his fortunes in that new world I possess no information. There seemed to me something so striking in the working of his feelings as expressed in his letters to Scott, that I thought the reader would forgive this little episode.

In the course of February, Mr. John Ballantyne had proceeded to London, for the purpose of introducing himself to the chief publishers there in his new capacity, and especially of taking Mr. Murray's instructions respecting the Scotch management of the Quarterly Review. As soon as the spring vacation began, Scott followed him by sea. He might naturally have wished to be at hand while his new partner was forming arrangements on which so much must depend; but some circumstances in the procedure of the Scotch Law Commission had made the Lord Advocate request his presence at this time in town. There he and Mrs. Scott took up their quarters, as usual, under the roof of their kind old friends the Dumergues; while their eldest girl enjoyed the advantage of being domesticated with the Miss Baillies at Hampstead. They staid more than two months, and this being his first visit to town since his fame had been crowned by Marmion, he was of course more than ever the object of general curiosity and attention. Mr. Morritt saw much of him, both at his own house in Portland Place and elsewhere, and I transcribe a few sentences from his *memoranda* of the period.

"Scott," his friend says, "more correctly than any other man I ever knew, appreciated the value of that apparently enthusiastic *engouement* which the world of London shows to the fashionable wonder of the year. During this sojourn of 1809, the homage paid him would have turned the head of any less gifted man of eminence. It neither altered his opinions, nor produced the affectation of despising it; on the contrary, he received it, cultivated it, and repaid it in its own coin. 'All this is very flattering,' he would say, 'and very civil; and if people are amused with hearing me tell a parcel of old stories, or recite a pack of ballads, to lovely young girls and gaping matrons, they are easily pleased, and a man would be very ill-natured who would not give pleasure so cheaply conferred.' If he dined with us and found any new faces, 'Well, do you want me to play lion to-day?' was his usual question 'I will roar if you like it to your heart's content.' He would, indeed, in such cases, put forth all his inimitable powers of entertainment—and day after day surprised me by their unexpected extent and variety. Then, as the party dwindled, and we were left alone, he laughed at himself, quoted, 'yet know that I one Snug the joiner am—no lion fierce,' &c. —and was at once himself again.

"He often lamented the injurious effects for literature and genius resulting from the influence of London celebrity on weaker minds, especially in the excitement of ambition for this subordinate and ephemeral *reputation du salon*. 'It may be a pleasant gale to sail with,' he said, 'but it never yet led to a port that I should like to anchor in;' nor did he willingly endure, either in London or in Edinburgh, the little exclusive circles of literary society, much less their occasional fastidiousness and petty partialities.

"One story which I heard of him from Dr. Howley, now Archbishop of Canterbury, (for I was not present,) was very characteristic. The doctor was one of a grand congregation of lions, where Scott and Coleridge, *cum multis aliis*, attended at Sotheby's. Poets and poetry were the topics of the table, and there was plentiful recitation of effusions as yet unpublished, which of course obtained abundant applause. Coleridge repeated more than one, which, as Dr. H. thought, were eulogised by some of the company with something like affection, and a desire to humble Scott by raising a poet of inferior reputation on his shoulders. Scott, however, joined in the compliments as cordially as any body, until, in his turn, he was invited to display some of his occasional poetry, much of which he must, no doubt, have written. Scott said he had published so much, he had nothing of his own left that he could think worth their hearing, but he would repeat a little copy of verses which he had shortly before seen in a provincial newspaper, and which seemed to him almost as good as any thing they had been listening to with so much pleasure. He repeated the stanzas now so well known of 'Fire, Famine, and Slaughter.' The applauses that ensued were faint—then came slight criticism, from which Scott defended the unknown author. At last, a more bitter antagonist opened, and fastening upon one line, cried, 'this at least is absolute nonsense.' Scott denied the charge—the Zoilus persisted—until Coleridge, out of all patience, exclaimed, 'For God's sake let Mr. Scott alone—I wrote the poem.' This exposition of the real worth of dinner criticism can hardly be excelled.*

"He often complained of the real dulness of parties, where each guest arrived under the implied and tacit obligation of exhibiting some extraordinary powers of talk or wit. 'If,' he said, 'I encounter men of the world, men of business, odd or striking characters of professional excellence in any department, I am in my element, for they cannot dismiss me without my returning the compliment, and learning something from them.' He was much with George Ellis, Canning, and Croker, and delighted in them,—as indeed who did not?—but he loved to study eminence of every class and sort, and his rising fame gave him easy access to gratify all his curiosity."

The meetings with Canning, Croker, and Ellis, to which Mr. Morritt alludes, were, as may be supposed, chiefly occupied with the affairs of the Quarterly Review. The first number of that Journal appeared while Scott was in London: it contained three articles from his pen—namely, one on the Reliques of Burns; another on the Chronicle of the Cid; and a third on Sir John Carr's Tour through Scotland. His conferences with the editor and publisher were frequent; and the latter certainly contemplated, at this time, a most close and intimate connexion with him, not only as a reviewer, but an author; and, consequently, with both the concerns of the Messrs. Ballantyne. Scott continued for some time to be a very active contributor to the Quarterly Review; nor, indeed, was his connexion with it ever entirely suspended. But John Ballantyne transacted business in a fashion which soon cooled, and in no very long time dissolved, the general "alliance, offensive and defensive," with Murray, which Scott had announced before leaving Edinburgh to both Southey and Ellis.

On his return northwards he spent a fortnight in Yorkshire with Mr. Morritt; but his correspondence, from which I resume my extracts, will show, among other things, the lively impression made on him by his first view of Rokeby.

The next of these letters reminds me, however, that I should have mentioned sooner the death of Camp, the first of not a few dogs whose names will be "freshly remembered" as long as their master's works are popular. This favourite began to droop early in 1809, and became incapable of accompanying Scott in his rides; but he preserved his affection and sagacity to the last. At Ashestiel, as the servant was laying the cloth for dinner, he

* It may amuse the reader to turn to Mr. Coleridge's own stately account of this lion-show in Grosvenor Street, in the preface to his celebrated Eclogue. There was one person present, it seems, who had been in the secret of its authorship—Sir Humphrey Davy; and no one could have enjoyed the scene more than he must have done. "At the house," Coleridge says, "of a gentleman who, by the principles and corresponding virtues of a sincere Christian, consecrates a cultivated genius and the favourable accidents of birth, opulence, and splendid connexions, it was my good fortune to meet, in a dinner party, with more men of celebrity in science or polite literature than are commonly found collected around the same table. In the course of conversation, one of the party reminded an illustrious poet," &c. &c. *Coleridge's Poetical Works*. Edition, 1828. Vol. I., p. 271.

would address the dog lying on his mat by the fire, and say, "Camp, my good fellow, the sheriff's coming home by the ford—or by the hill;" and the sick animal would immediately bestir himself to welcome his master, going out at the back door or the front door, according to the direction given, and advancing as far as he was able, either towards the ford of the Tweed, or the bridge over the Glenkinnon burn beyond Laird Nippy's gate. He died about January, 1809, and was buried in a fine moonlight night, in the little garden behind the house in Castle Street, immediately opposite to the window at which Scott usually sat writing. My wife tells me she remembers the whole family standing in tears about the grave, as her father himself smoothed down the turf above Camp with the saddest expression of face she had ever seen in him. He had been engaged to dine abroad that day, but apologized on account of "the death of a dear old friend;" and Mr. Macdonald Buchanan was not at all surprised that he should have done so, when it came out next morning that Camp was no more.

To George Ellis, Esq.

"Edinburgh, July 8, 1809.

"My dear Ellis,

"We reached home about a fortnight ago, having lingered a little while at Rokeby Park, the seat of our friend Morritt, and one of the most enviable places I have ever seen, as it unites the richness and luxuriance of English vegetation with the romantic variety of glen, torrent, and copse, which dignifies our northern scenery. The Greta and Tees, two most beautiful and rapid rivers, join their currents in the demesne. The banks of the Tees resemble, from the height of the rocks, the glen of Roslin, so much and justly admired. The Greta is the scene of a celtic romance,* of which I think I remember giving you the outline. It concerns the history of a 'Felon Sowe,'—

'Which won'd in Rokeby wood,
Ran endlang Greta side,'

bestowed by Ralph of Rokeby on the freres of Richmond—and the misadventures of the holy fathers in their awkward attempts to catch this intractable animal. We had the pleasure to find all our little folks well, and are now on the point of shifting quarters to Ashestiel. I have supplied the vacancy occasioned by the death of poor old Camp with a terrier puppy of the old shaggy Celtic breed. He is of high pedigree, and was procured with great difficulty by the kindness of Miss Dunlop of Dunlop; so I have christened him Wallace, as the donor is a descendant of the Guardian of Scotland. Having given you all this curious and valuable information about my own affairs, let me call your attention to the enclosed, which was in fact the principal cause of my immediately troubling you." * * *

The enclosure, and the rest of the letter, refer to the private affairs of Mr. Southey, in whose favour Scott had for some time back been strenuously using his interest with his friends in the government. How well he had, while in London, read the feelings of some of those ministers towards each other, appears from various letters written upon his return to Scotland. It may be sufficient to quote part of one addressed to the distinguished author whose fortunes he was exerting himself to promote. To him Scott says, (14th June,)—"Mr. Canning's opportunities to serve you will soon be numerous, or they will soon be gone altogether, for he is of a different mould from some of his colleagues, and a decided foe to those half measures which I know you detest as much as I do. It is not his fault that the cause of Spain is not at this moment triumphant. This I know, and the time will come when the world will know it too."

Before fixing himself at Ashestiel for the autumn, he had undertaken to have a third poem ready for publication, by John Ballantyne, by the end of the year, and probably made some progress in the composition of the Lady of the Lake. On the rising of the Court in July, he went, accompanied by Mrs Scott and his eldest daughter, to revisit the localities so dear to him in the days of his juvenile rambling which he had chosen for the scene of his fable. He gave a week to his old friends at Cambusmore, and ascertained, in his own person, that a good horseman, well mounted, might gallop from the shore of Loch Vennachar to the rock of Stirling within the space allotted for that purpose to Fitz James. From Cambusmore the party proceeded to Ross Priory, and under the guidance of Mr. Macdonald Buchanan explored the islands of Loch Lomond, Arrochar, Loch Sloy, and all the scenery of a hundred desperate conflicts between the Macfarlanes, the Colquhouns, and the Clan Alpine. At Buchanan House, which is very near Ross Priory, Scott's friends, Lady Douglas and Lady Louisa Stuart, were then visiting the Duke of Montrose; he joined them there, and read to them the Stag Chase, which he had just completed under the full influence of the *genius loci*. It was on this occasion, at Buchanan House, that he first saw Lord Byron's "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." On this subject he says, in his Introduction to Marmion of 1830—"When Byron wrote his famous satire, I had my share of flagellation among my betters. My crime was having written a poem for a thousand pounds, which was no otherwise true, than that I sold the copyright for that sum. Now, not to mention that an author can hardly be censured for accepting such a sum as the booksellers are willing to give him, especially as the gentlemen of the trade made no complaints of their bargain, I thought the interference with my private affairs was rather beyond the limits of literary satire. I was, moreover, so far from having had any thing to do with the offensive criticism in the Edinburgh, that I had remonstrated with the editor, because I thought the 'Hours of Idleness' treated with undue severity. They were written, like all juvenile poetry, rather from the recollection of what had pleased the author in others, than what had been suggested by his own imagination; but nevertheless I thought they contained passages of noble promise."

I need hardly transcribe the well-known lines—

"Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan,
The golden-crested, haughty Marmion,"—

down to

"For this we spurn Apollo's venal sun,
And bid a long 'good night to Marmion,'" ,

with his lordship's note on the last line—"Good night to Marmion, the pathetic and also prophetic exclamation of Henry Blount, Esquire, on the death of honest Marmion."—But it may entertain my readers to compare the style in which Scott alludes to Byron's assault in the preface of 1830, with that of one of his contemporary letters on the subject. Addressing (August 7, 1809) the gentleman in whose behalf he had been interceding with Mr. Canning, he says—"By the way, is the ancient ****, whose decease is to open our quest, thinking of a better world? I only ask, because about three years ago I accepted the office I hold in the Court of Session, the revenue to accrue to me only on the death of the old incumbent. But my friend has since taken out a new lease of life, and unless I get some Border lad to cut his throat, may, for aught I know, live as long as I shall;—such odious deceivers are these invalids. Mine reminds me of Sindbad's Old Man of the Sea, and will certainly throttle me if I can't somehow dismount him. If I were once in possession of reversionary income, I would, like you, bid farewell to the drudgery of literature, and do nothing but what I pleased, which might be another phrase for doing very little. I was always an admirer of the modest wish of a retainer in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays—

'I would not be a serving man
To carry the cloak-bag still,
Nor would I be a falconer,
The greedy hawks to fill;
But I would live in a good house,
And have a good master too,
And I would eat and drink of the best,
And *no* work would I do.'

In the mean time, it is funny enough to see a whelp of a young Lord Byron abusing me, of whose circumstances he knows nothing, for endeavouring to

* Scott painted this Ballad in the Notes to his 1pem of Rokeby.

scratch out a living with my pen. God help the bear if, having little else to eat, he must not even suck his own paws. I can assure the noble imp of fame it is not my fault that I was not born to a park and £5000 a-year, as it is not his lordship's merit, although it may be his great good fortune, that he was not born to live by his literary talents or success. Adieu, my dear friend. I shall be impatient to hear how your matters fadge."

This gentleman's affairs are again alluded to in a letter to Ellis, dated Ashestiel, September 14:—

"I do not write to whet a purpose that is not blunted, but to express my anxious wishes that your kind endeavours may succeed while it is called *to-day*, for by all tokens, it will soon be *yesterday* with this Ministry. And they well deserve it, for crossing, jostling, and hampering the measures of the only man among them fit to be intrusted with the salvation of the country. The springtide may, for ought I know, break in this next session of Parliament. There is an evil fate upon us in all we do at home and abroad, else why should the conqueror of Talavera be retreating from the field of his glory at a moment when, by all reasonable calculation, he should have been the soul and mover of a combined army of 150,000 English, Spaniards, and Portuguese? And why should Gifford employ himself at home in the thriftless exercise of correction, as if Mercury, instead of stretching to a race himself, were to amuse himself with starting a bedrid cripple, and making a pair of crutches for him with his own hand? Much might have been done, and may yet be done; but we are not yet in the right way. Is there no one among you who can throw a Congreve rocket among the gerunds and supines of that model of pedants, Dr. Philopatris Parr? I understand your foreign lingos too little to attempt it, but pretty things might be said upon the memorable tureen which he begged of Lord Somebody, whom he afterwards wished to prove to be mad. For example, I would adopt some of the leading phrases of *independent, high-souled, contentus parvo*, and so forth, with which he is bespattered in the Edinburgh, and declare it our opinion, that, if indulged with the three wishes of Prior's tale, he would answer, like the heroine Corisca,

'A ladle to my silver dish
Is all I want, is all I wish.'

I did *not* review Miss Edgeworth, nor do I think it at all well done; at least, it falls below my opinion of that lady's merits. Indeed, I have contributed nothing to the last Review, and am, therefore, according to all rules, the more entitled to criticise it freely. The conclusion of the article on Sir John Moore is transcendently written; and I think I can venture to say, '*aut Erasmus, aut Diabolus.*' Your sugar-cake is very far from being a heavy *bon-bon*; but there I think we stop. The Missionaries, though very good, is on a subject rather stale, and much of the rest is absolute wading.

"As an excuse for my own indolence, I have been in the Highlands for some time past; and who should I meet there, of all fowls in the air, but your friend Mr. Blackburn, to whom I was so much obliged for the care he took of my late unfortunate relative, at your friendly request. The recognition was unfortunately made just when I was leaving the country, and as he was in a gig, and I on the driving-seat of a carriage, the place of meeting a narrow Highland road, which looked as if forty patent ploughs had furrowed it, we had not time or space for so long a greeting as we could have wished. He has a capital good house on the banks of the Leven, about three miles below its discharge from the lake, and very near the classical spot where Matthew Bramble and his whole family were conducted by Smollett, and where Smollett himself was born. There is a new inducement for you to come to Caledon. Your health, thank God, is now no impediment; and I am told sugar and rum excel even whisky, so your purse must be proportionally distended."

The unfortunate brother, the blot of the family, to whom Scott alludes in this letter, had disappointed all the hopes under which his friends sent him to Jamaica. It may be remarked, as characteristic of Scott at this time, that in the various letters to Ellis concerning Daniel, he speaks of him as his *relation*, never as his *brother*; and it must also be mentioned as a circumstance suggesting that Daniel had retained, after all, some sense of pride, that his West Indian patron was allowed by himself to remain, to the end of their connexion, in ignorance of what his distinguished brother had thus thought fit to suppress. Mr. Blackburn, in fact, never knew that Daniel was Walter Scott's brother, until he was applied to for some information respecting him on my own behalf, after this narrative was begun. The story is shortly, that the adventurer's habits of dissipation proved incurable; but he finally left Jamaica under a stigma which Walter Scott regarded with utter severity. Being employed in some service against a refractory or insurgent body of negroes, he had exhibited a lamentable deficiency of spirit and conduct. He returned to Scotland a dishonoured man; and though he found shelter and compassion from his mother, his brother would never see him again. Nay, when soon after, his health, shattered by dissolute indulgence, and probably the intolerable load of shame, gave way altogether, and he died as yet a young man, the poet refused either to attend his funeral, or to wear mourning for him like the rest of the family. Thus sternly, when in the height and pride of his blood, could Scott, whose heart was never hardened against the distress of an enemy, recoil from the disgrace of a brother. It is a more pleasing part of my duty to add, that he spoke to me, twenty years afterwards, in terms of great and painful contrition for the austerity with which he had conducted himself on this occasion. I must add, moreover, that he took a warm interest in a natural child whom Daniel had bequeathed to his mother's care; and after the old lady's death, religiously supplied her place as the boy's protector.

About this time the edition of Sir Ralph Sadler's State Papers, &c. (3 vols. royal 4to) was at length completed by Scott, and published by Constable; but the letters which passed between the Editor and the bookseller show that their personal enstrangement had as yet undergone slender alteration. The collection of the Sadler papers was chiefly the work of Mr. Arthur Clifford—but Scott drew up the Memoir and Notes, and superintended the printing. His account of the Life of Sadler* extends to thirty pages; and both it and his notes are written with all that lively solicitude about points of antiquarian detail, which accompanied him through so many tasks less attractive than the personal career of a distinguished statesman intimately connected with the fortunes of Mary Queen of Scots. Some volumes of the edition of Somers's Tracts (which he had undertaken for Mr. Miller and other booksellers of London two or three years before) were also published about the same period; but that compilation was not finished (13 vols. royal 4to) until 1812. His part in it (for which the booksellers paid him 1200 guineas) was diligently performed, and shews abundant traces of his sagacious understanding and graceful expression. His editorial labours on Dryden, Swift, and these other collections, were gradually storing his mind with that minute and accurate knowledge of the leading persons and events both of Scotch and English history, which made his conversation on such subjects that of one who had rather lived with than read about the departed; while, unlike other antiquaries, he always preserved the keenest interest in the transactions of his own time.

The reader has seen that during his stay in London in the spring of this year, Scott became strongly impressed with a suspicion that the Duke of Portland's Cabinet could not much longer hold together; and the letters which have been quoted, when considered along with the actual course of subsequent events, can leave little doubt that he had gathered this impression from the tone of Mr. Canning's private conversation as to the recent management of the War Department by Lord Castlereagh. It is now known that, as early as Easter, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs had informed the head of the Government that, unless the Secretary for War and the Colonies were replaced by a more competent person, he himself must withdraw from the Ministry; that the Duke of Portland and the majority of the Cabinet concurred in the necessity of Lord Castlereagh's removal, but pressed Mr. Canning to allow the matter to lie over until the conclusion of the Parliamentary Session; that Mr. Canning, reluctantly agreeing to

* Republished in the Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. iv.

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this delay, continued to sit for some months in the same cabinet with the colleague whose eventual dismissal had been conceded to his representation; and that when, on the 20th of September, the Duke of Portland at length informed him of Mr. Canning's resolution, with the date of its original communication to his Grace and the other Ministers, Lord Castlereagh tendered his resignation, and wrote the same day to Mr. Canning, reproaching him with double dealing. "Having," he said, "pronounced it unfit that I should remain charged with the conduct of the war, and made my situation as a Minister of the Crown dependant on your will and pleasure, you continued to sit in the same Cabinet with me, and leave me not only in the persuasion that I possessed your confidence and support as a colleague, but allowed me, in breach of every principle of good faith, both public and private, to originate and proceed in the execution of a new enterprise of the most arduous and important nature (the Walcheren Expedition) with your apparent concurrence and ostensible approbation. You were fully aware that, if my situation in the government had been disclosed to me, I could not have submitted to remain in office, without the entire abandonment of my private honour and public duty. You knew I was deceived, and you continued to deceive me."

The result was a duel on the morning of the 21st, in which Mr. Canning was attended by Mr. Charles Ellis (now Lord Seaford) as his second. Mr. Canning, at the second fire, was severely wounded in the thigh, while his antagonist had a narrow escape, a button on the lapel of his coat having been shot off. In consequence of this quarrel, both Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning retired from office; their example was followed by the Duke of Portland himself; and after fruitless negotiations with Lords Grey and Grenville, Mr. Percival became First Lord of the Treasury, as well as Chancellor of the Exchequer; while the Marquis Wellesley took the Seals of the Foreign Department, and Lord Liverpool removed from the Home Office to that which Lord Castlereagh had occupied. There were some other changes, but Scott's friend, Mr. R. Dundas, (now Lord Melville,) remained in his place at the head of the Board of Control.

While the public mind was occupied with the duel and its yet uncertain results, Scott wrote as follows to the nearest relation and most intimate friend of Mr. Canning's second:—

To George Ellis, Esq.

"Ashestiel, Sept. 26, 1809.

"My dear Ellis,

"Your letter gave me great pleasure, especially the outside, for Canning's frank assured me that his wound was at least not materially serious. So for once the envelope of your letter was even more welcome than the contents. That harebrained Irishman's letter carries absurdity upon the face of it, for surely he would have had much more reason for personal animosity had Canning made the matter public, against the wishes of his uncle and every other person concerned, than for his consenting, at their request, that it should remain a secret, and leaving it to them to make such communication to Lord C. as they should think proper, and *when* they should think proper. I am ill situated here for the explanations I would wish to give, but I have forwarded copies of the letters to Lord Dalkeith, a high-spirited and independent young nobleman, in whose opinion Mr. Canning would, I think, wish to stand well. I have also taken some measures to prevent the good folks of Edinburgh from running after any straw that may be thrown into the wind. I wrote a very hurried note to Mr. C. Ellis the instant I *saw* the accident in the papers, not knowing exactly where you might be, and trusting he would excuse my extreme anxiety and solicitude upon the occasion.

"I see, among other reports, that my friend, Robert Dundas, is mentioned as Secretary at War. I confess I shall be both vexed and disappointed if he, of whose talents and opinions I think very highly, should be prevailed on to embark in so patched and crazy a vessel as can now be lashed together, and that upon a sea which promises to be sufficiently boisterous. My own hopes of every kind are as low as the heels of my boots, and methinks I would say to any friend of mine as Tybalt says to Benvolio—'What! art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?' I suppose the Doctor will be *move* the first, and then the Whigs will come in like a land-flood, and lay the country at the feet of Buonaparte for peace. This, if his devil does not fail, he will readily patch up, and send a few hundred thousands among our coachdriving noblesse, and perhaps among our Princes of the Blood. With the influence acquired by such *gages d'amitié*, and by ostentatious hospitality at his court to all those idiots who will forget the rat-trap of the *detenus*, and crowd there for novelty, there will be, in the course of five or six years, what we have never yet seen, a real French party in this country. To this you are to add all the Burdettites, men who, rather than want combustibles, will fetch brimstone from hell. It is not these whom I fear, however,—it is the vile and degrading spirit of *egoisme* so prevalent among the higher ranks, especially among the highest. God forgive me if I do them injustice, but I think champagne duty free would go a great way to seduce some of them; and is it not a strong symptom when people, knowing and feeling their own weakness, will, from mere selfishness and pride, suffer the vessel to drive on the shelves rather than she should be saved by the only pilot capable of the task? I will be much obliged to you to let me know what is likely to be done—whether any fight can yet be made, or if all is over. Lord Melville had been furious for some time against this Administration—I think *he* will hardly lend a hand to clear the wreck. I should think, if Marquis Wellesley returns, he might form a steady administration, but God wot he must condemn most of the present rotten planks before he can lay down the new vessel. Above all, let me know how Canning's recovery goes on. We must think what is to be done about the Review. Ever yours truly,

W. S."

Scott's views as to the transactions of this period, and the principal parties concerned in them, were considerably altered by the observation of subsequent years; but I have been much interested with watching the course of his sentiments and opinions on such subjects; and, in the belief that others may feel in the same way with myself, I shall insert, without comment, some further extracts from this correspondence:

To the Same.

"Ashestiel, Nov. 3, 1809.

"My dear Ellis,

"I had your letter some time ago, which gave me less comfort in the present public emergency than your letters usually do. Frankly, I see great doubts, not to say an impossibility, of Canning's attaining that rank among the Opposition which will enable him to command the use of their shoulders to place him where—you cannot be more convinced than I am—he is entitled to stand. The *condottieri* of the Grenvilles,—for they have no political principles, and therefore no political party, detached from their immense influence over individuals—will hardly be seduced from their standard to that of Canning, by an eloquence which has been exerted upon them in vain, even when they might have hoped to be gainers by listening to it. The *soi-disant* Whigs stick together like burs. The ragged regiment of Burdett and Folkstone is under yet stricter discipline, for you may have observed that no lover was ever so jealous of his mistress as Sir Francis is of his mob popularity—witness the fate of Paull, Tierney, even Wardle; in short, of whomsoever presumed to rival the brazen image whom the mob of Westminster has set up. That either, or both of these parties, will be delighted with the accession of our friend's wisdom and eloquence, cannot for a moment be disputed. That the Grenvilles, in particular, did be only propose to himself a slice of the great pudding, would allow him to help himself where the plums lie thickest, cannot be doubted. But I think it is very doubtful whether they, closely banded and confident of triumph as they at present are, will accept of a colleague upon terms which would make him a master; and unless Canning has these, it appears to me that *we* (the Republic) should be no better than if he had retained his office in the present, or rather late, Administration. But how far, in throwing himself altogether into the arms of Opposition at this crisis, Canning will injure himself with the large and sound party who profess *Pittism*, is, I really think, worthy of consideration. The influence of his name is at present as great as you or I could wish it; but those who wish to undermine it want but, according to our Scottish proverb, 'a hair to make a tether of.' I admit his hand is very difficult to play, and much as I love and admire him, I am most interested because it is the decided interest of his country, that he should pique, roquet, and capot his antagonists. But you know much of the

delicacy of the game lies in *discarding*—so I hope he will be in no hurry on throwing out his cards.

"I am the more anxious on this score, because I feel an internal conviction that neither Marquis Wellesley nor Lord Melville will lend their names to bolster out this rump of an Administration. Symptoms of this are said to have transpired in Scotland, but in this retirement I cannot learn upon what authority. Should this prove so, confess my best wishes would be realized, because I cannot see how Percival could avoid surrendering at discretion, and taking, perhaps, a peerage. We should then have an Administration *à la Pitt*, which is a much better thing than an Opposition, howsoever conducted or headed, which, like a wave of the sea, forms indeed but a single body when it is rolling towards the shore, but dashes into foam and dispersion the instant it reaches its object. Should Canning and the above named noble peers come to understand each other, joined to all among the present Ministry whom their native good sense, and an attachment to good warm places, will lead to hear reason, it does seem to me that we might form a deeper front to the enemy than we have presented since the death of Pitt, or rather since the dissolution of his first Administration. But if this be a dream, as it may very probably be, I still hope Canning will take his own ground in Parliament, and hoist his own standard. Sooner or later it must be successful. So much for politics—about which, after all, my neighbours the *blackcocks* know about as much as I do.

"I have a great deal to write you about a new poem which I have on the anvil—also, upon the melancholy death of a favourite greyhound bitch—rest her body, since I dare not say soul! She was of high blood and excellent promise. Should any of your sporting friends have a whelp to spare, of a good kind, and of the female sex, I would be grateful beyond measure, especially if she has had the distemper. As I have quite laid aside the gun, coursing is my only and constant amusement, and my valued pair of four-legged champions, Douglas and Percy, wax old and *unfeary*. Ever yours truly,

W. S."

To Walter Scott, Esq.

"Gloucester Lodge, Nov. 13, 1809.

"My dear Sir,

"I am very sensibly gratified by your kind expressions, whether of condolence or congratulation, and I acknowledge, if not (with your Highland writer) the synonymousness of the two terms, at least the union of the two sentiments, as applied to my present circumstances. I am not so heroically fond of being *out*, (*quâtenus out*,) as not to consider that a matter of condolence. But I am at the same time sufficiently convinced of the desirableness of not being *in*, when one should be *in* to no purpose, either of public advantage or personal credit, to be satisfied that on that ground I am entitled to your congratulations.

"I should be very happy indeed to look forward, with the prospect of being able to realize it, to the trip to Scotland which you suggest to me; and still more to the visit included therein, which, as you bold it out, would not be the least part of my temptation. Of this, however, I hope we shall have opportunities of talking before the season arrives; for I reckon upon your spring visit to London, and think of it, I assure you, with great pleasure, as likely to happen at a period when I shall have it more in my power than I have had on any former occasion to enjoy the advantage of it. You will find me not in quite so romantic a scene of seclusion and tranquillity here as that which you describe—but very tranquil and secluded nevertheless, at a mile and a half's distance from Hyde Park Corner—a distance considerable enough, as I now am, to save me from any very overwhelming 'unda salutantium.'

"Here, or any where else, I beg you to believe in the very sincere satisfaction which I shall derive from your society, and which I do derive from the assurance of your regard and good opinion. Ever, my dear sir, very truly and faithfully yours,

GEO. CANNING.

"P. S.—I expect, in the course of this week, to send you a copy of a more ample statement of the circumstances of my retirement, which the misrepresentations of some who, I *think*, must have known they were misrepresenting, (though *that* I must not say,) have rendered necessary."

I could not quote more largely from these political letters without trespassing against the feelings of distinguished individuals still alive, I believe the extracts which I have give are sufficient to illustrate the sagacity with which Scott had at that early period apprehended the dangers to which the political career of Mr. Canning was exposed, by the jealousy of the old Tory aristocracy on the one hand, and the insidious flatteries of Whig intriguers on the other. Even in communications which he must have known would pass under Mr. Canning's own eye, I think we may trace something of the lurking suspicion, that a propensity to tamper with intrigue might eventually develope itself in that great statesman's otherwise noble character. In after years he certainly expressed himself concerning the quarrel of 1809 as if, on a cool retrospect, he considered the "harebrained Irishman" to have been much more sinned against than sinning; but his original impressions on this point had of course been modified by the subsequent lives of the two antagonists—as, indeed, his correspondence will be found to confess. I willingly turn from Scott's politics, to some other matters, which about this time occupied a large share of his thoughts.

He had from his boyish days a great love for theatrical representation; and so soon as circumstances enabled him to practise extended hospitality, the chief actors of his time, whenever they happened to be in Scotland, were among the most acceptable of his guests. Mr. Charles Young was, I believe, the first of them of whom he saw much. As early as 1803 I find him writing of that gentleman to the Marchioness of Abercorn as a valuable addition to the society of Edinburgh; and down to the end of Scott's life, Mr. Young was never in the north without visiting him.

Another graceful and intelligent performer in whom he took a special interest, and of whom he saw a great deal in his private circle, was Miss Smith, afterwards Mrs. Bartley. But at the period of which I am now treating, his principal theatrical intimacy was with John Philip Kemble, and his sister Mrs. Siddons, both of whom he appears to have often met at Lord Abercorn's villa near Stanmore, during his spring visits to London after the first establishment of his poetical celebrity. Of John Kemble's personal character and manners, he has recorded his impressions in a pleasing reviewal of Mr. Boaden's Memoir.* The great tragedian's love of black-letter learning, especially of dramatic antiquities, afforded a strong bond of fellowship; and I have heard Scott say, that the only man who ever seduced him into very deep potations in his middle life was Kemble. He was frequently at Ashestiel, and the "fat Scotch butler," whom Mr. Skene has described to us, by name *John Macbeth*, made sore complaints of the bad hours kept on such occasions in one of the most regular of households; but the watchings of the night were not more grievous to "Cousin Macbeth," as Kemble called the honest *beauffetier*, than were the hazards and fatigues of the morning to the representative of the Scotch usurper. Kemble's miseries during a rough gallop were quite as grotesque as those of his namesake, and it must be owned that species of distress was one from the contemplation of which his host could never derive any thing but amusement.

I have heard Scott chuckle with particular glee over the recollection of an excursion to the vale of the Ettrick, near which river the party were pursued by a bull. "Come, King John," said he, "we must even take the water," and accordingly he and his daughter plunged into the stream. But King John, halting on the bank and surveying the river, which happened to be full and turbid, exclaimed, in his usual solemn manner,

——"The flood is angry, Sheriff,
Methinks I'll get me up into a tree."†

It was well that the dogs had succeeded in diverting the bull, because there was no tree at hand which could have sustained King John, nor, had that been otherwise, could so stately a personage have dis-

* Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xx.

† John Kemble's most familiar table-talk often flowed into blank verse; and so indeed did his sister's. Scott (who was a capital mimic) often repeated her tragic exclamation to a footboy during a dinner at Ashestiel,

"You've brought me water, boy,—I asked for beer."

mounted and ascended with such alacrity as circumstances would have required. He at length followed his friends through the river with the rueful dignity of Don Quixote.

It was this intercourse which led Scott to exert himself very strenuously, when some change in the administration of the Edinburgh stage became necessary—(I believe in 1808,)—to prevail on Mr. Henry Siddons, the nephew of Kemble, to undertake the lease and management. Such an arrangement would, he expected, induce both Kemble and his sister to be more in Scotland than hitherto; and what he had seen of young Siddons himself led him to prognosticate a great improvement in the whole conduct of the northern stage. His wishes were at length accomplished in the summer of 1809. On this occasion he purchased a share, and became one of the acting trustees for the general body of proprietors; and thenceforth, during a long series of years, he continued to take a very lively concern in the proceedings of the Edinburgh company. In this he was plentifully encouraged by his domestic *camarilla*; for his wife had all a Frenchwoman's passion for the *spectacle*; and the elder of the two Ballantynes (both equally devoted to the company of players) was a regular newspaper critic of theatrical affairs, and in that capacity had already attained a measure of authority supremely gratifying to himself.

The first new play produced by Henry Siddons was the Family Legend of Joanna Baillie. This was, I believe, the first of her dramas that ever underwent the test of representation in her native kingdom; and Scott appears to have exerted himself most indefatigably in its behalf. He was consulted about all the *minutiæ* of costume, attended every rehearsal, and supplied the prologue. The play was better received than any other which the gifted authoress has since subjected to the same experiment; and how ardently Scott enjoyed its success will appear from a few specimens of the many letters which he addressed to his friend on the occasion.

The first of these letters is dated Edinburgh, October 27, 1809. He had gone into town for the purpose of entering his eldest boy at the High School:

"On receiving your long kind letter yesterday, I sought out Siddons, who was equally surprised and delighted at your liberal arrangement about the Lady of the Rock. I will put all the names to rights, and retain enough of locality and personality to please the antiquary, without the least risk of bringing the clan Gillian about our ears. I went through the theatre which is the most complete little thing of the kind I ever saw, elegantly fitted up, and large enough for every purpose. I trust, with you, that in this, as in other cases, our Scotch poverty may be a counterbalance to our Scotch pride, and that we shall not need in my time a larger or more expensive building. Siddons himself observes, that even for the purposes of show (so paramount now-a-days) a moderate stage is better fitted than a large one, because the machinery is pliable and manageable in proportion to its size. With regard to the equipment of the Family Legend, I have been much diverted with a discovery which I have made. I had occasion to visit our Lord Provost, (by profession a stocking-weaver,)* and was surprised to find the worthy magistrate filled with a new born zeal for the drama. He spoke of Mr. Siddons' merits with enthusiasm, and of Miss Baillie's powers almost with tears of rapture. Being a curious investigator of cause and effect, I never rested until I found out that this theatric rage which had seized his lordship of a sudden, was owing to a large order for hose, pantaloons, and plaids, for equipping the rival clans of Campbell and Maclean, and which Siddons was sensible enough to send to the warehouse of our excellent provost. . . . The Laird† is just gone to the High School, and it is with inexpressible feeling that I hear him trying to babble the first words of Latin, the signal of commencing serious study, for his acquirements hitherto have been under the mild dominion of a governess. I felt very like Leontes,

> Looking on the lines
> Of my boy's face, methought I did recall
> Thirty good years—

And O, my dear Miss Baillie, what a tale thirty years can tell even in an uniform and unhazardous course of life! How much I have reaped that I have never sown, and sown that I have never reaped! Always, I shall think it one of the proudest and happiest circumstances of my life that enables me to subscribe myself your faithful and affectionate friend,

W. S."

Three months later, he thus communicates the result of the experiment.

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Jan. 30th, 1810.

"My dear Miss Baillie,

"You have only to imagine all that you could wish to give success to a play, and your conceptions will still fall short of the complete and decided triumph of the Family Legend. The house was crowded to a most extraordinary degree; many people had come from your native capital of the west; every thing that pretended to distinction, whether from rank or literature, was in the boxes, and in the pit such an aggregate mass of humanity as I have seldom if ever witnessed in the same space. It was quite obvious from the beginning, that the cause was to be very fairly tried before the public, and that if any thing went wrong, no effort, even of your numerous and zealous friends, could have had much influence in guiding or restraining the general feeling. Some good-natured persons had been kind enough to propagate reports of a strong opposition, which, though I considered them as totally groundless, did not by any means lessen the extreme anxiety with which I waited the rise of the curtain. But in a short time I saw there was no ground whatever for apprehension, and yet I sat the whole time shaking for fear a scene-shifter, or a carpenter, or some of the subaltern actors, should made some blunder, and interrupt the feeling of deep and general interest which soon seized on the whole pit, box, and gallery, as Mr. Bayes has it. The scene on the rock struck the utmost possible effect into the audience, and you heard nothing but sobs on all sides. The banquet-scene was equally impressive, and so was the combat. Of the greater scenes, that between Lorn and Helen in the castle of Maclean, that between Helen and her lover, and the examination of Maclean himself in Argyle's castle, were applauded to the very echo. Siddons announced the play '*for the rest of the week*,' which was received not only with a thunder of applause, but with cheering and throwing up of hats and handkerchiefs. Mrs. Siddons supported her part incomparably, although just recovered from the indisposition mentioned in my last. Siddons himself played Lorn very well indeed, and moved and looked with great spirit. A Mr. Terry, who promises to be a fine performer, went through the part of the Old Earl with great taste and effect. For the rest I cannot say much, excepting that from highest to lowest they were most accurately perfect in their parts, and did their very best. Malcolm de Grey was tolerable but *stickish*—Maclean came off decently—but the conspirators were sad hounds. You are, my dear Miss Baillie, too much of a democrat in your writings; you allow life, soul, and spirit to these inferior creatures of the drama, and expect they will be the better of it. Now it was obvious to me, that the poor monsters, whose mouths are only of use to spout the vapid blank verse which your modern playwright puts into the part of the confidant and subaltern villain of his piece, did not know what to make of the energetic and poetical diction which even these subordinate departments abound with in the Legend. As the play greatly exceeded the usual length, (lasting till half-past ten,) we intend, when it is repeated to-night, to omit some of the passages where the weight necessarily fell on the weakest of our host, although we may hereby injure the detail of the plot. The scenery was very good, and the rock, without appearance of pantomime, was so contrived as to place Mr. Siddons in a very precarious situation to all appearance. The dresses were more tawdry than I should have judged proper, but expensive and showy. I got my brother John's Highland recruiting party to reinforce the garrison of Inverary, and as they mustered beneath the porch of the castle, and seemed to fill the court-yard behind, the combat scene had really the appearance of reality. Siddons has been most attentive, anxious, assiduous, and docile, and has drilled his troops so well that the prompter's aid was unnecessary,

* This magistrate was Mr. William Coulter, who died in office in April, 1810, and is said to have been greatly consoled on his deathbed by the prospect of so grand a funeral as must needs occur in the case of an actual Lord Provost of Auld Reekie. Scott used to *take him off* as saying at some public meeting, "Gentlemen, though doomed to the trade of a stocking-weaver, I was born with the soul of a *Shcepio*!"—(Scipio.)

† Young Walter Scott was called Glinockie, the Laird of Glinockie, or simply *the Laird*, in consequence of his childish admiration for Johnnie Armstrong, whose ruined tower is still extant at Glinockie on the Esk, nearly opposite Netherby.

and I do not believe he gave a single hint the whole night; nor were there any false or ridiculous accents or gestures even among the underlings, though God knows they fell often far short of the true spirit. Mrs. Siddons spoke the epilogue* extremely well: the prologue,† which I will send you in its revised state, was also very well received. Mrs. Scott sends her kindest compliments of congratulation; she had a party of thirty friends in one small box, which she was obliged to watch like a clucking hen till she had gathered her whole flock, for the crowd was insufferable. I am going to see the Legend to-night, when I shall enjoy it quietly, for last night I was so much interested in its reception, that I cannot say I was at leisure to attend to the feelings arising from the representation itself. People are dying to read it. If you think of suffering a single edition to be printed to gratify their curiosity, I will take care of it. But I do not advise this, because until printed no other theatres can have it before you give leave. My kind respects attend Miss Agnes Baillie, and believe me ever your obliged and faithful servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S. A friend of mine writes dramatic criticism now and then. I have begged him to send me a copy of the Edinburgh paper in which he inserts his lucubrations, and I will transmit it to you; he is a play-going man, and more in the habit of expressing himself on such subjects than most people.—In case you have not got a playbill, I enclose one, because I think in my own case I should like to see it."

The Family Legend had a continuous run of fourteen nights, and was soon afterwards printed and published by the Ballantynes.

The theatrical critic alluded to in the last of these letters was the elder of those brothers; the newspaper in which his lucubrations then appeared was the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*; and so it continued until 1817, when the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* was purchased by the printing company in the Canongate; ever after which period it was edited by the prominent member of that firm, and from time to time was the vehicle of many fugitive pieces by the unseen partner.

In one of these letters there occurs, for the first time, the name of a person who soon obtained a large share of Scott's regard and confidence—the late ingenious comedian, Mr. Daniel Terry. He had received a good education, and been regularly trained as an architect; but abandoned that profession, at an early period of life, for the stage, and was now beginning to attract attention as a valuable and efficient actor in Henry Siddons's new company at Edinburgh. Already he and the Ballantynes were constant companions, and through his familiarity with them, Scott had abundant opportunities of appreciating his many excellent and agreeable qualities. He had the manners and feeling of a gentleman. Like John Kemble, he was deeply skilled in the old literature of the drama, and he rivalled Scott's own enthusiasm for the antiquities of *verse*. Their epistolary correspondence in after days was frequent, and will supply me with many illustrations of Scott's minor tastes and habits. As their letters lie before me, they appear as if they had all been penned by the same hand. Terry's idolatry of his new friend induced him to imitate his writing so zealously, that Scott used to say, if he were called on to swear to any document, the utmost he could venture to attest would be, that it was either in his own hand or in Terry's. The actor, perhaps unconsciously, mimicked him in other matters with hardly inferior pertinacity. His small lively features had acquired, before I knew him, a truly ludicrous cast of Scott's graver expression; he had taught his tiny eyebrow the very trick of the poet's meditative frown; and to crown all, he so habitually affected his tone and accent, that, though a native of Bath, a stranger could hardly have doubted he must be a Scotchman. These things afforded Scott and all their mutual acquaintances much diversion; but perhaps no Stoic could have helped being secretly gratified by seeing a clever and sensible man convert himself into a living type and symbol of admiration.

* Written by Henry Mackenzie.

† See Scott's Poetical Works, vol. viii. p. 367.

Charles Mathews and Terry were once thrown out of a gig together, and the former received an injury which made him halt ever afterwards, while the latter escaped unhurt. "Dooms, *Daniel*," said Mathews when they next met, "what a pity that it wasna your luck to get the game leg, mon! Your *Shirra* wad hae been the very thing, ye ken, an' ye wad hae been creose till ye war coffined!" Terry, though he did not always relish bantering on this subject, replied readily and good-humouredly by a quotation from Peter Pindar's *Boxzy and Piozzi*:—

> "When Foote his leg by some misfortune broke,
> Says I to Johnson, all by way of joke,
> Sam, sir, in Paragraph will soon be clever,
> He'll take off Peter better now than ever."

Mathews's mirthful caricature of Terry's sober mimicry of Scott was one of the richest extravaganzas of his social hours; but indeed I have often seen this Proteus dramatize the whole Ballantyne group with equal success—while Rigdumfunnidos screamed with delight, and Aldiboronti phoscophornio faintly chuckled, and the Sheriff, gently smiling, pushed round his decanters.

Miss Seward died in March, 1809. She bequeathed her poetry to Scott, with an injunction to publish it speedily, and prefix a sketch of her life; while she made her letters (of which she had kept copies) the property of Mr. Constable, in the assurance that due regard for his own interests would forthwith place the whole collection before the admiring world. Scott superintended accordingly the edition of the lady's verses, which was published in three volumes in August, 1810, by John Ballantyne and Co.; and Constable lost no time in announcing her correspondence, which appeared a year later, in six volumes. The following letter alludes to these productions, as well as a comedy by Mr. Henry Siddons, which he had recently brought out on the Edinburgh stage; and lastly, to the Lady of the Lake, the printing of which had by this time made great progress.

To Miss Joanna Baillie.

"Edinburgh, March 18, 1810.

'Nothing, my dear Miss Baillie, can loiter in my hands, when you are commanding officer. I have put the play in progress through the press, and find my publishers, the Ballantynes, had previously determined to make Mr. Longman, the proprietor of your other works, the offer of this. All that can be made of it in such a course certainly shall, and the booksellers shall be content with as little profit as can in reason be expected. I understand the trade well, and will take care of this. Indeed, I believe the honour weighs more with the booksellers here than the profit of a single play. So much for business. You are quite right in the risk I run of failure in a third poem; yet I think I understand the British public well enough to set every sail towards the popular breeze. One set of folks pique themselves upon sailing in the wind's eye—another class drive right before it; now I would neither do one or t'other, but endeavour to go, as the sailors express it, *upon* a wind, and make use of it to carry me my own way, instead of going precisely in its direction; or, to speak in a dialect with which I am more familiar, I would endeavour to make my horse carry me, instead of attempting to carry my horse. I have a vainglorious presentiment of success upon this occasion, which may very well deceive me, but which I would hardly confess to any body but you, nor perhaps to you neither, unless I knew you would find it out whether I told it you or no,—

> 'You are a sharp observer, and you look
> Quite through the eyes of men.'—

"I plead guilty to the charge of ill-breeding to Miss ···. The despair which I used to feel on receiving poor Miss Seward's letters, whom I really liked, gave me a most unsentimental horror for sentimental letters. The crossest thing I ever did in my life was to poor, dear Miss Seward; she wrote me in an evil hour (I had never seen her, mark that!) a long and most passionate epistle upon the death of a dear friend, whom I had never seen neither, concluding with a charge not to attempt answering the said letter, for she was dead to the world, &c. &c. &c. Never were commands more literally obeyed. I remained as silent as the grave, till the lady made so many inquiries

after me, that I was afraid of my death being prematurely announced by a sonnet or an elegy. When I did see her, however, she interested me very much, and I am now doing penance for my ill-breeding, by submitting to edite her posthumous poetry, most of which is absolutely execrable. This, however, is the least of my evils, for when she proposed this bequest to me, which I could not in decency refuse, she combined it with a request that I would publish her whole literary correspondence. This I declined on principle, having a particular aversion at perpetuating that sort of gossip; but what availed it? Lo! to ensure the publication, she left it to an Edinburgh bookseller; and I anticipate the horror of seeing myself advertised for a live poet like a wild beast on a painted streamer, for I understand all her friends are depicted therein in body, mind, and manners. So much for the risks of sentimental correspondence.

"Siddons' play was truly flat, but not unprofitable; he contrived to get it well propped in the acting, and—though it was such a thing as if you or I had written it (supposing, that is, what in your case, and I think even in my own, is impossible) would have been damned seven-fold,—yet it went through with applause. Such is the humour of the multitude; and they will quarrel with reason for being dressed a day sooner than fashion requires, and batten on a neck of mutton, because, on the whole, it is rather better than they expected; however, Siddons is a good lad, and deserves success, through whatever channel it comes. His mother is here just now. I was quite shocked to see her, for the two last years have made a dreadful inroad both on voice and person; she has, however, a very bad cold. I hope she will be able to act Jane de Montfort, which we have long planned. Very truly yours,

W. S."

CHAPTER XX.

AFFAIR OF THOMAS SCOTT'S EXTRACTORSHIP DISCUSSED IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS—SPEECHES OF LORD LAUDERDALE—LORD MELVILLE, &C.—LORD HOLLAND AT THE FRIDAY CLUB—PUBLICATION OF THE LADY OF THE LAKE—CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING VERSIFICATION WITH ELLIS AND CANNING—THE POEM CRITICISED BY JEFFREY AND MACKINTOSH—LETTERS TO SOUTHEY AND MORRITT—ANECDOTES FROM JAMES BALLANTYNE'S MEMORANDA—1810.

THERE occurred, while the latter cantos of the Lady of the Lake were advancing through the press, an affair which give Scott so much uneasiness, that I must not pass it in silence. Each Clerk of Session had in those days the charge of a particular office or department in the Great Register House of Scotland, and the appointment of the subalterns, who therein recorded and extracted the decrees of the Supreme Court, was in his hands. Some of these situations, remunerated, according to a fixed rate of fees, by the parties concerned in the suits before the Court, were valuable, and considered not at all below the pretensions of gentlemen who had been regularly trained for the higher branches of the law. About the time when Thomas Scott's affairs as a Writer to the Signet fell into derangement, but before they were yet hopeless, a post became vacant in his brother's office, which yielded an average income of £400, and which he would very willingly have accepted. The Poet, however, considered a respectable man, who had grown gray at an inferior desk in the same department, as entitled to promotion, and exerted the right of patronage in his favour accordingly, bestowing on his brother the place which this person left. It was worth about £250 a year, and its duties being entirely mechanical, might be in great part, and often had been in former times entirely, discharged by deputy. Mr. Thomas Scott's appointment to this *Extractorship* took place at an early stage of the proceedings of that Commission for inquiring into the Scotch System of Judicature, which had the poet for its secretary. Thomas, very soon afterwards, was compelled to withdraw from Edinburgh, and retired, as has been mentioned, to the Isle of Man, leaving his official duties to the care of a substitute, who was to allow him a certain share of the fees, until circumstances should permit his return. It was not, however, found so easy, as he and his friends had anticipated, to wind up his accounts, and settle with his creditors.

Time passed on, and being an active man, in the prime vigour of life, he accepted a commission in the Manx Fencibles, a new corps raised by the Lord of that island, the Duke of Athol, who willingly availed himself of the military experience which Mr. Scott had acquired in the course of his long connexion with the Edinburgh Volunteers. These Manx Fencibles, however, were soon dissolved, and Thomas Scott, now engaged in the peaceful occupation of collecting materials for a History of the Isle of Man, to which his brother had strongly directed his views, was anxiously expecting a final arrangement, which might allow him to re-establish himself in Edinburgh, and resume his seat in the Register House, when he received the intelligence that the Commission of Judicature had resolved to abolish that, among many other similar posts. This was a severe blow; but it was announced, at the same time, that the Commission meant to recommend to Parliament a scheme of compensation for the functionaries who were to be discharged at their suggestion, and that his retired allowance would probably amount to £130 per annum.

In the spring of 1810, the Commission gave in its report, and was dissolved; and a bill, embodying the details of an extensive reform, founded on its suggestions, was laid before the House of Commons, who adopted most of its provisions, and among others passed, without hesitation, the clauses respecting compensation for the holders of abolished offices. But when the bill reached the House of Lords, several of these clauses were severely reprobated by some Peers of the Whig party, and the case of Thomas Scott, in particular, was represented as a gross and flagrant *job*. The following extract from Hansard's Debates will save me the trouble of further details:—

"THOMAS SCOTT.

"THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE moved an amendment, 'that those only be remunerated who were mentioned in the schedule.' The application of this amendment was towards the compensation intended for Mr Thomas Scott, the brother of Walter Scott. It appeared the former was appointed to the office of an Extractor at a time when it must have been foreseen that those offices would be abolished. Mr. Thomas Scott had not been connected previously with that sort of situation, but was recruiting for the Manx Fencibles in the Isle of Man at the time, and had not served the office, but performed its duties through the means of a deputy. He considered this transaction a perfect job. By the present bill Mr. T. Scott would have £130 for life as an indemnity for an office, the duties of which he never had performed, while those clerks who had laboured for twenty years had no adequate remuneration.

"VISCOUNT MELVILLE supported the general provisions of the bill. With respect to Mr. T. Scott, he certainly had been in business, had met with misfortunes, and on account of his circumstances went to the Isle of Man; but with respect to his appointment, this was the fact: a situation in the same office [of the Register House] with that of his brother, of £400, became vacant, and he [Walter Scott] thought it his duty to promote a person who had meritoriously filled the situation which was afterwards granted to Mr. T. Scott. His brother was therefore so disinterested as to have appointed him to the inferior instead of the superior situation. The noble viscount saw no injustice in the case, and there was no partiality but what was excusable.

"LORD HOLLAND thought no man who knew him would suspect that he was unfavourable to men of literature; on the contrary, he felt a great esteem for the literary character of Walter Scott. He and his colleagues ever thought it their duty to reward literary merit without regard to political opinions; and he wished he could pay the same compliment to the noble and learned viscount, for he must ever recollect that the poet Burns, of immortal memory, had been shamefully neglected. But with respect to Mr. Thomas Scott, the question was quite different, for he was placed in a situation which he and his brother knew at the time would be abolished; and from Parliament he claimed an indemnity for what could not be pronounced any loss. It was unjust as regarded others, and improper as it respected Parliament.

"The amendment was then proposed and negatived. The bill was accordingly read the third time and passed."—HANSARD, *June*, 1810.

I shall now extract various passages from Scott's

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letters to his brotner and other friends, which will show what his feelings were while this affair continued under agitation.

To Thomas Scott, Esq., Douglas, Isle of Man.

"Edinburgh, 25th May, 1810.

"My dear Tom,

"I write under some anxiety for your interest, though I sincerely hope it is groundless. The devil or James Gibson* has put it into Lord Lauderdale's head to challenge your annuity in the House of Lords on account of your non-residence, and your holding a commission in the militia. His lordship kept his intention as secret as possible, but fortunately it reached the kind and friendly ear of Colin Mackenzie. Lord Melville takes the matter up stoutly, and I have little doubt will carry his point, unless the whole bill is given up for the season, which some concurring opposition from different quarters renders not impossible. In that case, you must, at the expense of a little cash and time, shew face in Edinburgh for a week or two, and attend your office. But I devoutly hope all will be settled by the bill being passed as it now stands. This is truly a most unworthy exertion of private spite and malice, but I trust it will be in vain."

. . . . . .

"Edinburgh, June 12th.

"Dear Tom,

"I have the pleasure to acquaint you that I have every reason to believe that the bill will pass this week. It has been *committed;* upon which occasion Lord Lauderdale stated various objections, all of which were repelled. He then adverted to your case with some sufficiently bitter observations. Lord Melville advised him to reserve his epithets till he was pleased to state his cause, as he would pledge himself to show that they were totally inapplicable to the transaction. The Duke of Montrose also intimated his intention to defend it, which I take very kind of his Grace, as he went down on purpose, and declared his resolution to attend whenever the business should be stirred. So much for

'The Lord of Graham, by every chief adored,
Who boasts his native philabeg restored.'"†

. . . . . .

"Edinburgh, 21st June, 1810.

"My dear Tom,

"The bill was read a third time in the House of Lords, on which occasion Lord Lauderdale made his attack, which Lord Melville answered. There was not much said on either side: Lord Holland supported Lord Lauderdale, and the bill passed without a division. So you have fairly doubled Cape Lauderdale. I believe his principal view was to insult my feelings, in which he has been very unsuccessful, for I thank God I feel nothing but the most hearty contempt both for the attack and the sort of paltry malice by which alone it could be dictated."

The next letter is addressed to an old friend of Scott's, who, though a stout Whig, had taken a lively interest in the success of his brother's parliamentary business.

To John Richardson, Esq., Fludyer Street, Westminster.

"Edinburgh, 3d July, 1810.

"My dear Richardson,

"I ought before now to have written you my particular thanks for your kind attention to the interest which I came so strangely and unexpectedly to have in the passing of the Judicature Bill. The only purpose which I suppose Lord Lauderdale had in view was to state charges which could neither be understood nor refuted, and to give me a little pain by dragging my brother's misfortunes into public notice. If the last was his aim, I am happy to say it has most absolutely miscarried, for I have too much contempt for the motive which dictated his Lordship's eloquence to feel much for its thunders. My brother loses by the bill from £150 to £200, which no power short of an act of Parliament could have taken from him, and far from having a view to the compensation, he is a considerable loser by its being substituted for the actual receipts of his office. I assure you I am very sensible of your kind and friendly activity and zeal in my brother's behalf.

"I received the Guerras* safe; it is a fine copy, and I think very cheap, considering how difficult it is now to procure foreign books. I shall be delighted to have the Traité des Tournois. I propose, on the 12th, setting forth for the West Highlands, with the desperate purpose of investigating the caves of Staffa, Egg, and Skye. There was a time when this was a heroic undertaking, and when the return of Samuel Johnson from achieving it was hailed by the Edinburgh literati with 'per varios casus,' and other scraps of classical gratulation equally new and elegant. But the harvest of glory has been entirely reaped by the early discoverers; and in an age when every London citizen makes Lochlomond his wash-pot, and throws his shoe over Ben-Nevis, a man may endure every hardship and expose himself to every danger of the Highland seas, from sea-sickness to the jaws of the great sea-snake, without gaining a single leaf of laurel for his pains.

"The best apology for bestowing all this tediousness upon you is, that John Burnet is dinning into the ears of the Court a botheration about the politics of the magnificent city of Culross. But I will release you sooner than I fear I shall escape myself, with the assurance that I am ever yours, most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

I conclude the affair of Thomas Scott with a brief extract from a letter which his brother addressed to him a few weeks later:—"Lord Holland has been in Edinburgh, and we met accidentally at a public party. He made up to me, but I remembered his part in your affair, and *cut* him with as little remorse as an old pen." The meeting here alluded to occurred at a dinner of the *Friday Club*, at Fortune's Tavern, to which Lord Holland was introduced by Mr. Thomas Thomson. Two gentlemen who were present, inform me that they distinctly remember a very painful scene, for which, knowing Scott's habitual good-nature and urbanity, they had been wholly unprepared. One of them (Lord Jeffrey) adds, that this was the only example of rudeness he ever witnessed in him in the course of a lifelong familiarity. I have thought it due to truth and justice not to omit this disagreeable passage in Scott's life, which shows how even his mind could at times be unhinged and perverted by the malign influence of political spleen. It is consolatory to add, that he enjoyed much agreeable intercourse in after days with Lord Holland, and retained no feelings of resentment towards any other of the Whig gentlemen named in the preceding correspondence.†

While these disagreeable affairs were still in progress, the poem of the Lady of the Lake was completed. Scott was at the same time arranging the materials, and superintending the printing, of the collection entitled "English Minstrelsy," in which several of his own minor poems first appeared, and which John Ballantyne and Co. also published in the summer of 1810. The Swift, too, (to say nothing of reviews and the like,) was going on; and so was the Somers. A new edition of the Minstrel-

* James Gibson, Esq. W. S. (now Sir James Gibson Craig of Riccarton, Bart.,) had always been regarded as one of the most able and active of the Scotch Whigs—whose acknowledged chief in those days was the Earl of Lauderdale.

† These lines are slightly altered from the Rolliad, p. 308. The Duke had obtained the repeal of an act of Parliament forbidding the use of the Highland garb.

* A copy of the *Guerras Civiles de Granada*

† I subjoin a list of the Members of *The Friday Club*, which was instituted in June, 1803, (on the model, I believe, of Johnson's at the Turk's Head,) down to the period of Scott's death. The others marked, like his name, by an asterisk, are also dead.

1803	*Sir James Hall	1904	*Alex. Hamilton
	*Professor Dugald Stewart		*Dr. Coventry
	*Professor John Playfair		*Professor John Robison
	Rev. Arch. Alison		George Strickland
	Rev. Sidney Smith		*Professor Dalzell
	*Rev. Peter Elmslie		*Lord Webb Seymour
	*Alex. Irving (Lord Newton)		*Earl of Selkirk
	*Wm. Erskine (Lord Kinnedder)		*Lord Glenbervie
		1907	Rev. John Thomson
	George Cranstoun (Lord Corehouse)	1810	John Jeffrey
		1811	T. F. Kennedy
	*Walter Scott		J. Fullerton (Lord Fullerton)
	Thomas Thomson		
	Dr. John Thomson		John Allen
	John A. Murray (Lord Advocate in 1836)		*Francis Horner
			Thomas Campbell
	Henry Brougham (Lord Brougham)	1812	*George Wilson
		1814	*Dr. John Gordon
	*Henry Mackenzie	1816	Andrew Rutherford
	H. Mackenzie (Lord Mackenzie)	1817	James Keay
		1825	Leonard Horner
	*Malcolm Laing		Professor Pillans
	Henry Cockburn (Lord Cockburn)	1826	Count M. de Flahault
			*D. Cathcart (Lord Alloway
	John Richardson	1827	Earl of Minto
	Francis Jeffrey (Lord Jeffrey)		William Murray
		1830	Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone.
	William Clerk		

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ny of the Scottish Border was moreover at press, and in it the editor included a few features of novelty, particularly Mr. Morritt's spirited ballad of the *Curse of Moy*. He gives a lively description of his occupations in the following letter addressed to that gentleman;—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., 24 Portland Place, London.

"Edinburgh, 2d March, 1810.

"My dear Morritt,

"You are very good to remember such a false knave as I am, who have omitted so long to thank you for a letter, bringing me the assurances of your health and remembrance, which I do not value the less deeply and sincerely for my seeming neglect. Truth is, I do not eat the bread of idleness. But I was born a Scotchman, and a bare one, and was therefore born to fight my way with my left hand where my right failed me, and with my teeth, if they were both cut off. This is but a bad apology for not answering your kindness, yet not so bad when you consider that it was only admitted as a cause of procrastination, and that I have been—let me see—I have been Secretary to the Judicature Commission, which sat daily during all the Christmas vacation. I have been editing Swift, and correcting the press, at the rate of six sheets a-week. I have been editing Somers at the rate of four ditto ditto. I have written reviews—I have written songs—I have made selections—I have superintended rehearsals—and all this independent of visiting, and of my official duty, which occupies me four hours every working day except Mondays—and independent of a new poem with which I am threatening the world. This last employment is not the most prudent, but I really cannot well help myself. My office, though a very good one for Scotland, is only held in reversion; nor do I at present derive a shilling from it. I must expect that a fresh favourite of the public will supersede me, and my philosophy being very great on the point of poetical fame, I would fain, at the risk of hastening my own downfall, avail myself of the favourable moment to make some further provision for my little people. Moreover, I cannot otherwise honestly indulge myself in some of the luxuries which, when long gratified, become a sort of pseudo necessaries. As for the terrible parodies* which have come forth, I can only say with Benedict, 'A college of such witmongers cannot flout me out of my humour.' Had I been conscious of one place about my temper, were it even, metaphorically speaking, the tip of my heel, vulnerable to this sort of aggression, I have that respect for mine own ease, that I would have shunned being a candidate for public applause, as I would avoid snatching a honey-comb from among a hive of live bees. My present attempt is a poem, partly Highland—the scene Loch Katrine, *tempore Jacobi quinti*. If I fail, as Lady Macbeth gallantly says, I fail, and there is only a story murdered to no purpose; and if I succeed, why then, as the song says—

'Up with the bonnie blue bonnet,
The dirk and the feather and a'.

"I hope to show this ditty to you soon in Portland Place, for it seems determined I must go to London, though the time is not fixed. The pleasure of meeting you and half a dozen other friends, reconciles me to this change of plan, for had I answered your letter the day I received it, I would have said nothing was less likely than my going to town in spring. I hope it will be so late as to afford me an opportunity of visiting Rokeby and Greta Side on my return. The *felon sow* herself could not think of them with more affection than I do; and though I love Portland Place dearly, yet I would fain enjoy both. But this must be as *the Fates and Destinies and Sisters three* determine. Charlotte hopes to accompany me, and is particularly gratified by the expectation of meeting Mrs. Morritt. We think of our sunny days at Rokeby with equal delight.

"Miss Baillie's play went off capitally here, notwithstanding her fond and over-credulous belief in a Creator of the world. The fact is so generally believed that it is man who makes the deity, that I am surprised it has never been maintained as a corollary, that the knife and fork make the fingers. We wept till our hearts were sore, and applauded till our hands were blistered—what could we more—and this in crowded theatres.

"I send a copy of the poetical collection, not for you, my good friend, because you would not pay your literary subscription,† but for Mrs. Morritt. I thought of leaving it as I came through Yorkshire, but as I can get *as yet* an office frank, it will be safer in your charge. By a parity of reasoning, you will receive a copy of the new edition of the Minstrelsy just finished, and about to be shipped, enriched with your Curse of Moy, which is very much admired by all to whom I have shown it. I am sorry that dear ——— ——— is so far from you. There is something about her that makes me think of her with a mixture of affection and anxiety—such a pure and excellent heart, joined to such native and fascinating manners, cannot pass unprotected through your fashionable scenes without much hazard of a twinge at least, if not a stab. I remember we talked over this subject once while riding on the banks of Tees, and somehow (I cannot tell why) it falls like a death-bell on my ear. She is too artless for the people that she has to live amongst. This is all vile croaking, so I will end it by begging ten time love and compliments to Mrs. Morritt, in which Charlotte heartily joins. Believe me ever, dear Morritt, yours most faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT."

Early in May the Lady of the Lake came out—as her two elder sisters had done—in all the majesty of quarto, with every accompanying grace of typography, and with, moreover, an engraved frontispiece of Saxon's portrait of Scott; the price of the book, two guineas. For the copyright the poet had nominally received 2000 guineas, but as John Ballantyne and Co., retained three fourths of the property to themselves, (Miller of London purchasing the other fourth,) the author's profits were, or should have been, more than this.

It ought to be mentioned, that during the progress of the poem, his feelings towards Constable were so much softened, that he authorized John Ballantyne to ask, in his name, that experienced bookseller's advice respecting the amount of the first impression, the method of advertising, and other professional details. Mr. Constable readily gave the assistance thus requested, and would willingly have taken any share they pleased in the adventure. The property had been disposed of before these communications occurred, and the triumphant success of the *coup d'essai* of the new firm was sufficient to close Scott's ears for a season against any propositions of the like kind from the house at the Cross; but from this time there was no return of any thing like personal ill-will between the parties. One article of this correspondence will be sufficient.

To Mr. Constable.

"Castle Street, 12th March, 1810.

"Dear Sir,

"I am sure if Mr. Hunter is really sorry for the occasion of my long absence from your shop, I shall be happy to forget all disagreeable circumstances, and visit it often as a customer and amateur. I think it necessary to add (before departing from this subject, and I hope for ever,) that it is not in my power to restore our relative situation as author and publishers, because, upon the breach between us, a large capital was diverted by the Ballantynes from another object, and invested in their present bookselling concern, under an express assurance from me of such support as my future publications could give them; which is a pledge not to be withdrawn without grounds which I cannot anticipate. But this is not a consideration which need prevent our being friends and well-wishers. Yours truly,

W. SCOTT."

Mr. Robert Cadell, the publisher of this Memoir, who was then a young man in training for his profession in Edinburgh, retains a strong impression of the interest which the Lady of the Lake excited there for two or three months before it was published. "James Ballantyne," he says, "read the cantos from time to time to select coteries, as they advanced at press. Common fame was loud in their favour; a great poem was on all hands anticipated. I do not recollect that any of all the author's works was ever looked for with more intense anxiety, or that any one of them excited a more extraordinary sensation when it did appear. The whole country rang with the praises of the poet—crowds set off to view the scenery of Loch Katrine, till then comparatively unknown; and as the book came out just before the season for excursions, every house and

* I suppose this is an allusion to the "Lay of the Scotch Fiddle," "the Goblin Groom," and some other productions, like them, long since forgotten.

† Scott alludes to some translations of Italian poetry which he had wished for Mr. Morritt's permission to publish in the "English Minstrelsy."

inn in that neighbourhood was crammed with a constant succession of visitors. It is a well-ascertained fact, that from the date of the publication of the Lady of the Lake, the posthorse duty in Scotland rose in an extraordinary degree, and indeed it continued to do so regularly for a number of years, the author's succeeding works keeping up the enthusiasm for our scenery which he had thus originally created."

I owe to the same correspondent the following details:—"The quarto edition of 2050 copies disappeared instantly, and was followed in the course of the same year by four editions in octavo, viz. one of 3000, a second of 3250, and a third and a fourth each of 6000 copies; thus, in the space of a few months, the extraordinary number of 20,000 copies were disposed of. In the next year (1811) there was another edition of 3000; there was one of 2000 in 1814; another of 2000 in 1815; one of 2000 again in 1819; and two, making between them 2500, appeared in 1825: since which time the Lady of the Lake, in collective editions of his poetry, and in separate issues, must have circulated to the extent of at least 20,000 copies more." So that, down to the month of July, 1836, the legitimate sale in Great Britain has been not less than 50,000 copies.

I have little to add to what the Introduction of 1830, and some letters already extracted have told us, concerning the history of the composition of this poem. Indeed the coincidences of expression and illustration in the Introduction, and those private letters, written twenty years before, are remarkable. In both we find him quoting Montrose's lines, and in both he quotes also "Up wi' the bonnie blue bonnet," &c. In truth, both letters and Introduction were literal transcripts of his usual conversation on the subject. "A lady," he says, "to whom I was nearly related, and with whom I lived during her whole life on the most brotherly terms of affection, was residing with me (at Ashestiel) when the work was in progress, and used to ask me what I could possibly do to rise so early in the morning. At last I told her the subject of my meditation; and I can never forget the anxiety and affection expressed in her reply. 'Do not be so rash,' she said, 'my dearest cousin. You are already popular—more so perhaps than you yourself will believe, or than even I or other partial friends can fairly allow to your merit. You stand high—do not rashly attempt to climb higher and incur the risk of a fall; for, depend upon it, a favourite will not be permitted even to stumble with impunity.' I replied to this affectionate expostulation in the words of Montrose:—

> 'He either fears his fate too much,
> Or his deserts are small,
> Who dares not put it to the touch,
> To win or lose it all.'

'If I fail,' I said—for the dialogue is strong in my recollection, 'it is a sign that I ought never to have succeeded, and *I will write prose for life*: you shall see no change in my temper, nor will I eat a single meal the worse. But if I succeed—

> 'Up wi' the bonnie blue bonnet,
> The dirk and the feather an' a'!'

"Afterwards I showed my critic the first canto, which reconciled her to my imprudence."—The lady here alluded to was no doubt Miss Christian Rutherford, his mother's sister, who, as I have already mentioned, was so little above his age, that they seem always to have lived together on the terms of equality indicated in her use of the word "cousin" in the dialogue before us. She was, however, about as devout a Shakspearian as her nephew, and the use of *cousin*, for kinsman in general, is common to all our elder dramatists.*

He says, in the same essay, "I remember that about the same time a friend started in to 'heeze up my hope,' like the minstrel in the old song. He was bred a farmer, but a man of powerful understanding, natural good taste, and warm poetical feeling, perfectly competent to supply the wants of an imperfect or irregular education. He was a passionate admirer of field sports, which we often pursued together. As this friend happened to dine with me at Ashestiel one day, I took the opportunity of reading to him the first canto of the Lady of the Lake, in order to ascertain the effect the poem was likely to produce upon a person who was but too favourable a representative of readers at large. His reception of my recitation, or prelection, was rather singular. He placed his hand across his brow, and listened with great attention through the whole account of the staghunt, till the dogs throw themselves into the lake to follow their master, who embarks with Ellen Douglas. He then started up with a sudden exclamation, struck his hand on the table, and declared in a voice of censure calculated for the occasion, that the dogs must have been totally ruined by being permitted to take the water after such a severe chase. I own I was much encouraged by the species of reverie which had possessed so zealous a follower of the sports of the ancient Nimrod, who had been completely surprised out of all doubts of the reality of the tale." Scott adds—"Another of his remarks gave me less pleasure. He detected the identity of the king with the wandering knight, Fitz-James, when he winds his bugle to summon his attendants. He was probably thinking of the lively but somewhat licentious old ballad in which the *dénouement* of a royal intrigue" [one of James V. himself by the way] "takes place as follows:—

> 'He took a bugle from his side,
> He blew both loud and shrill,
> And four-and-twenty belted knights
> Came skipping owre the hill.
>
> 'Then he took out a little knife,
> Let a' his duddies fa',
> And he was the bravest gentleman
> That was amang them a'.
> And we'll go no more a roving,' &c.

"This discovery, as Mr. Pepys says of the rent in his camblet cloak, 'was but a trifle, yet it troubled me;' and I was at a good deal of pains to efface any marks by which I thought my secret could be traced before the conclusion, when I relied on it with the same hope of producing effect with which the Irish postboy is said to reserve a 'trot for the avenue.'"*

I believe the shrewd critic here introduced was the poet's excellent cousin, Charles Scott, now laird of Knowe-south. The story of the Irish postilion's trot he owed to Mr. Moore.

In their reception of this poem, the critics were for once in full harmony with each other, and with the popular voice. The article in the Quarterly was written by George Ellis; but its eulogies, though less discriminative, are not a whit more emphatic than those of Mr. Jeffrey in the rival Review. Indeed, I have always considered this last paper as the best specimen of contemporary criticism on Scott's poetry; and I shall therefore indulge myself with quoting here two of its paragraphs:—

"There is nothing in Mr. Scott of the severe and majestic style of Milton—or of the terse and fine composition of Pope—or of the elaborate elegance and melody of Campbell—or even of the flowing and redundant diction of Southey,—but there is a medley of bright images and glowing, set carelessly and loosely together—a diction tinged successively with the careless richness of Shakspeare, the harshness and antique simplicity of the old romances, the homeliness of vulgar ballads and anecdotes, and the sentimental glitter of the most modern poetry—passing from the borders of the ludicrous to those of the sublime—alternately minute and energetic—sometimes artificial, and frequently negligent, but always full of spirit and vivacity—abounding in images that are striking at first sight to minds of every contexture—and never expressing a sentiment which it can cost the most ordinary reader any exertion to comprehend. Upon the whole, we are inclined to think more highly of the Lady of the Lake than of either of its author's former publications. We are more sure, however, that it has fewer faults, than that it has greater beauties; and as its beauties bear a strong resemblance to those with which the public has been alrea

* Thus Lady Capulet exclaims, on seeing the corpse of Tybalt, "Tybalt, my cousin! oh! my brother's child!"

* Introduction to the Lady of the Lake—1830.

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dy made familiar in these celebrated works, we should not be surprised if its popularity were less splendid and remarkable. For our own parts, however, we are of opinion, that it will be oftener read hereafter than either of them; and that if it had appeared first in the series, their reception would have been less favourable than that which it has experienced. It is more polished in its diction, and more regular in its versification; the story is constructed with infinitely more skill and address; there is a greater proportion of pleasing and tender passages, with much less antiquarian detail; and, upon the whole, a larger variety of characters, more artfully and judiciously contrasted. There is nothing so fine, perhaps, as the battle in Marmion—or so picturesque as some of the scattered sketches in the Lay; but there is a richness and a spirit in the whole piece which does not pervade either of those poems—a profusion of incident, and a shifting brilliancy of colouring, that reminds us of the witchery of Ariosto—and a constant elasticity, and occasional energy, which seem to belong more peculiarly to the author now before us."

"It is honourable to Mr. Scott's genius that he has been able to interest the public so deeply with this third presentment of the same chivalrous scenes; but we cannot help thinking, that both his glory and our gratification would have been greater, if he had changed his hand more completely, and actually give us a true Celtic story, with all its drapery and accompaniments, in a corresponding style of decoration. Such a subject, we are persuaded, has very great capabilities, and only wants to be introduced to public notice by such a hand as Mr. Scott's, to make a still more powerful impression than he has already effected by the resurrection of the tales of romance. There are few persons, we believe, of any degree of poetical susceptibility, who have wandered among the secluded valleys of the Highlands, and contemplated the singular people by whom they are still tenanted—with their love of music and of song—their hardy and irregular life, so unlike the unvarying toils of the Saxon mechanic—their devotion to their chiefs—their wild and lofty traditions—their national enthusiasm—the melancholy grandeur of the scenes they inhabit—and the multiplied superstitions which still linger among them—without feeling that there is no existing people so well adapted for the purposes of poetry, or so capable of furnishing the occasions of new and striking inventions.

"We are persuaded, that if Mr. Scott's powerful and creative genius were to be turned in good earnest to such a subject, something might be produced still more impressive and original than even this age has yet witnessed."*

The second of these paragraphs is a strikingly prophetic one; and if the details already given negative the prediction of the first,—namely, that the immediate popularity of the Lady of the Lake would be less remarkable than that of the Lay or Marmion had been—its other prediction, that the new poem would be "oftener read hereafter than either of the former," has, I believe, proved just. The Lay, if I may venture to state the creed now established, is, I should say, generally considered as the most natural and original, Marmion as the most powerful and splendid, the Lady of the Lake as the most interesting, romantic, picturesque, and graceful of his great poems.

Of the private opinions expressed at the time of its first publication by his distinguished literary friends, and expressed with an ease and candour equally honourable to them and to him, that of Mr. Southey was, as far as I know, the only one which called forth any thing like a critical reply; and even here, *more suo*, he seems glad to turn from his own productions to those of his correspondent. It will be seen that Mr. Southey had recently put forth the first volume of his history of Brazil; that his Kehama was then in the Ballantyne press; and that he had mentioned to Scott his purpose of writing another poem under the title of "Don Pelayo"—which in the issue was exchanged for that of "Roderick the Last of the Goths."

To Robert Southey, Esq., Durham.

"Edinburgh, May 20, 1810.

"My dear Southey,

"I am very sensible of the value of your kind approbation of my efforts, and trust I shall, under such good auspices, keep my ground with the public. I have studied their taste as much as a thing so variable can be calculated upon, and I hope I have again given them an acceptable subject of entertainment. What you say of the songs is very just, and also of the measure. But, on the one hand, I wished to make a difference between my former poems and this new attempt, in the general tenor of versification, and on the other, having an eye to the benefits derivable from the change of stanza, I omitted no opportunity which could be given or taken, of converting my dog-trot into a hop-step-and-jump. I am impatient to see Kehama; James Ballantyne, who has a good deal of tact, speaks very highly of the poetical fire and beauty which pervades it; and, considering the success of Sir William Jones, I should think the Hindhu mythology would not revolt the common readers, for in that lies your only danger. As for Don Pelayo, it should be exquisite under your management; the subject is noble, the parties finely contrasted in manners, dress, religion, and all that the poet desires to bring into action; and your complete knowledge of every historian who has touched upon the period, promises the reader at once delight and instruction.

"Twenty times twenty thanks for the History of Brazil, which has been my amusement, and solace, and spring of instruction for this month past. I have always made it my reading-book after dinner, between the removal of the cloth and our early tea-time. There is only one defect I can point out, and that applies to the publishers—I mean the want of a good map. For, to tell you the truth, with my imperfect atlas of South America, I can hardly trace these same *Tups* of yours, (which in our Border dialect signifies *rams*,) with all their divisions and subdivisions, through so many ramifications, without a *carte de pays*. The history itself is most singularly entertaining, and throws new light upon a subject which we have hitherto understood very imperfectly. Your labour must have been immense, to judge from the number of curious facts quoted, and unheard-of authorities which you have collected. I have traced the achievements of the Portuguese adventurers with greater interest than I remember to have felt since, when a schoolboy, I first perused the duodecimo collection of Voyages and Discoveries called the World Displayed—a sensation which I thought had been long dead within me; for, to say the truth, the philanthropic and cautious conduct of modern discoverers, though far more amiable, is less entertaining than that of the old Buccaneers, and Spaniards and Portuguese, who went to conquer and achieve adventures, and met with strange chances of fate in consequence, which could never have befallen a well-armed boat's crew, not trusting themselves beyond their watering-place, or trading with the natives on the principles of mercantile good faith.

"I have some thoughts of a journey and voyage to the Hebrides this year, but if I don't make that out, I think I shall make a foray into your northern counties, go to see my friend Morritt at Greta Bridge, and certainly cast myself Keswick-ways either going or coming. I have some literary projects to talk over with you, for the re-editing some of our ancient classical romances and poetry, and so forth. I have great command of our friends the Ballantynes, and I think, so far as the filthy lucre of gain is concerned, I could make a very advantageous bargain for the time which must necessarily be bestowed in such a labour, besides doing an agreeable thing for ourselves, and a useful service to literature. What is become of Coleridge's *Friend*? I hope he had a letter from me, enclosing my trifling subscription. How does our friend Wordsworth? I won't write to him, because he hates letter-writing as much as I do; but I often think on him, and always with affection. If you make any stay at Durham, let me know, as I wish you to know my friend Surtees of Mainsforth.* He is an excellent antiquary, some of the rust of which study has clung to his manners; but he is good-hearted, and you would make the *summer ere* (for so by the courtesy of the kalendar we must call these abominable easterly blighting afternoons) short between you. I presume you are with my friend Dr. Sou-

* It may interest the reader to compare with this passage a brief extract from Sir James Mackintosh's Indian Diary of 1811:—"The subject of 'The Lady,' says he, 'is a common Highland expedition, but at a point where the neighbourhood of the Lowlands affords the best contrast of manners—where the scenery affords the noblest subject of description—and where the wild clan is so near to the Court, that their robberies can be connected with the romantic adventures of a disguised king, an exiled lord, and a high-born beauty. The whole narrative is very fine. There are not so many splendid passages for quotation as in the two former poems. This may indeed silence the objections of the critics, but I doubt whether it will promote the popularity of the poem. It has nothing so good as the Address to Scotland, or the Death of Marmion."—*Life of Mackintosh*, v. ii. p. 82.

* This amiable gentleman, author of the History of Durham, in three volumes folio,—one of the most learned as well as interesting works of its class,—was an early and dear friend of Scott's. He died at the family seat of Mainsforth, near Durham, 11th February, 1834, in his 55th year.

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they, who, I hope, has not quite forgotten me, in which faith, I beg kind compliments to him, and am ever yours most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

George Ellis having undertaken, at Gifford's request, to review the Lady of the Lake, does not appear to have addressed any letter to the poet upon the subject, until after his article had appeared. He then says simply, that he had therein expressed his candid sentiments, and hoped his friend, as great a worshipper as himself of Dryden's tales, would take in good part his remarks on the octosyllabic metre as applied to serious continued narrative. The following was Scott's reply:—

To G. Ellis, Esq.

"My dear Ellis,

"I have been scandalously lazy in answering your kind epistle, received I don't know how long since; but then I had been long your creditor, and I fancy correspondents, like merchants, are often glad to plead their friends' neglect of their accompt-current as an apology for their own, especially when they know that the value of the payments being adjusted, must leave a sad balance against them. I have run up an attempt on the Curse of Kehama for the Quarterly; a strange thing it is—the Curse, I mean—and the critique is not, as the blackguards say, worth a damn; but what I could I did, which was to throw as much weight as possible upon the beautiful passages, of which there are many, and to slur over the absurdities, of which there are not a few. It is infinite pity of Southey, with genius almost to exuberance, so much learning and real good feeling of poetry, that with true obstinacy of a foolish papa, he *will* be most attached to the defects of his poetical offspring. This said Kehama affords cruel openings for the quizzers, and I suppose will get it roundly in the Edinburgh Review. I would have made a very different hand of it indeed, had the order of the day been *pour déchirer*."

"I told you how much I was delighted with your critique on the Lady; but, very likely moved by the same feeling for which I have just censured Southey, I am still inclined to defend the eight-syllable stanza, which I have somehow persuaded myself is more congenial to the English language—more favourable to narrative poetry at least—than that which has been commonly termed heroic verse. If you will take the trouble to read a page of Pope's Iliad, you will probably find a good many lines out of which two syllables may be struck without injury to the sense. The first lines of this translation have been repeatedly noticed as capable of being cut down from ships of the line into frigates, by striking out the said two syllabled words, as—

> 'Achilles' wrath to Greece, the *direful* spring
> Of woes unnumbered, *heavenly* goddess sing,
> That wrath which sent to Pluto's *gloomy* reign
> The souls of *mighty* chiefs in battle slain,
> Whose bones unburied on the *desert* shore,
> Devouring dogs and *hungry* vultures tore.'

"Now, since it is true that by throwing out the epithets underscored, we preserve the sense without diminishing the force of the verses—and since it is also true that scarcely one of the epithets are more than merely expletive—I do really think that the structure of verse which requires least of this sort of bolstering, is most likely to be forcible and animated. The case is different in descriptive poetry, because there epithets, if they are happily selected, are rather to be sought after than avoided, and admit of being varied *ad infinitum*. But if in narrative you are frequently compelled to tag your substantives with adjectives, it must frequently happen that you are forced upon those that are merely commonplaces, such as '*heavenly* goddess,' '*desert* shore,' and so forth; and I need not tell you, that whenever any syllable is obviously inserted for the completion of a couplet, the reader is disposed to quarrel with it. Besides, the eight-syllable stanza is capable of certain varieties denied to the heroic. Double rhymes, for instance, are congenial to it, which often give a sort of Gothic richness to its cadences; you may also render it more or less rapid by retaining or dropping an occasional syllable. Lastly, and which I think its principal merit, it runs better into sentences than any length of line I know, as it corresponds, upon an average view of our punctuation, very commonly with the proper and usual space between comma and comma. Lastly the Second—and which ought perhaps to have been said first, I think I have somehow a better knack at this 'false gallop' of verse, as Touchstone calls it, than at your more legitimate hexameters; and so there is the short and long of my longs and shorts. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

Mr. Ellis recurs to the octosyllabic measure of the Lady of the Lake in his next letter. "I don't think," says he, "after all the eloquence with which you plead for your favourite metre, that you really like it from any other motive than that *sainte paresse*—that delightful indolence—which induces one to delight in doing those things which we can do with the least fatigue. If you will take the trouble of converting Dryden's Theodore and Honoria (a narrative, is it not?) into Hudibrastic measure, and after trying this on the first twenty lines you feel pleased with the transformation, I will give up the argument;—although, in point of fact, I believe that I regret the *variety* of your own old stanza, much more than the absence of that heroic measure, which you justly remark is not, without great difficulty, capable of being moulded into sentences of various lengths. When, therefore, you give us another poem, pray indulge me with rather a larger share of your ancient dithyrambics."

Canning, too, came to the side of Ellis in his debate. After telling Scott that "on a repeated perusal" he had been "more and more delighted" with the Lady of the Lake, he says—"But I *should* like to see something a little different when you write next. In short, I have sometimes thought (very presumptuously) that partly by persuasion, and partly by shewing the effect of a change of dress—of a fuller and more sweeping style—upon some of your favourite passages, I could induce you to present yourself next time in a Drydenic habit. Has this ever occurred to you, and have you tried it, and not liked yourself so well?" We shall see by and by what attention Scott gave to these friendly suggestions.

Of the success of the new poem he speaks as follows in his Introduction of 1830:—"It was certainly so extraordinary as to induce me for the moment to conclude that I had at last fixed a nail in the proverbially inconstant wheel of Fortune. I had attained, perhaps, that degree of public reputation at which prudence, or certainly timidity, would have made a halt, and discontinued efforts by which I was far more likely to diminish my fame than to increase it. But—as the celebrated John Wilkes is said to have explained to King George the Third, that he himself, amid his full tide of popularity, was never a Wilkite—so I can with honest truth exculpate myself from having been at any time a partisan of my own poetry, even when it was in the highest fashion with the million. It must not be supposed that I was either so ungrateful, or so superabundantly candid, as to despise or scorn the value of those whose voice had elevated me so much higher than my own opinion told me I deserved. I felt, on the contrary, the more grateful to the public, as receiving that from partiality which I could not have claimed from merit: and I endeavoured to deserve the partiality by continuing such exertions as I was capable of for their amusement."

James Ballantyne has preserved in his *Memorandum* an anecdote strikingly confirmative of the most remarkable statement in this page of Scott's confessions. "I remember," he says, "going into his library shortly after the publication of the Lady of the Lake, and finding Miss Scott (who was then a very young girl) there by herself—I asked her—'Well, Miss Sophia, how do you like the Lady of the Lake?' Her answer was given with perfect simplicity—'Oh, I have not read it; papa says there's nothing so bad for young people as reading bad poetry.'"

In fact, his children in those days had no idea of the source of his distinction—or rather, indeed, that his position was in any respect different from that of other Advocates, Sheriffs, and Clerks of Session. The eldest boy came home one afternoon about this time from the High School, with tears and blood hardened together upon his cheeks. "Well, Wat," said his father, "what have you been fighting about to-day?" With that the boy blushed and hung his

[a] See this article in his Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xvii. pp. 301—327.

seed, and at last stammered out—that "he had been called *a lassie*." "Indeed!" said Mrs. Scott, "this was a terrible mischief to be sure." "You may say what you please, mamma," Wat answered roughly, "but I dinna think there's a *waufer* (shabbier) thing in the world than to be a lassie, to sit boring at a clout." Upon further inquiry, it turned out that one or two of his companions had dubbed him *The Lady of the Lake*, and the phrase was to him incomprehensible, save as conveying some imputation on his prowess, which he accordingly vindicated in the usual style of the Yards. Of the poem he had never before heard. Shortly after, this story having got wind, one of Scott's colleagues of the Clerks' Table said to the boy—"Gilknockie, my man, you cannot surely help seeing that great people make more work about your papa than they do about me or any other of your *uncles*—what is it, do you suppose, that occasions this?" The little fellow pondered for a minute or two, and then answered very gravely—"It's commonly *him* that sees the hare sitting." And yet this was the man that had his children all along so very much with him. In truth, however, young Walter had guessed pretty shrewdly in the matter, for his father had all the tact of the Sutherland Highlander, whose detection of an Irish rebel up to the neck in a bog, he has commemorated in a note upon Rokeby. Like him, he was quick to catch the *sparkle* of the future victim's eye; and often said jestingly of himself, that whatever might be thought of him as a *maker* (poet,) he was an excellent *trouveur*.

Ballantyne adds:—"One day, about this same time, when his fame was supposed to have reached its acmé, I said to him—'Will you excuse me, Mr. Scott, but I should like to ask you what you think of your own genius as a poet, in comparison with that of Burns?' He replied—'There is no comparison whatever—we ought not to be named in the same day.' 'Indeed!' I answered, 'would you compare Campbell to Burns?' 'No, James, not at all—If you wish to speak of a real poet, Joanna Baillie is now the highest genius of our country.'—But, in fact," (continues Ballantyne)—"he had often said to me that neither his own nor any modern popular style of composition was that from which he derived most pleasure. I asked him what it was. He answered—Johnson's; and that he had more pleasure in reading *London*, and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, than any other poetical composition he could mention; and I think I never saw his countenance more indicative of high admiration, than while reciting aloud from those productions."*

CHAPTER XXI.

FIRST VISIT TO THE HEBRIDES—STAFFA—SKYE—MULL—IONA, ETC.—THE LORD OF THE ISLES PROJECTED—LETTERS TO JOANNA BAILLIE—SOUTHEY—AND MORRITT.—1810.

WALTER SCOTT was at this epoch in the highest spirits, and having strong reasons of various kinds for his resolution to avail himself of the gale of favour, only hesitated in which quarter to explore the materials of some new romance. His first and most earnest desire was to spend a few months with the British army in the Peninsula, but this he soon resigned, from an amiable motive, which a letter presently to be quoted will explain. He then thought of revisiting Rokeby—for he had, from the first day that he spent on that magnificent domain, contemplated it as the scenery of a future poem. But the burst of enthusiasm which followed the appearance of the Lady of the Lake finally swayed him to undertake a journey, deeper than he had as yet gone, into the *Highlands*, and a warm invitation from the Laird of Staffa,* a brother of his friend and colleague Mr. Macdonald Buchanan, easily induced him to add a voyage to the *Hebrides*. He was accompanied by part of his family, (not forgetting his dog Wallace,) and by several friends besides; among others, his relation Mrs. Apreece, (now Lady Davy,) who had been, as he says in one of his letters, "a lioness of the first magnitude in Edinburgh," during the preceding winter. He travelled slowly, with his own horses, through Argylshire, as far as Oban; but, indeed, even where post-horses might have been had, this was the mode he always preferred in these family excursions, for he delighted in the liberty it afforded him of alighting and lingering as often and as long as he chose; and, in truth, he often performed the far greater part of the day's journey on foot—examining the map in the morning so as to make himself master of the bearings—and following his own fancy over some old disused riding track, or along the margin of a stream, while the carriage, with its female occupants, adhered to the proper road. At Oban, where they took to the sea, Mrs. Apreece met him by appointment.

He seems to have kept no journal during this expedition; but I shall string together some letters which, with the notes that he contributed many years afterwards to Mr. Croker's edition of Boswell, may furnish a tolerable sketch of the insular part of his progress, and of the feelings with which he first inspected the localities of his last great poem—The Lord of the Isles. The first of these letters is dated from the Hebridean residence of the young Laird of Staffa, now Sir Reginald Macdonald Steuart Seton of Staffa, Allanton, and Touch, Baronet.

To Miss Joanna Baillie.

"Ulva House, July 19, 1810.

"I cannot, my dear Miss Baillie, resist the temptation of writing to you from scenes which you have rendered classical as well as immortal. We, which in the present case means my wife, my eldest girl, and myself, are thus far in fortunate accomplishment of a pilgrimage to the Hebrides. The day before yesterday we passed the Lady's Rock, in the Sound of Mull, so near that I could almost have touched it. This is, you know, the Rock of your *Family Legend*. The boat, by my desire, went as near as prudence permitted; and I wished to have picked a relic from it, were it but a cockle shell, or a mussel, to have sent to you; but a spring tide was running with such force and velocity as to make the thing impossible. About two miles farther, we passed under the Castle of Duart, the seat of Maclean, consisting of one huge (indeed immense) square tower, in ruins, and additional turrets and castellated buildings, (the work, doubtless, of Benlora's guardianship,) on which the roof still moulders. It overhangs the strait channel from a lofty rock, without a single tree in the vicinity, and is surrounded by high and barren mountains, forming altogether as wild and dreary a scene as I ever beheld. Duart is confronted by the opposite castles of Dunstaffnage, Dunolly, Ardtornish, and others, all once the abodes of grim feudal chiefs, who warred incessantly with each other. I think I counted seven of these fortresses in sight at once, and heard seven times seven legends of war and wonder connected with them. We landed late, wet and cold, on the Island of Mull, near another old castle called Aros, separated, too, from our clothes, which were in a large wherry, which could not keep pace with our row-boat. Mr. Macdonald of Staffa, my kind friend and guide, had sent his piper (a constant attendant, mark that!) to rouse a Highland gentleman's family in the neighbourhood, where we were received with a profusion of kindness and hospitality. Why should I appal you with a description of our difficulties

* In his Sketch of Johnson's Life (Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. iii. p. 291) Scott says—"The deep and pathetic morality of the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, has often extracted tears from those whose eyes wander dry over pages professedly sentimental." And Lord Byron, in his Ravenna Diary, (1821,) has the following entry on the same subject—'Read Johnson's Vanity of Human Wishes.—all the examples and mode of giving them sublime, as well as the latter part, with the exception of an occasional couplet. 'Tis a grand poem—and so *true!*—true as the 10th of Juvenal himself. The lapse of ages changes all things—time—language—the earth—the bounds of the sea—the stars of the sky, and every thing about, around, and underneath man, except man himself, who has always been, and always will be an unlucky rascal. The infinite variety of lives conduct but to death, and the infinity of wishes lead but to disappointment."—(*Life and Works*, vol. v. p. 66.) Yet it is the cant of our day, above all of its poetasters, that Johnson was no poet. To be sure, they say the same of Pope—and hint it occasionally even of Dryden.

* The reader will find a warm tribute to Staffa's character as a Highland landlord, in Scott's article on Sir John Carr's Caledonian Sketches,—Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xix.—and some spirited verses, written at his mansion of Ulva, in Scott's Poetical Works, edition 1834, vol. x., p. 356.

and disrobe—how Charlotte lost her shoes, and little Sophia her whole collection of pebbles—how I was divorced from my razors, and the whole party looked like a Jewish sanhedrim! By this time we were accumulated as follows:—Sir George Paul, the great philanthropist, Mrs. Apreece, a distant relation of mine, Hannah Mackenzie, a daughter of our friend Henry, and Mackinnon of Mackinnon, a young gentleman born and bred in England, but nevertheless a Highland chief.* It seems his father had acquired wealth, and this young man, who now visits the Highlands for the first time, is anxious to buy back some of the family property which was sold long since. Some twenty Mackinnons, who happened to live within hearing of our arrival, (that is, I suppose, within ten miles of Aros,) came posting to see their young chief, who behaved with great kindness, and propriety, and liberality. Next day we rode across the isle on Highland ponies, attended by a numerous retinue of gillies, and arrived at the head of the salt-water loch called Loch an Gaoil, where Staffa's boats awaited us with colours flying and pipes playing. We proceeded in state to this lonely isle, where our honoured lord has a very comfortable residence, and were received by a discharge of swivels and musketry from his people.

"Yesterday we visited Staffa and Iona: The former is one of the most extraordinary places I ever beheld. It exceeded, in my mind, every description I had heard of it; or rather, the appearance of the cavern, composed entirely of basaltic pillars as high as the roof of a cathedral,† and running deep into the rock, eternally swept by a deep and swelling sea, and paved as it were with ruddy marble, baffles all description. You can walk along the broken pillars, with some difficulty, and in some places with a little danger, as far as the farthest extremity. Boats also can come in below when the sea is placid,—which is seldom the case. I had become a sort of favourite with the Hebridean boatmen, I suppose from my anxiety about their old customs, and they were much pleased to see me get over the obstacles which stopped some of the party. So they took the whim of solemnly christening a great stone seat at the mouth of the cavern, Clachan an Beirdh, or the Poet's Stone. It was consecrated with a pibroch, which the echoes rendered tremendous, and a glass of whisky, not poured forth in the ancient mode of libation, but turned over the throats of the assistants. The head boatman, whose father had been himself a bard, made me a speech on the occasion; but as it was in Gaelic, I could only receive it as a silly beauty does a fine-spun compliment, bow, and say nothing.

"When this fun was over, (in which, strange as it may seem, the men were quite serious,) we went to Iona, where there are some ancient and curious monuments. From this remote island the light of Christianity shone forth on Scotland and Ireland. The ruins are of a rude architecture, but curious to the antiquary. Our return was less comfortable; we had to row twenty miles against an Atlantic tide and some wind, besides the pleasure of seeing occasional squalls gathering to windward. The ladies were sick, especially poor Hannah Mackenzie, and none of the gentlemen escaped except Staffa and myself. The men, however, cheered by the pipers, and by their own interesting boat-songs, which were uncommonly wild and beautiful, one man leading and the others answering in chorus, kept pulling away without apparently the least sense of fatigue, and we reached Ulva at ten at night, tolerably wet, and well disposed for bed.

"Our friend Staffa is himself an excellent specimen of Highland chieftainship; he is a cadet of Clanronald, and lord of a cluster of isles on the western side of Mull, and a large estate (in extent at least) on that island. By dint of minute attention to this property, and particularly to the management of his kelp, he has at once trebled his income and doubled his population, while emigration is going on all around him. But he is very attentive to his people, who are distractedly fond of him, and has them under such regulations as conduce both to his own benefit and their profit; and keeps a certain sort of rude state and hospitality, in which they take much pride. I am quite satisfied that nothing under the personal attention of the landlord himself will satisfy a Highland tenantry, and that the substitution of factors, which is now becoming general, is one great cause of emigration. This mode of life has, however, its evils; and I can see them in this excellent man. The habit of solitary power is dangerous even to the best regulated minds, and this ardent and enthusiastic young man has not escaped the prejudices incident to his situation. But I think I have bestowed enough of my tediousness upon you. To ballast my letter, I put in one of the hallowed green pebbles from the shore of St. Columba—put it into your work-basket until we meet, when you will give me some account of its virtues. Don't suppose the lapidaries can give you any information about it, for in their profane eyes it is good for nothing. But the piper is sounding to breakfast, so no more (excepting love to Miss Agnes, Dr. and Mrs. Baillie,) from your truly affectionate,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—I am told by the learned, the pebble will wear its way out of the letter, so I will keep it till I get to Edinburgh. I must not omit to mention that all through these Islands I have found every person familiarly acquainted with the Family Legend, and great admirers."

It would be idle to extract many of Scott's notes on Boswell's Hebridean Journal; but the following specimens appear too characteristic to be omitted. Of the island Inchkenneth, where Johnson was received by the head of the clan M'Lean, he says:—

"Inchkenneth is a most beautiful little islet of the most verdant green, while all the neighbouring shore of Greban, as well as the large islands of Colonsay and Ulva, are as black as heath and moss can make them. But Ulva has a good anchorage, and Inchkenneth is surrounded by shoals. It is now uninhabited. The ruins of the huts, in which Dr. Johnson was received by Sir Allan M'Lean, were still to be seen, and some tatters of the paper hangings were to be seen on the walls. Sir George Onesiphorus Paul was at Inchkenneth with the same party of which I was a member. He seemed to me to suspect many of the Highland tales which he heard, but he showed most incredulity on the subject of Johnson's having been entertained in the wretched huts of which we saw the ruins. He took me aside, and conjured me to tell him the truth of the matter. 'This Sir Allan,' said he, 'was he a *regular baronet*, or was his title such a traditional one as you find in Ireland?' I assured my excellent acquaintance that, 'for my own part, I would have paid more respect to a Knight of Kerry, or Knight of Glynn; yet Sir Allan M'Lean was a *regular baronet* by patent;' and, having given him this information, I took the liberty of asking him, in return, whether he would not in conscience prefer the worst cell in the jail at Gloucester, (which he had been very active in overlooking while the building was going on,) to those exposed hovels where Johnson had been entertained by rank and beauty. He looked round the little islet, and allowed Sir Allan had some advantage in exercising ground; but in other respects he thought the compulsory tenants of Gloucester had greatly the advantage. Such was his opinion of a place, concerning which Johnson has recorded that 'it wanted little which palaces could afford.'

"Sir Allan M'Lean, like many Highland chiefs, was embarrassed in his private affairs, and exposed to unpleasant solicitations from attorneys, called, in Scotland, *Writers*, (which, indeed, was the chief motive of his retiring to Inchkenneth.) Upon one occasion he made a visit to a friend, then residing at Carron Lodge, on the banks of the Carron, where the banks of that river are studded with pretty villas. Sir Allan, admiring the landscape, asked his friend whom that handsome seat belonged to. 'M——, the Writer to the Signet,' was the reply. 'Umph!' said Sir Allan, but not with an accent of assent, 'I *mean* that other house.' 'Oh! that belongs to a very honest fellow, Jamie ——, also a Writer to the Signet.'—'Umph!' said the Highland chief of M'Lean, with more emphasis than before.—'And you smaller house?'—'That belongs to a Stirling man; I forget his name, but I am sure he is a writer too; for'—— Sir Allan, who had recoiled a quarter of a circle backward at every response, now wheeled the circle entire, and turned his back on the landscape, saying, 'My good friend, I must own you have a pretty situation here, but d—n your neighbourhood.'"

The following notices of Boswell himself, and his father, Lord Auchinleck, may be taken as literal transcripts from Scott's Table-Talk:

* William Alexander Mackinnon, Esq., now member of Parliament for Lymington, Hants.

† "——that wondrous dome,
Where, as to shame the temples deck'd
By skill of earthly architect,
Nature herself, it seem'd, would raise
A minster to her Maker's praise!
Not for a meaner use ascend
Her columns, or her arches bend;
Nor of a theme less solemn tells
That mighty surge that ebbs and swells,
And still, between each awful pause
From the high vault an answer draws,
In varied tone prolonged and high,
That mocks the organ's melody.
Nor doth its entrance front in vain
To old Iona's holy fane,
That Nature's voice might seem to say,
'Well hast thou done, frail child of clay!
Thy humble powers that stately shrine
Task'd high and hard—but witness mine!'"

Lord of the Isles, Canto IV., St. 10.

"Boswell himself was callous to the *contacts* of Dr. Johnson, and when telling them, always reminds one of a jockey receiving a kick from the horse which he is showing off to a customer, and is grinning with pain while he is trying to cry out, 'Pretty rogue—no vice—all fun.' To him Johnson's rudeness was only '*pretty Fanny's way.*' Dr. Robertson had a sense of good breeding, which inclined him rather to forego the benefit of Johnson's conversation than awaken his rudeness. . . . . .

"Old Lord Auchinleck was an able lawyer, a good scholar, after the manner of Scotland, and highly valued his own advantages as a man of good estate and ancient family; and, moreover, he was a strict Presbyterian and Whig of the old Scottish cast. This did not prevent his being a terribly proud aristocrat; and great was the contempt he entertained and expressed for his son James, for the nature of his friendship, and the character of the personages of whom he was *engoué* one after another. 'There's nae hope for Jamie, mon,' he said to a friend. 'Jamie is gane clean gyte. What do you think, mon? He's done wi' Paoli—he's off wi' the land-louping scoundrel of a Corsican; and whose tail do you think he has pinned himself to now, mon?' Here the old judge summoned up a sneer of most sovereign contempt, 'A *doctor*, mon—an auld dominie! he keeped a schule, and cand it an *ecaadamy*.' Probably if this had been reported to Johnson, he would have felt it most galling, for he never much liked to think of that period of his life; it would have aggravated his dislike of Lord Auchinleck's Whiggery and Presbyterianism. These the old Lord carried to such an unusual height, that once, when a country man came in to state some justice business, and being required to make his oath, declined to do so before his Lordship, because he was not a *covenanted* magistrate.—'Is that a' your objection, mon?' said the judge; 'come your ways in here, and we'll baith o' us tak the solemn league and covenant together.' The oath was accordingly agreed and sworn to by both, and I dare say it was the last time it ever received such homage. It may be surmised how far Lord Auchinleck, such as he is here described, was likely to suit a high Tory and Episcopalian like Johnson. As they approached Auchinleck, Boswell conjured Johnson by all the ties of regard, and in requital of the services he had rendered him upon his tour, that he would spare two subjects in tenderness to his father's prejudices; the first related to Sir John Pringle, President of the Royal Society, about whom there was then some dispute current; the second concerned the general question of Whig and Tory. Sir John Pringle, as Boswell says, escaped, but the controversy between Tory and Covenanter raged with great fury, and ended in Johnson's pressing upon the old judge the question, what good Cromwell, of whom he had said something derogatory, had ever done to his country; when, after being much tortured, Lord Auchinleck at last spoke out, 'God! doctor, he garr kings ken that they had a *bit* in their neck'—he taught kings they had a *joint* in their necks. Jamie then set to mediating between his father and the philosopher, and availing himself of the judge's sense of hospitality, which was punctilious, reduced the debate to more order."

The following letter, dated Ashestiel, August 9, appears to have been written immediately on Scott's return from this expedition.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. Rokeby Park.

"My dear Morritt,

"Your letter reached me in the very centre of the Isle of Mull, from which circumstance you will perceive how vain it was for me even to attempt availing myself of your kind invitation to Rokeby, which would otherwise have given us so much pleasure. We deeply regretted the absence of our kind and accomplished friends, the Clephanes, *yet entre nous*, as we were upon a visit to a family of the Capulets, I do not know but we may pay our respects to them more pleasantly at another time. There subsist some aching scars of the old wounds which were in former times inflicted upon each other by the rival tribes of M'Lean and Macdonald, and my very good friends the Laird of Staffa and Mrs. M'Lean Clephane are both too true Highlanders to be without the characteristic prejudices of their clans, which, in their case, divide two highly accomplished and most estimable families, living almost within sight of each other, and on an island where polished conversation cannot be supposed to abound.

"I was delighted, on the whole, with my excursion. The weather was most excellent during the whole time of our wanderings; and I need not tell you of Highland hospitality. The cavern at Staffa, and indeed the island itself, *dont on parle en histoire*, is one of the few lions which completely maintain an extended reputation. I do not know whether its extreme resemblance to a work of art, from the perfect regularity of the columns, or the grandeur of its dimensions, far exceeding the works of human industry, joined to a certain ruggedness and magnificent irregularity, by which nature vindicates her handiwork, are most forcibly impressed upon my memory. We also saw the far-famed Island of Columba, where there are many monuments of singular curiosity, forming a strange contrast to the squalid and dejected poverty of the present inhabitants of the isle. We accomplished both these objects in one day, but our return, though we had no alarms to boast of, was fatiguing to the ladies, and the sea not affording us quite such a smooth passage as we had upon the Thames, (that morning we heard the voice of Lysons setting forth the contents of the records in the White Tower,) did, as one may say, excite a commotion in the stomachs of some of our party. Mine being a staunch anti-revolutionist, was no otherwise troublesome than by demanding frequent supplies of cold beef and biscuit. Mrs. Apreece was of our party. Also

—Sir George Paul, for prison-house renowned,
A wandering knight, on high adventures bound.

—We left this celebrated philanthropist in a plight not unlike some of the misadventures of 'Him of the sorrowful figure.' The worthy baronet was mounted on a quadruped, which the owners called a pony, with his woful valet on another, and travelling slowly along the coast of Mull, in order to detect the point which approached nearest to the continent, protesting he would not again put foot in a boat, till he had discovered the shortest possible traject. Our separation reminded me of the disastrous incident in Byron's Shipwreck, when they were forced to abandon two of their crew on an unknown coast, and beheld them at a distance commencing their solitary peregrination along the cliffs.

WALTER SCOTT."

The Iona pebble, mentioned in Scott's letter from Ulva, being set in a brooch of the form of a harp, was sent to Joanna Baillie some months later; but it may be as well to insert here the letter which accompanied it. The young friend, to whose return from a trip to the seat of war in the Peninsula it alludes, was John Miller, Esq., then practising at the Scotch bar, but now an eminent King's counsel of Lincoln's Inn.

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Edinburgh, Nov. 23, 1810.

"I should not have been so long your debtor, my dear Miss Baillie, for your kind and valued letter, had not the false knave, at whose magic touch the Iona pebbles were to assume a shape in some degree appropriate to the person to whom they are destined, delayed finishing his task. I hope you will set some value upon this little trumpery brooch, because it is a harp, and a Scotch harp, and set with Iona stones. This last circumstance is more valuable, if ancient tales be true, than can be ascertained from the reports of dull modern lapidaries. These green stones, blessed of St. Columbe, have a virtue, saith old Martin, to gratify each of them a single wish of the wearer. I believe, that which is most frequently formed by those who gather them upon the shores of the Saint, is for a fair wind to transport them from his domains. Now, after this, you must suppose every thing respecting this said harp sacred and hallowed. The very inscription is, you will please to observe, in the ancient Celtic language and character, and has a very talismanic look. I hope that upon you it will have the effect of a conjuration, for the words *Buail a'n Teud* signify *Strike the String;* and thus having, like the pedlars who deal in like matters of value, exhausted all my eloquence in setting forth the excellent outward qualities and mysterious virtues of my little keepsake, I have only to add, in homely phrase, God give you joy to wear it. I am delighted with the account of your brother's sylvan empire in Glo'stershire. The planting and cultivation of trees always seemed to me the most interesting occupation of the country. I cannot enter into the spirit of common vulgar farming, though I am doomed to carry on, in a small extent, that losing trade. It never occurred to me to be a bit more happy because my turnips were better than my neighbours; and as for *grieving* my shearers, as we very emphatically term it in Scotland, I am always too happy to get out of the way, that I may hear them laughing at a distance when on the harvest rigg.

'So every servant takes his course,
And bad at first, they all grow worse'—

I mean for the purposes of agriculture,—for my hind shall kill a salmon, and my plough-boy find a hare sitting, with any man in the forest. But planting and pruning trees I could work at from morning till night; and if ever my poetical revenues enable me to have a few acres of my

own, that is one of the principal pleasures I look forward to. There is, too, a sort of self-congratulation, a little tickling self-flattery in the idea that, while you are pleasing and amusing yourself, you are seriously contributing to the future welfare of the country, and that your very acorn may send its future ribs of oak to future victories like Trafalgar.

"You have now by my calculation abandoned your extensive domains, and returned to your Hampstead villa, which, at this season of the year, though the lesser, will prove, from your neighbourhood to good society, the more comfortable habitation of the two. Dr. Baillie's cares are transferred (I fear for some time) to a charge still more important than the poor Princess.* I trust in God that his skill and that of his brethren may be of advantage to the poor King; for a Regency, from its unsettled and uncertain tenure, must in every country, but especially where parties run so high, be a lamentable business. I wonder that the consequences which have taken place had not occurred sooner, during the long and trying suspense in which his mind must have been held by the protracted lingering state of a beloved child.

"Your country neighbours interest me excessively. I was delighted with the man, who remembered me, though he had forgotten Sancho Panza; but I am afraid my pre-eminence in his memory will not remain much longer than the worthy squire's government at Barataria. Meanwhile, the Lady of the Lake is likely to come to preferment in an unexpected manner, for two persons of no less eminence than Messrs. Martin and Reynolds, play carpenters in ordinary to Covent Garden, are employed in scrubbing, careening, and cutting her down into one of those new-fashioned sloops called a melo-drama, to be launched at the theatre; and my friend, Mr. H. Siddons, emulous of such a noble design, is at work on the same job here. It puts me in mind of the observation with which our parish smith accompanied his answer to an inquiry whom he had heard preach on Sunday. 'Mr. such-a-one—O! sir, he made *neat work*,' thinking, doubtless, of turning off a horse-shoe handsomely. I think my worthy artisans will make neat work too before they have done with my unlucky materials—but, as Durandarte says in the cavern of Montesinos—'Patience, cousin, and shuffle the cards.' Jeffrey *was* the author of the critique in the Edinburgh; he sent it to me in the sheet, with an apology for some things in that of Marmion, which he said contained needless asperities; and, indeed, whatever I may think of the justice of some part of his criticism, I think his general tone is much softened in my behalf.

"You say nothing about the drama on Fear, for which you have chosen so admirable a subject, and which, I think, will be in your own most powerful manner. I hope you will have an eye to its being actually represented. Perhaps of all passions it is the most universally interesting; for although most part of an audience may have been in love once in their lives, and many engaged in the pursuits of ambition, and some perhaps have fostered deadly hate; yet there will always be many in each case who cannot judge of the operations of these motives from personal experience: Whereas, I will bet my life there is not a soul of them but has felt the impulse of fear, were it but, as the old tale goes, at snuffing a candle with his fingers. I believe I should have been able to communicate some personal anecdotes on the subject, had I been enabled to accomplish a plan I have had much at heart this summer, namely, to take a peep at Lord Wellington and his merry men in Portugal; but I found the idea gave Mrs. Scott more distress than I am entitled to do for the mere gratification of my own curiosity. Not that there would have been any great danger,—for I could easily, as a non-combatant, have kept out of the way of the "grinning honour" of my namesake, Sir Walter Blount, and I think I should have been overpaid for a little hardship and risk by the novelty of the scene. I could have got very good recommendations to Lord Wellington; and, I dare say, I should have picked up some curious materials for battle scenery. A friend of mine made the very expedition, and arriving at Oporto when our army was in retreat from the frontier, he was told of the difficulty and danger he might encounter in crossing the country to the southward, so as to join them on the march; nevertheless, he travelled on through a country totally deserted, unless when he met bands of fugitive peasantry flying they scarce knew whither, or the yet wilder groups of the Ordinanza, or *levy en masse*, who, fired with revenge or desire of plunder, had armed themselves to harass the French detached parties. At length in a low glen he heard, with feelings that may be easily conceived, the distant sound of a Highland bagpipe playing 'The Garb of Old Gaul,' and fell into the quarters of a Scotch regiment, where he was most courteously received by his countrymen, who assured 'his honour he was just come in time to see the battle.' Accordingly, being a young man of spirit, and a volunteer sharp-shooter, he got a rifle, joined the light corps, and next day witnessed the Battle of Busaco, of which he describes the carnage as being terrible. The narrative was very simply told, and conveyed, better than any I have seen, the impressions which such scenes are likely to make when they have the effect (I had almost said the charm) of novelty. I don't know why it is I never found a soldier could give me an idea of a battle. I believe their mind is too much upon the *tactique* to regard the picturesque, just as the lawyers care very little for an eloquent speech at the bar, if it does not show good doctrine. The technical phrases of the military art, too, are unfavourable to convey a description of the concomitant terror and desolation that attends an engagement; but enough of this bald disjointed chat, from ever yours,

W. S."

* The Princess Amelia—whose death was immediately followed by the hopeless malady of King George III.

There appeared in the London Courier of September 15, 1810, an article signed S. T. C., charging Scott with being a plagiarist, more especially from the works of the poet for whose initials this signature had no doubt been meant to pass. On reading this silly libel, Mr. Southey felt satisfied that Samuel Taylor Coleridge could have no concern in its manufacture; but as Scott was not so well acquainted with Coleridge as himself, he lost no time in procuring his friend's indignant disavowal, and forwarding it to Ashestiel. Scott acknowledges this delicate attention as follows:—

To Robert Southey, Esq.

"Ashestiel, Thursday

"My dear Southey,

"Your letter, this morning received, released me from the very painful feeling, that a man of Mr. Coleridge's high talents, which I had always been among the first to appreciate as they deserve, had thought me worthy of the sort of public attack which appeared in the Courier of the 15th. The initials are so remarkable, and the trick so very impudent, that I was likely to be fairly duped by it, for which I have to request Mr. Coleridge's forgiveness. I believe attacks of any sort sit as light upon me as they can on any one. If I have had my share of them, it is one point, at least, in which I resemble greater poets—but I should not like to have them come from the hand of contemporary genius. A man, though he does not 'wear his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at,' would not willingly be stooped upon by a falcon. I am truly obliged to your friendship for so speedily relieving me from so painful a feeling. The hoax was probably designed to set two followers of literature by the ears, and I dare say will be followed up by something equally impudent. As for the imitations, I have not the least hesitation in saying to you, that I was unconscious at the time of appropriating the goods of others, although I have not the least doubt that several of the passages must have been running in my head. Had I meant to steal, I would have been more cautious to disfigure the stolen goods. In one or two instances the resemblance seems general and casual, and in one, I think, it was impossible I could practise plagiarism, as Ethwald, one of the poems quoted, was published *after* the Lay of the Last Minstrel. A witty rogue, the other day, who sent me a letter subscribed Detector, proved me guilty of stealing a passage from one of Vida's Latin poems, which I had never seen or heard of; yet there was so strong a general resemblance, as fairly to authorize Detector's suspicion.

"I renounced my Greta excursion in consequence of having made instead a tour to the Highlands, particularly to the Isles. I wished for Wordsworth and you a hundred times. The scenery is quite different from that on the mainland, dark, savage, and horrid, but occasionally magnificent in the highest degree. Staffa, in particular, merits well its far-famed reputation: it is a cathedral arch, scooped by the hand of nature, equal in dimensions and in regularity to the most magnificent aisle of a gothic cathedral. The sea rolls up to the extremity in most tremendous majesty, and with a voice like ten thousand giants shouting at once. I visited Icolmkill also, where there are some curious monuments, mouldering among the poorest and most naked wretches that I ever beheld. Affectionately yours,

W. Scott."

The "lines of Vida" which "Detector" had enclosed to Scott as the obvious original of the address to "Woman" in Marmion, closing with

"When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou !"

end as follows;—and it must be owned that, if Vida had really written them, a more extraordinary example of casual coincidence could never have been pointed out—

"Cum dolor atque supercilio gravis imminet angor,
Fungeris angelico sola ministerio !"

Detector's reference is "VIDA *ad Eranen*, El. II. v. 21;"—but it is almost needless to add, there are no such lines—and no pièce bearing such a title in Vida's works. Detector was no doubt some young college wag, for his letter has a Cambridge postmark.

CHAPTER XXII.

LIFE OF MISS SEWARD—WAVERLEY RESUMED—BALLANTYNE'S CRITIQUE ON THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF THE NOVEL—WAVERLEY AGAIN LAID ASIDE—UNFORTUNATE SPECULATIONS OF JOHN BALLANTYNE AND CO.; HISTORY OF THE CULDEES—TIXALL POETRY; BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER—EDINBURGH ANNUAL REGISTER, ETC.—SCOTT'S ESSAY ON JUDICIAL REFORM—HIS SCHEME OF GOING TO INDIA—LETTERS ON THE WAR IN THE PENINSULA—DEATH OF LORD PRESIDENT BLAIR—AND OF LORD MELVILLE—PUBLICATION OF THE VISION OF DON RODERICK—THE INFERNO OF ALTESIDORA, ETC.—1810-1811.

In the course of this autumn appeared the Poetical Works of Miss Seward, in three volumes 12mo, with a Prefatory Memoir of her Life by Scott. This edition had, as we have seen, been enjoined by her last will—but his part in it was an ungrateful one, and the book was among the most unfortunate that James Ballantyne printed, and his brother published, in deference to the personal feelings of their partner. He had been, as was natural, pleased and flattered by the attentions of the Lichfield poetess in the days of his early aspirations after literary distinction; but her verses, which he had with his usual readiness praised to herself beyond their worth, appeared when collected a formidable monument of mediocrity. Her Correspondence, published at the same time by Constable, was considered by him with still greater aversion. He requested the bookseller to allow him to look over the MS., and draw his pen through passages in which her allusions to letters of his own might compromise him as a critic on his poetical contemporaries. To this request Constable handsomely acceded, although it was evident that he thus deprived the collection of its best chance of popularity. I see, on comparing her letters as they originally reached Scott, with the printed copies, that he had also struck out many of her most extravagant rhapsodies about himself and his works. No collection of this kind, after all, can be wholly without value; I have already drawn from it some sufficiently interesting fragments, as the biographers of other eminent authors of this time will probably do hereafter under the like circumstances: and, however affected and absurd, Miss Seward's prose is certainly far better than her verse.

And now I come to a very curious letter of James Ballantyne's, the date of which seems to fix pretty accurately the time when Scott *first* resumed the long-forgotten MS. of his Waverley. As in the Introduction of 1829 he mentions having received discouragement as to the opening part of the novel from two friends, and as Ballantyne on this occasion writes as if he had never before seen any portion of it, I conclude that the fragment of 1805 had in that year been submitted to Erskine alone.

To Walter Scott, Esq., Ashestiel.

"Edinburgh, Sept. 15, 1810.

"Dear Sir,

"What you have sent of Waverley has amused me much; and certainly if I had read it as part of a new novel, the remainder of which was open to my perusal, I should have proceeded with avidity. So much for its general effect; but you have sent me too little to enable me to form a decided opinion. Were I to say that I was equally struck with Waverley as I was with the much smaller portion of the Lady, which you first presented to us as a specimen, the truth would not be in me; but the cases are different. It is impossible that a small part of a fine novel can equally impress one with the decided conviction of splendour and success as a small part of a fine poem. I will state one or two things that strike me. Considering that 'sixty years since' only leads us back to the year 1750, a period when our fathers were alive and merry, it seems to me that the air of antiquity diffused over the character is rather too great to harmonize with the time. The period is modern; Johnson was writing—and Garrick was acting—and in fact scarcely any thing appears to have altered, more important than the cut of a coat.

"The account of the studies of Waverley seems unnecessarily minute. There are few novel readers to whom it would be interesting. I can see at once the connection between the studies of Don Quixote, or of the Female Quixote, and the events of their lives; but I have not yet been able to trace betwixt Waverley's character and his studies such clear and decided connection. The account, in short, seemed to me too particular; quite unlike your usual mode in your poetry, and less happy. It may be, however, that the further progress of the character will defeat this criticism. The character itself I think excellent and interesting, and I was equally astonished and delighted to find in the last-written chapter, that you can paint to the eye in prose as well as in verse.

"Perhaps your own reflections are rather too often mixed with the narrative—but I state this with much diffidence. I do not mean to object to a train of reflections arising from some striking event, but I don't like their so frequent recurrence. The language is spirited, but perhaps rather careless. The humour is admirable. Should you go on? My opinion is, clearly—certainly. I have no doubt of success, though it is impossible to guess how much. . . . . .—Ever respectfully,

J. B."

The part of the letter which I have omitted, refers to the state of Ballantyne's business at the time when it was written. He had, that same week, completed the eleventh edition of the Lay; and the fifth of the Lady of the Lake had not passed through his press, before new orders from London called for the beginning of a sixth. I presume the printer's exultation on this triumphant success, had a great share in leading him to consider with doubt and suspicion the propriety of his friend's interrupting just then his career as the great caterer for readers of poetry. However this and other matters may have stood, the novel appears to have been forthwith laid aside again.

Some sentences refer to less fortunate circumstances in their joint affairs. The publishing firm was as yet little more than a twelvemonth old, and already James began to apprehend that some of their mightiest undertakings would wholly disappoint Scott's prognostications. He speaks with particular alarm of the edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, of which Weber had now dismissed several volumes from his incompetent and presumptuous hand. How Scott should ever have countenanced the project of an edition of an English book of this class, by a mere drudging *German*, appears to me quite inexplicable. He placed at Weber's disposal his own annotated copy, which had been offered some years before for the use of Gifford; but Weber's text is thoroughly disgraceful, and so are all the notes, except those which he owed to his patron's own pen. James Ballantyne augurs, and well might he do so, not less darkly, as to "the Aston speculation"—that is, the bulky collection entitled "Tixal poetry." "Over this," he says, "the (Edinburgh) Review of the Sadler has thrown a heavy cloud—the fact is, it seems to me to have ruined it. Here is the same editor and the same printer, and your name withdrawn. I hope you agree with John and me, that this Aston business ought to be got rid of at almost any sacrifice. We could not now even ask a London bookseller to take a share, and a net outlay of near £2500, upon a worse than doubtful speculation, is surely 'most tolerable and not to be endured.'"

Another unpromising adventure of this season,

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was the publication of the History of *the Culdees*, (that is, of the clergy of the primitive Scoto-Celtic Church,) by Scott's worthy old friend, Dr. John Jamieson, the author of the celebrated Dictionary. This work, treating of an obscure subject, on which very different opinions were and are entertained by Episcopalians on the one hand, and the adherents of Presbyterianism on the other, was also printed and published by the Ballantynes, in consequence of the interest which Scott felt, not for the writer's hypothesis, but for the writer personally; and the result was another heavy loss to himself and his partners. But a far more serious business was the establishment of the Edinburgh Annual Register, which, as we have seen, was suggested by Scott in the very dawn of his bookselling projects. The two first volumes were issued about this time, and expectation had been highly excited by the announcement that the historical department was in the hands of Southey, while Scott and many other eminent persons were to contribute regularly to its miscellaneous literature and science. Mr. Southey was fortunate in beginning his narrative with the great era of the Spanish Revolt against Napoleon, and it exhibited his usual research, reflection, elegance, and spirit. Several of the miscellanies also, were admirable: Mr. Southey inserted in the 2d volume for 1808, published in 1810, some of the most admired of his minor poems;—and Scott did the like. He moreover drew up for that volume an Essay of considerable extent on those changes in the Scottish System of Judicature, which had occupied the attention of the Commission under which he served as secretary: and the sagacity of this piece appears, on the whole, as honourable to him, as the clear felicity of its language. Nevertheless, the public were alarmed by the prospect of two volumes annually: it was, in short, a new periodical publication on a large scale; all such adventures are hazardous in the extreme; and none of them ever can succeed, unless there be a skilful bookseller, and a zealous editor, who give a very large share of their industry and intelligence, day after day, to the conduct of all its arrangements. Such a bookseller John Ballantyne was not; such an editor, with Scott's multifarious engagements, he could not be for an Annual Register; and who, indeed, could wish that this had been otherwise? The volumes succeeded each other at irregular intervals; there was soon felt the want of one ever active presiding spirit; and though the work was continued during a long series of years, it never was the source of any thing but anxiety and disappointment to its original projectors.

I am tempted, as Scott's Essay on Judicial Reform has never been included in any collection of his writings, to extract here a few specimens of a composition which appears to be as characteristic of the man as any that ever proceeded from his pen. His deep jealousy of the national honour of Scotland, his fear lest the course of innovation at this time threatened should end in a total assimilation of her jurisprudence to the system of the more powerful sister country, and his habitual and deep-rooted dread of change in matters affecting the whole machinery of social existence, are expressed in, among others, the following passages:—

"An established system is not to be tried by those tests which may with perfect correctness be applied to a new theory. A civilized nation, long in possession of a code of law, under which, with all its inconveniences, they have found means to flourish, is not to be regarded as an infant colony, on which experiments in legislation may, without much charge of presumption, be hazarded. A philosopher is not entitled to investigate such a system by those ideas which he has fixed in his own mind as the standard of possible excellence. The only unerring test of every old establishment is the *effect* it has actually produced; for that must be held to be good from whence good is derived. The people have, by degrees, moulded their habits to the law they are compelled to obey; for some of its imperfections, remedies have been found; to others they have reconciled themselves; till, at last, they have, from various causes, attained the object which the most sanguine visionary could promise to himself from his own perfect *unembodied* system. Let us not be understood to mean, that a superstitious regard for antiquity ought to stay the hand of a temperate reform. But the task is delicate, and full of danger; perilous in its execution, and extremely doubtful in its issue. Is there not rational ground to apprehend, that, in attempting to eradicate the disease, the sound part of the constitution may be essentially injured? Can we be quite certain that less inconvenience will result from that newly-discovered and unknown remedy, than from the evil, which the juices and humours with which it has long been incorporated may have neutralized?—that, after a thorough reformation has been achieved, it may not be found necessary to counter-work the antidote itself, by having recourse to the very error we have incautiously abjured? We are taught, by great authority, that 'possibly they may espy something that may, in truth, be mischievous in some particular case, but weigh not how many inconveniences are, on the other side, prevented or remedied by that which is the supposed vicious strictness of the law; and he that purchases a reformation of a law with the introduction of greater inconveniences, by the amotion of a mischief, makes an ill bargain. No human law can be absolutely perfect. It is sufficient that it be best *ut plurimum*; and as to the mischiefs that it occasions, as they are accidental and casual, so they may be oftentimes, by due care, prevented, without an alteration of the main.'

"Every great reform, we farther conceive, ought to be taken at a point somewhat lower than the necessity seems to require. Montesquieu has a chapter, of which the title is, *Qu'il ne faut pas tout corriger*. Our improvement ought to contain within itself a principle of progressive improvement. We are thus enabled to see our way distinctly before us; we have, at the same time, under our eyes, the ancient malady, with the palliatives by which the hand of time has controlled its natural symptoms, and the effects arising from the process intended to remove it; and our course, whether we advance or recede, will be safe, and confident, and honourable; whereas, by taking our reform at the utmost possible stretch of the wrong complained of, we cannot fail to bring into disrepute the order of things, as established, without any corresponding certainty that our innovations will produce the result which our sanguine hopes have anticipated; and we thus deprive ourselves of the chance of a secure retreat, in the event of our failure."

Nor does the following paragraph on the proposal for extending to Scotland the system of *Jury Trial* in civil actions *of all classes*, appear to me less characteristic of Scott:—

"We feel it very difficult to associate with this subject any idea of political or personal liberty; both of which have been supposed to be secured, and even to be rendered more valuable, by means of the trial by jury in questions of private right. It is perhaps owing to our want of information, or to the phlegm and frigidity of our national character, that we cannot participate in that enthusiasm which the very name of this institution is said to excite in many a patriotic bosom. We can listen to the cabalistic sound of Trial by Jury, which has produced effects only to be paralleled by those of the mysterious words uttered by the Queen of the City of Enchantments, in the Arabian Tale, and retain the entire possession of our form and senses. We understand that sentiment of a celebrated author, that this barrier against the usurpation of power, in matters where power has any concern, may probably avert from our island the fate of many states that now exist but in history; and we think this great possession is peculiarly valuable in Scotland, where the privileges of the public prosecutor are not controlled by those of a grand jury. The merits of the establishment we are now examining are to be ascertained by a different test. It is merely a contrivance for attaining the ends of private justice, for developing the merits of a civil question in which individuals are interested; and that contrivance is the best which most speedily and effectually serves the purpose for which it was framed. In causes of that description no shield is necessary against the invasion of power; the issue is to be investigated without leaning or partiality, for whatever is unduly given to one party is unduly wrested from the other; and unless we take under our consideration those advantages which time or accident may have introduced, we see not what superiority can in the abstract be supposed to belong to this as a judicature for the determination of all or the greater number of civil actions. We discover no ground for suspecting that the judgments of a few well-educated and upright men may be influenced by any undue bias; that an interest merely patrimonial is more safely lodged in an obscure and evanescent body than a dignified, independent, and permanent tribunal, versed in the science

* Lord Hale on the Amendment of the Laws.

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to be [illegible] and responsible for the decisions they pronounce;—and we suspect that a philosopher, contemplating both in his closet, will augur more danger from a system which devolves on one set of men the responsibility of doctrines taught them by another, than from that system which attaches to the judges all the consequences of the law they deliver."

Some, though not all, of the changes deprecated in this Essay, had been adopted by the Legislature before it was published; others of them have since been submitted to experiment; and I believe that, on the whole, his views may safely bear the test to which time has exposed them—though as to the particular point of *trial by jury in civil causes*, the dreaded innovation, being conducted by wise and temperate hands, has in its results proved satisfactory to the people at large, as well as to the Bench and the Bar of Scotland. I have, however, chiefly introduced the above extracts as illustrative of the dissatisfaction with which Scott considered the commencement of a *system* of jurisprudential innovation; and though it must not be forgotten that his own office as a Clerk of Session had never yet brought him any thing but labour, and that he consequently complained from time to time of the inroads this labour made on hours which might otherwise have been more profitably bestowed, I suspect his antipathy to this new system, as a system, had no small share in producing the state of mind indicated in a remarkable letter addressed, in the latter part of this year, to his brother Thomas. The other source of uneasiness to which it alludes has been already touched upon—and we shall have but too much of it hereafter. He says to his brother, (Ashestiel, 1st November, 1810,) "I have no objection to tell you in confidence, that were Dundas to go out Governor-General to India, and were he willing to take me with him in a good situation, I would not hesitate to pitch the Court of Session and the booksellers to the Devil, and try my fortune in another climate." He adds, "but this is strictly *entre nous*"—nor indeed was I aware, until I found this letter, that he had ever entertained such a design as that which it communicates. Mr. Dundas, (now Lord Melville,) being deeply conversant in our Eastern affairs, and highly acceptable to the Court of Directors in the office of President of the Board of Control, which he had long filled, was spoken of, at various times in the course of his public life, as likely to be appointed Governor-General of India. He had, no doubt, hinted to Scott that in case he should ever assume that high station, it would be very agreeable for him to be accompanied by his early friend; and there could be little question of his capacity to have filled with distinction the part either of an Indian secretary or of an Indian judge.

But, though it is easy to account for his expressing in so marked a manner at this particular period his willingness to relinquish literature as the main occupation of his time, it is impossible to consider the whole course of his correspondence and conversation, without agreeing in the conclusion of Mr. Morritt, that he was all along sincere in the opinion that literature ought never to be ranked on the same scale of importance with the conduct of business in any of the great departments of public life. This opinion he always expressed, and I have no doubt that at any period preceding his acquisition of a landed property, he would have acted on it, even to the extent of leaving Scotland, had a suitable opportunity been afforded him to give that evidence of his sincerity. This is so remarkable a feature in his character, that the reader will forgive me should I recur to it in the sequel.

At the same time I have no notion that at this or any other period he contemplated abandoning literature. Such a thought would hardly enter the head of the man, not yet forty years of age, whose career had been one of unbroken success, and whose third great work had just been received with a degree of favour, both critical and popular, altogether unprecedented in the annals of his country. His hope, no doubt, was, that an honourable official station in the East might afford him both a world of new materials for poetry, and what would in his case be abundance of leisure for turning them to account, according to the deliberate dictates of his own judgment. What he desired to escape from was, not the exertion of his genius, which must ever have been to him the source of his most exquisite enjoyment, but the daily round of prosaic and perplexing toils, in which his connexion with the Ballantynes had involved him. He was able to combine the regular discharge of such functions with the exercise of the high powers of imagination, in a manner of which history affords no other example; yet many, no doubt, were the weary hours, when he repented him of the rash engagements which had imposed such a burden of more taskwork on his energies. But his external position, before the lapse of another year, underwent a change, which for ever fixed his destiny to the soil of his best affections and happiest inspirations.

The letters of Scott to all his friends have sufficiently shown the unflagging interest with which, among all his personal labours and anxieties, he watched the progress of the great contest in the Peninsula. It was so earnest that he never on any journey, not even in his very frequent passages between Edinburgh and Ashestiel, omitted to take with him the largest and best map he had been able to procure of the seat of war; upon this he was perpetually poring, tracing the marches and countermarches of the French and English, by means of black and white pins; and not seldom did Mrs. Scott complain of this constant occupation of his attention and her carriage. In the beginning of 1811, a committee was formed in London to collect subscriptions for the relief of the Portuguese, who had seen their lands wasted, their vines torn up, and their houses burnt, in the course of Massena's last unfortunate campaign; and Scott, on reading the advertisement, immediately addressed Mr. Whitmore, the chairman, begging that the committee would allow him to contribute to their fund the profits, to whatever they might amount, of a poem which he proposed to write upon a subject connected with the localities of the patriotic struggle. His offer was of course accepted; and "THE VISION OF DON RODERICK" was begun as soon as the Spring vacation enabled him to retire to Ashestiel.

On the 26th of April he writes thus to Mr. Morritt, who had lost a dear young friend in the battle of Barrosa.

"I rejoice with the heart of a Scotsman in the success of Lord Wellington, and with all the pride of a seer to boot. I have been for three years proclaiming him as the only man we had to trust to—a man of talent and genius—not deterred by obstacles, not fettered by prejudices, not immured within the pedantries of his profession—but playing the general and the hero, when most of our military commanders would have exhibited the drill sergeant, or at best the adjutant. These campaigns will teach us what we have long needed to know, that success depends not on the nice drilling of regiments, but upon the grand movements and combinations of an army. We have been hitherto polishing hinges, when we should have studied the mechanical union of a huge machine. Now—our army begin to see that the *grand secret*, as the French call it, consists only in union, joint exertion, and concerted movement. This will enable us to meet the dogs on fair terms as to numbers, and for the rest, 'my soul and body on the action both.'

"The downfall of Buonaparte's military fame will be the signal of his ruin, and, if we may trust the reports this day brings us from Holland, there is glorious mischief on foot already. I hope we shall be able to fling fuel into the flame immediately. A country with so many dykes and ditches must be fearfully tenable when the peasants are willing to fight. How I should enjoy the disconsolate visages of those Whig dogs, those dwellers upon the Isthmus, who have been foretelling the rout and ruin which it only required their being in power to have achieved! It is quite plain, from Sir Robert Wilson's account, that they neglected to feed the lamp of Russia, and it only resulted from their want of opportunity that they did not quench the smoking flax in the Peninsula—a thought so profligate that those who, from party or personal interest, indulged it, ought to pray for mercy, and return thanks for the providential interruption which obstructed their purpose, as they would for a meditated

but prevented parricide. But enough of the thorny subject of politics.

"I grieve for your loss at Barossa, but what more glorious fall could a man select for himself or friend, than dying with his sword in hand, and the cry of victory in his ears?

"As for my own operations, they are very trifling, though sufficiently miscellaneous. I have been writing a sketch of Buonaparte's tactics for the Edinburgh Register, and some other trumpery of the same kind. Particularly I meditate some wild stanzas referring to the Peninsula: if I can lick them into any shape, I hope to get something handsome from the booksellers for the Portuguese sufferers: 'Silver and gold have I none, but that which I have I will give unto them.' My lyrics are called the Vision of Don Roderick: you remember the story of the last Gothic King of Spain descending into an enchanted cavern to know the fate of the Moorish invasion—that is my machinery. Pray, don't mention this, for some one will snatch up the subject as I have been served before: and I have not written a line yet. I am going to Ashestiel for eight days, to fish and rhyme."

The poem was published, in 4to, in July; and the immediate proceeds were forwarded to the board in London. His friend the Earl of Dalkeith seems to have been a member of the committee, and he writes thus to Scott on the occasion:—

"Those with ample fortunes and thicker heads may easily give 100 guineas to a subscription, but the man is really to be envied who can draw that sum from his own brains, and apply the produce so beneficially and to so exalted a purpose." I presume, however, that when his Lordship thus mentions 100 guineas, he alludes merely to the first instalment of Scott's contribution.

In the original preface to this poem, Scott alludes to two events which had "cruelly interrupted his task"—the successive deaths of his kind friend the Lord President of the Court of Session (Blair,)* and his early patron, Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville: and his letters at the time afford additional evidence of the shock his feelings had thus sustained.

The following, to Mrs. Scott of Harden, is dated May 28th, 1811—

"My dear Madam,

"We are deprived of the prospect of waiting upon you on the birth-day, by the confusion into which the business of this court is thrown, by the most unexpected and irreparable loss which it has sustained in the death of the president—it is scarcely possible to conceive a calamity which is more universally or will be so long felt by the country. His integrity and legal knowledge, joined to a peculiar dignity of thought, action, and expression, had begun to establish in the minds of the public at large that confidence in the regular and solemn administration of justice, which is so necessary to its usefulness and respectability. My official situation, as well as the private intimacy of our families, makes me a sincere mourner on this melancholy occasion, for I feel a severe personal deprivation, besides the general share of sorrow common to all of every party or description who were in the way of witnessing his conduct.

"He was a rare instance of a man whose habits were every way averse to the cultivation of popularity, rising, nevertheless, to the highest point in the public opinion, by the manly and dignified discharge of his duty. I have been really so much shocked and out of spirits, yesterday and the day preceding, that I can write and think of nothing else.

"I have to send you the Vision of Don Roderick, as soon as we can get it out—it is a trifle I have written to eke out the subscription for the suffering Portuguese. Believe me, my dear Mrs. Scott, ever yours most truly and respectfully,

WALTER SCOTT."

The next letter is to Mr. Morritt, who, like himself, had enjoyed a large share of Lord Melville's friendly regard; and had more than once met his Lordship, after his fall, at the Poet's house in Castle Street; where, by the way, the old Statesman entered with such simple-heartedness into all the ways of the happy circle, that it had come to be an established rule for the children *to sit up to supper* whenever Lord Melville dined there.

* The Right Hon. Robert Blair of Avontoun, son of the Author of "The Grave."

"Edinburgh, July 1, 1811.

"My dear M.

"I have this moment got your kind letter, just as I was packing up Don Roderick for you. This patriotic puppet-show has been finished under wretched auspices; poor Lord Melville's death so quickly succeeding that of President Blair, one of the best and wisest judges that ever distributed justice, broke my spirit sadly. My official situation placed me in daily contact with the President, and his ability and candour were the source of my daily admiration. As for poor dear Lord Melville, 'Tis vain to name him whom we mourn in vain.' Almost the last time I saw him, he was talking of you in the highest terms of regard, and expressing great hopes of again seeing you at Dunira this summer, where I proposed to attend you. *Hei mihi! quid hei mihi? humana perpessi sumus.* His loss will be long and severely felt here, and envy is already paying her cold tribute of applause to the worth that she maligned while it walked upon earth.

"There is a very odd coincidence between the deaths of these eminent characters, and that of a very inferior person, a dentist of this city, named Dubisson. He met the President the day before his death, who used a particular expression in speaking to him; the day before Lord Melville died, he also met Dubisson nearly on the same spot, and to the man's surprise used the President's very words in saluting him. On this second death, he expressed (jocularly, however) an apprehension that he himself would be the third—was taken ill, and died in an hour's space. Was not this remarkable? Yours ever,

W. S."

The Vision of Don Roderick had features of novelty, both as to the subject and the manner of the composition, which excited much attention, and gave rise to some sharp controversy. The main fable was indeed from the most picturesque region of old romance; but it was made throughout the vehicle of feelings directly adverse to those with which the Whig critics had all along regarded the interference of Britain in behalf of the nations of the Peninsula; and the silence which, while celebrating our other generals on that scene of action, had been preserved with respect to Scott's own gallant countryman, Sir John Moore, was considered or represented by them as an odious example of genius hood-winked by the influence of party. Nor were there wanting persons who affected to discover that the charm of Scott's poetry had, to a great extent, evaporated under the severe test to which he had exposed it, by adopting, in place of those comparatively light and easy measures in which he had hitherto dealt, the most elaborate one that our literature exhibits. The production, notwithstanding the complexity of the Spenserian stanza, had been very rapidly executed; and it shows, accordingly, many traces of negligence. But the patriotic inspiration of it found an echo in the vast majority of British hearts; many of the Whig oracles themselves acknowledged that the difficulties of the metre had been on the whole successfully overcome; and even the hardest critics were compelled to express unqualified admiration of various detached pictures and passages, which, in truth, as no one now disputes, neither he nor any other poet ever excelled. The whole setting or framework—whatever relates in short to the last of the Goths himself—was, I think, even then unanimously pronounced admirable; and no party feeling could blind any man to the heroic splendour of such stanzas as those in which the three equally gallant elements of a British army are contrasted. I incline to believe that the choice of the measure had been in no small degree the result of those hints which Scott had received on the subject of his favourite octosyllabics, more especially from Ellis and Canning; and, as we shall see presently, he about this time made more than one similar experiment, in all likelihood from the same motive.

Of the letters which reached him in consequence of the appearance of The Vision, he has preserved several, which had no doubt interested and gratified him at the time. One of these was from Lady Wellington, to whom he had never had the honour of being presented, but who could not, as she said, remain silent on the receipt of such a tribute to the fame of "the first and best of men." Ever afterwards she continued to correspond with him, and

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indeed, among the very last letters which the Duchess of Wellington appears to have written, was a most affecting one, bidding him farewell, and thanking him for the solace his works had afforded her during her fatal illness. Another was in these terms:—

To Walter Scott, Esq.

"Hookley, July 26, 1811.

"My dear Sir,

"I am very glad that you have essayed a new metre—new I mean for you to use. That which you have chosen is perhaps at once the most artificial and the most magnificent that our language affords; and your success in it ought to encourage you to believe, that for you, at least, the majestic march of Dryden (to my ear the perfection of harmony) is not, as you seem to pronounce it, irrecoverable. Am I wrong in imagining that *Spenser* does not use the *phaeqnam-Alexandrine*—the verse which is as much longer than an Alexandrine, as an Alexandrine is longer than an ordinary heroic measure? I have no books where I am, to which to refer. You use this—and in the first stanza.

"Your poem has been met on my part by an exchange somewhat like that of Diomed's armour against Glaucus's—brass for gold—a heavy speech upon buffion. If you have never thought upon the subject—as to my great contentment I never had a twelvemonth ago—let me counsel you to keep clear of it, and forthwith put my speech into the fire, unread. It has no one merit but that of sincerity. I formed my opinion most reluctantly; having formed it. I could not but maintain it; having maintained it in Parliament, I wished to record it intelligibly. But it is one which, so far from cherishing and wishing to make proselytes to, I would much rather renounce, if I could find a person to convince me that it is erroneous. This is at least an unusual state of mind in controversy. It is such as I do not generally profess on all subjects—such as you will give me credit for not being able to maintain, for instance, when either the exploits which you celebrate in your last poem, or your manner of celebrating *them*, are disputed or disparaged. Believe me, with great regard and esteem, very sincerely yours,

GEORGE CANNING."

But, of all the letters addressed to the author of the Vision of Don Roderick, I am very sure no one was so welcome as that which reached him, some months after his poem had ceased to be new in England, from a dear friend of his earliest days, who, after various chances and changes of life, was then serving in Lord Wellington's army, as a captain in the 88th regiment. I am sure that Sir Adam Ferguson's good-nature will pardon my inserting here some extracts from a communication, which his affectionate schoolfellow very often referred to in after years with the highest appearance of interest and pleasure.

To Walter Scott, Esq.

"Lisbon, 31st August, 1811.

"My dear Walter,

"After such a length of silence between us, and, I grant on my part, so unwarrantable, I think I see your face of surprise on recognising this MS., and hear you exclaim—What strange wind has blown a letter from *Linton*? I must say, that although both you and my good friend Mrs. S. must long ago have set me down as a most indifferent, not to say ungrateful sort of gentleman, for otherwise has been the case, as in the course of my wanderings through this country, I have often beguiled a long march, or watchful night's duty, by thinking on the merry fireside in North Castle Street. However, the irregular roving life we lead, always interfered with my resolves of correspondence.

"But now, quitting self, I need not tell you how greatly I was delighted at the success of the Lady of the Lake. I dare say you are by this time will tired of such greetings—so I shall only say, that last spring I was so fortunate as to get a reading of it, when in the lines of Torres Vedras, and thought I had no inconsiderable right to enter into and judge of its beauties, having made one of the party on your first visit to the Trossachs; and you will allow, that a little vanity on my part on this account (every thing considered) was natural enough. While the book was in my possession, I had nightly invitations *to evening parties!* to read and illustrate passages of it; and I must say that (though not conscious of much merit in the way of recitation) my attempts to do justice to the grand opening of the stag-hunt, were always followed with bursts of applause—for this Canto was the favourite among the rough sons of the fighting Third Division. At that time supplies of various kinds, especially any thing in the way of delicacies, were very scanty; and, in gratitude, I am bound to declare, that to the good offices of the Lady, I owed many a nice slice of ham, and rummer of hot punch, which, I assure you, were amongst the most welcome favours that one officer could bestow on another during the long rainy nights of last January and February. By desire of my messmates of the Black-cuffs, I some time ago sent a commission to London for a copy of the music of the Boat-Song, 'Hail to the Chief,' as performed at Covent-Garden, but have not yet got it. 'If you can assist in this, I need not say that on every performance a flowing bumper will go round to the Bard. We have lately been fortunate in getting a good master to our band, who is curious in old Scotch and Irish airs, and has harmonised *Johnny Cope*, &c. &c. . . . .

"Lisbon, 5th October.

"I had written all the foregoing botheration, intending to send it by a wounded friend going home to Scotland, when, to my no small joy, your parcel, enclosing Don Roderick, reached me. How kind I take it, your remembering old Linton in this way. A day or two after I received yours, I was sent into the Alentejo, where I remained a month, and only returned a few days ago, much delighted with the trip. You wish to know how I like the Vision; but as you can't look for any learned critique from me, I shall only say that I fully entered into the spirit and beauty of it, and that I relished much the wild and fanciful opening of the introductory part; yet what particularly delighted me were the stanzas announcing the approach of the British fleets and armies to this country, and the three delightful ones descriptive of the different troops, English, Scotch, and Irish; and I can assure you the Pats are, to a man, enchanted with the picture drawn of their countrymen, and the mention of the great man himself. Your swearing, in the true character of a minstrel, 'shiver my harp and burst its every chord,' amused me not a little. From being well acquainted with a great many of the situations described, they had of course the more interest, and 'Grim Busaco's iron ridge' most happily paints the appearance of that memorable field. You must know that we have got with us some bright geniuses, natives of the *dear country*, and who go by the name of 'the poets.' Of course, a present of this kind is not thrown away upon indifferent subjects, but it is read and repeated with all the enthusiasm your warmest wish could desire. Should it be my fate to survive, I am resolved to try my hand on a snug little farm either up or down the Tweed, somewhere in your neighbourhood, and on this dream many a delightful castle do I build.

"I am most happy to hear that the Club goes on in the old smooth style. I am afraid, however, that now . . . has become a judge, the delights of *Scrogum* and *The Tailor* will be lost, till revived perhaps by the old croupier in the shape of a battered half-pay officer. Yours affectionately,

ADAM FERGUSON."

More than one of the gallant captain's *chateaux en Espagne* were, as we shall see, realized in the sequel. I must not omit a circumstance which had reached Scott from another source, and which he always took special pride in relating, namely, that in the course of the day when the Lady of the Lake first reached Sir Adam Ferguson, he was posted with his company on a point of ground exposed to the enemy's artillery; somewhere no doubt on the lines of Torres Vedras. The men were ordered to lie prostrate on the ground; while they kept that attitude, the Captain, kneeling at their head, read aloud the description of the battle in Canto VI., and the listening soldiers only interrupted him by a joyous huzza, whenever the French shot struck the bank close above them.

The only allusion which I have found, in Scott's letters, to the Edinburgh Review on his Vision, occurs in a letter to Mr. Morritt, (September 26, 1811,) which also contains the only hint of his having been about this time requested to undertake the task of rendering into English the *Charlemagne* of Lucien Buonaparte. He says—"The Edinburgh Reviewers have been down on my poor Don hand to fist; but, truly, as they are too fastidious to approve of the campaign, I should be very unreasonable if I expected them to like the celebration of it. I agree with

* See note, p. 27.

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them, however, as to the lumbering weight of the stanza, and I shrewdly suspect it would require a very great poet indeed to prevent the tedium arising from the recurrence of rhymes. Our language is unable to support the expenditure of so many for each stanza: even Spenser himself, with all the license of using obsolete words and uncommon spellings, sometimes fatigues the ear. They are also very wroth with me for omitting the merits of Sir John Moore; but as I never exactly discovered in what these lay, unless in conducting his advance and retreat upon a plan the most likely to verify the desponding speculations of the foresaid reviewers, I must hold myself excused for not giving praise where I was unable to see that much was due. The only literary news I have to send you is, that Lucien Buonaparte's epic, in twenty-four *chants*, is about to appear. An application was made to me to translate it, which I negatived of course, and that roundly."*

I have alluded to some other new experiments in versification about this time as probably originating in the many hints of Ellis, Canning, and probably of Erskine, that, if he wished to do himself full justice in poetical narration, he ought to attempt at least the rhyme of Dryden's Fables. Having essayed the most difficult of all English measures in Don Roderick, he this year tried also the heroic couplet, and produced that imitation of Crabbe, *The Poacher*:—on seeing which, Crabbe, as his son's biography tells us, exclaimed, "This man, whoever he is, can do all that I can, and *something more*." This piece, together with some verses, afterwards worked up into the Bridal of Triermain, and another fragment in imitation of Moore's Lyrics, when first forwarded to Ballantyne, were accompanied with a little note, in which he says: "Understand I have no idea of parody, but serious imitation, if I can accomplish it. The subject for my Crabbe is a character in his line which he has never touched. I think of Wordsworth, too, and perhaps a ghost story after Lewis. I should be ambitious of trying Campbell; but his peculiarity consists so much in the matter, and so little in the manner, that (to his praise be it spoken) I rather think I cannot touch him." The three imitations which he did execute appeared in the Edinburgh Register for 1809, published in the autumn of 1811. They were there introduced by a letter entitled The Inferno of Altisidora, in which he shadows out the chief reviewers of the day, especially his friends Jeffrey and Gifford, with admirable breadth and yet lightness of pleasantry. He kept his secret as to this Inferno, and all its appendages, even from Miss Baillie—to whom he says, on their appearance, that—"the imitation of Crabbe had struck him as good; that of Moore as bad; and that of himself as beginning well, but falling off grievously to the close." He seems to have been equally mysterious as to an imitation of the quaint love verses of the beginning of the 17th century, which had found its way shortly before into the newspapers, under the name of The Resolve; † but I find him acknowledging its parentage to his brother Thomas, whose sagacity had at once guessed at the truth. "As to the Resolve," he says, "it is mine; and it is not—or, to be less enigmatical, it is an old fragment, which I scopered up into its present state with the purpose of quizzing certain judges of poetry, who have been extremely delighted, and declare that no living poet could write in the same exquisite taste." These critics were his friends of the Friday Club. When included in the Register, however, the Resolve had his name affixed to it. In that case his concealment had already answered its purpose. It is curious to trace the beginnings of the systematic mystification which he afterwards put in practice with regard to the most important series of his works.

The quarto edition of Don Roderick having rapidly gone off, instead of reprinting the poem as usual in a separate octavo, he inserted it entire in the current volume of the Register; a sufficient proof how much that undertaking was already felt to require extraordinary exertion on the part of its proprietors. Among other minor tasks of the same year, he produced an edition of Wilson's Secret History of the Court of King James I., in two vols. 8vo, to which he supplied a copious preface, and a rich body of notes. He also contributed two or three articles to the Quarterly Review.

* The ponderous epic, entitled, *Charlemagne, ou l'Eglise Delivrée*, was published in 1814; and an English version, by the Rev. S. Butler and the Rev. F. Hodgson, appeared in 1815. 2 vols. 4to.

† See Poetical Works, edition 1834, vol. viii. p. 374.

CHAPTER XXIII.

NEW ARRANGEMENT CONCERNING THE CLERKS OF SESSION—SCOTT'S FIRST PURCHASE OF LAND—ABBOTSFORD; TURN-AGAIN, ETC.—JOANNA BAILLIE'S ORRA, ETC.—DEATH OF JAMES GRAHAME—AND OF JOHN LEYDEN,—1811,

THROUGHOUT 1811, Scott's serious labour continued to be bestowed on the advancing edition of Swift; but this and all other literary tasks were frequently interrupted in consequence of an important step which he took early in the year; namely, the purchase of the first portion of what became in the sequel an extensive landed property in Roxburghshire. He had now the near prospect of coming into the beneficial use of the office he had so long filled without emolument in the Court of Session. For, connected with the other reforms in the Scotch judicature, was a plan for allowing the retirement of functionaries, who had served to an advanced period of life, upon pensions; should this meet the approbation of parliament, there was little doubt that Mr. George Home would avail himself of the opportunity to resign the place of which he had now for five years executed none of the duties; and the second Lord Melville, who had now succeeded his father as the virtual minister for Scotland, had so much at heart a measure in itself obviously just and prudent, that little doubt could be entertained of the result of his efforts in its behalf. The Clerks of Session, it had been already settled, were henceforth to be paid not by fees, but by fixed salaries; the amount of each salary, it was soon after arranged, should be £1300 per annum; and contemplating a speedy accession of professional income so considerable as this, and at the same time a vigorous prosecution of his literary career, Scott fixed his eyes on a small farm within a few miles of Ashestiel, which it was understood would presently be in the market, and resolved to place himself, by its acquisition, in the situation to which he had probably from his earliest days looked forwards as the highest object of ambition, that of a Tweedside Laird.—*Sit mihi sedes utinam senectæ!*

And the place itself, though not to the general observer a very attractive one, had long been one of peculiar interest for him. I have often heard him tell, that when travelling in his boyhood with his father, from Selkirk to Melrose, the old man suddenly desired the carriage to halt at the foot of an eminence, and said, "we must get out here, Walter, and see a thing quite in your line." His father then conducted him to a rude stone on the edge of an acclivity about half a mile above the Tweed at Abbotsford, which marks the spot—

> "Where gallant Cessford's life-blood dear
> Reeked on dark Elliott's border spear."

This was the conclusion of the battle of Melrose, fought in 1526, between the Earls of Angus and Home, and the two chiefs of the race of Kerr, on the one side, and Buccleuch and his clan on the other, in sight of the young King James V., the possession of whose person was the object of the contest. This battle is often mentioned in the Border Minstrelsy, and the reader will find a long note on it, under the lines which I have just quoted from the Lay of the Last Minstrel. In the names of various localities between Melrose and Abbotsford, such as *Skirmish-field*, *Charge-Law*, and so forth, the incidents of the fight have found a lasting record; and the spot where the retainer of Buccleuch terminated the pursuit of the victors by the mortal wound

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of Kerr of Cessford, (ancestor of the Dukes of Roxburghe,) has always been called *Turn-again*. In his own future domain the young minstrel had before him the scene of the last great Clan-battle of the Borders.

On the 12th May, 1811, he writes to James Ballantyne, apologizing for some delay about proof-sheets, "My attention," he adds, "has been a little dissipated by considering a plan for my own future comfort, which I hasten to mention to you. My lease of Ashestiel is out—I now sit a tenant at will under a heavy rent, and at all the inconvenience of one when in the house of another. I have, therefore, resolved to purchase a piece of ground sufficient for a cottage and a few fields. There are two pieces, either of which would suit me, but both would make a very desirable property indeed. They stretch along the Tweed near half way between Melrose and Selkirk, on the opposite side from Lord Somerville, and could be had for between £7000 and £8000, or either separate for about half the sum. I have serious thoughts of one or both, and must have recourse to my pen to make the matter easy. The worst is the difficulty which John might find in advancing so large a sum as the copyright of a new poem, supposing it to be made payable within a year at farthest from the work going to press,—which would be essential to my purpose. Yet the Lady of the Lake came soon home. I have a letter this morning giving me good hope of my Treasury business being carried through; if this takes place I will buy both the little farms, which will give me a mile of the beautiful turn of Tweed, above Gala foot—if not, I will confine myself to one. As my income, in the event supposed, will be very considerable, it will afford a sinking fund to clear off what debt I may incur in making this purchase. It is proper John and you should be as soon as possible apprized of these my intentions, which I believe you will think reasonable in my situation and at my age, while I may yet hope to sit under the shade of a tree of my own planting. I shall not, I think, want any pecuniary assistance beyond what I have noticed, but of course my powers of rendering it will be considerably limited for a time. I hope this Register will give a start to its predecessors; I assure you I shall spare no pains. John must lend his earnest attention to clear his hands of the quire stock, and to taking in as little as he can unless in the way of exchange; in short, reefing our sails, which are at present too much spread for our ballast."

He alludes in the same letter to a change in the firm of Messrs. Constable, which John Ballantyne had just announced to him; and, although some of his prognostications on this business were not exactly fulfilled, I must quote his expressions for the light they throw on his opinion of Constable's temper and character. "No association," he says "of the kind Mr. C. proposes, will stand two years with him for its head. His temper is too haughty to bear with the complaints, and to answer all the minute inquiries, which partners of that sort will think themselves entitled to make, and expect to have answered. Their first onset, however, will be terrible, and John must be prepared to lie by.... The new poem would help the presses." The new partners to which he refers, were Mr. Robert Cathcart, Writer to the Signet, a man of high worth and integrity, who continued to be connected with Constable's business until his death in November, 1812, and Mr. Robert Cadell, who afterwards married Mr. Constable's eldest daughter.*

Of the two adjoining farms, both of which he had at this time thought of purchasing, he shortly afterwards made up his mind that one would be sufficient to begin with; and he selected that nearest to Ashestiel, and comprising the scene of Cessford's slaughter. The person from whom he bought it was an old friend of his own, whose sterling worth he venerated, and whose humorous conversation rendered him an universal favourite among the gentry of the Forest—the late Rev. Dr. Robert Douglas, minister of Galashiels—the same man to whom Mrs. Cockburn described the juvenile prodigy of George's Square, in November, 1777. Dr. Douglas had never resided on the property, and his efforts to embellish it had been limited to one stripe of firs, so long and so narrow that Scott likened it to a black hair-comb. It ran from the precincts of the homestead towards *Turn-again*, and has bequeathed the name of *the Doctor's redding-kame* to the mass of nobler trees amidst which its dark straight line can now hardly be traced. The farm consisted of a rich meadow or haugh along the banks of the river, and about a hundred acres of undulated ground behind, all in a neglected state, undrained, wretchedly enclosed, much of it covered with nothing better than the native heath. The farm house itself was small and poor, with a common *kail-yard* on one flank, and a staring barn of the doctor's erection on the other; while in front appeared a filthy pond covered with ducks and duckweed, from which the whole tenement had derived the unharmonious designation of *Clarty Hole*. But the Tweed was every thing to him—a beautiful river, flowing broad and bright over a bed of milk-white pebbles, unless here and there where it darkened into a deep pool, overhung as yet only by the birches and alders which had survived the statelier growth of the primitive forest; and the first hour that he took possession he claimed for his farm the name of the adjoining *ford*, situated just above the influx of the classical tributary Gala. As might be guessed from the name of *Abbotsford*, these lands had all belonged of old to the great abbey of Melrose; and indeed the Duke of Buccleuch, as the territorial representative of that religious brotherhood, still retains some seigniorial rights over them, and almost all the surrounding district. Another feature of no small interest in Scott's eyes was an ancient Roman road, leading from the Eildon hills to this ford, the remains of which, however, are now mostly sheltered from view amidst his numerous plantations. The most graceful and picturesque of all the monastic ruins in Scotland, the Abbey of Melrose itself, is visible from many points in the immediate neighbourhood of the house; and last, not least, on the rising ground full in view across the river, the traveller may still observe the chief traces of that ancient British barrier, the *Catrail*, of which the reader has seen frequent mention in Scott's early letters Ellis, when investigating the antiquities of Reged and Strathclyde.

Such was the territory on which Scott's prophetic eye already beheld rich pastures, embosomed among flourishing groves, where his children's children should thank the founder. But the state of his feelings, when he first called these fields his own, will be best illustrated by a few extracts from his letters. To his brother-in-law, Mr. Carpenter, he thus writes from Ashestiel, on the 5th of August—

"As my lease of this place is out, I have bought, for about £1000, a property in the neighbourhood, extending along the banks of the river Tweed for about half a mile. It is very bleak at present, having little to recommend it but the vicinity to the river; but as the ground is well adapted by nature to grow wood, and is considerably various in form and appearance, I have no doubt that by judicious plantations it may be rendered a very pleasant spot; and it is at present my great amusement to plan the various lines which may be necessary for that purpose. The farm comprehends about a hundred acres, of which I shall keep fifty in pasture and tillage, and plant all the rest, which will be a very valuable possession in a few years, as wood bears a high price among us. I intend building a small cottage here for my summer abode, being obliged by law, as well as induced by inclination, to make this country my residence for some months every year. This is the greatest incident which has lately taken place in our domestic concerns, and I assure you we are not a little proud of being greeted as *laird* and *lady of Abbotsford*. We will give a grand gala when we take possession of it, and as we are very *clannish* in this corner, all the Scotts in the country, from the Duke to the peasant, shall dance on the green to the bagpipes, and drink whiskey punch. Now as this happy festival is to be deferred for

* This union was dissolved by the death of the lady within a year of the marriage. Mr. Cadell, not long after the catastrophe of 1826, became sole publisher of Scott's later works.

more than a twelvemonth, during which our cottage is to be built, &c. &c., what is there to hinder brother and sister Carpenter from giving us their company upon so gratifying an occasion? Pray, do not stay broiling yourself in India, for a moment longer than you have secured comfort and competence. Don't look forward to *peace*; it will never come either in your day or mine."

The same week he says to Joanna Baillie—

"My dreams about my cottage go on; of about a hundred acres I have manfully resolved to plant from sixty to seventy; as to my scale of dwelling, why, you shall see my plan when I have adjusted it. My present intention is to have only two spare bed-rooms, with dressing-rooms, each of which will on a pinch have a couch bed; but I cannot relinquish my Border principle of accommodating all the cousins and *dunniwasties*, who will rather sleep on chairs, and on the floor, and in the hay-loft, than be absent when folks are gathered together; and truly I used to think Ashestiel was very much like the tent of Paribanou, in the Arabian Nights, that suited alike all numbers of company equally; ten people fill it at any time, and I remember its lodging thirty-two without any complaint. As for the *go-about*-folks, they generally pay their score one way or other; for you who are always in the way of seeing, and commanding, and selecting your society, are too fastidious to understand how a dearth of news may make any body welcome that can tell one the current report of the day. If it is any pleasure to these stragglers to say I made them welcome as strangers, I am sure that costs me nothing—only I deprecate publication, and am now the less afraid of it that I think scarce any bookseller will be desperate enough to print a new Scottish tour. Besides, one has the pleasure to tell over all the stories that have bored your friends a dozen of times, with some degree of propriety. In short, I think, like a true Scotchman, that a stranger, unless he is very unpleasant indeed, usually brings a title to a welcome along with him; and to confess the truth, I do a little envy my old friend Abouhassan his walks on the bridge of Bagdad, and evening conversations and suppers with the guests whom he was never to see again in his life; he never fell into a scrape till he met with the Caliph—and, thank God, no Caliphs frequent the brigg of Melrose, which will be my nearest Rialto at Abbotsford.

"I never heard of a stranger that utterly baffled all efforts to engage him in conversation, excepting one whom an acquaintance of mine met in a stage coach. My friend,* who piqued himself on his talents for conversation, assailed this tortoise on all hands, but in vain, and at length descended to expostulation. 'I have talked to you, my friend, on all the ordinary subjects—literature, farming, merchandise—gaming, game-laws, horse-races—suits at law—politics, and swindling, and blasphemy, and philosophy—is there any one subject that you will favour me by opening upon?' The wight writhed his countenance into a grin—'Sir,' said he, 'can you say any thing clever about *bend leather*?' There, I own, I should have been as much non-plussed as my acquaintance; but upon any less abtruse subject, I think, in general, something may be made of a stranger, worthy of his clean sheets, and beef-steak, and glass of port. You, indeed, my dear friend, may suffer a little for me, as I should for you, when such a fortuitous acquaintance talks of the intercourse arising from our meeting as any thing beyond the effect of chance and civility: but these braggings break no bones, and are always a compliment to the person of whom the discourse is held, though the narrator means it to himself; for no one can suppose the affectation of intimacy can be assumed, unless from an idea that it exalts the person who brags of it. My little folks are well, and I am performing the painful duty of hearing my little boy his Latin lesson every morning; painful, because my knowledge of the language is more familiar than grammatical, and because little Walter has a disconsolate yawn at intervals which is quite irresistible, and has nearly cost me a dislocation of my jaws."

In answering the letter which announced the acquisition of Abbotsford, Joanna Baillie says, very prettily:—"Yourself, and Mrs. Scott, and the children, will feel sorry at leaving Ashestiel, which will long have a consequence, and be the object of kind feelings with many, from having once been the place of your residence. If I should ever be happy enough to be at Abbotsford, you must take me to see Ashestiel too. I have a kind of tenderness for it, as one has for a man's first wife, when you hear he has married a second." The same natural sentiment is expressed in a manner characteristically different in a letter from the Ettrick Shepherd, of about the same date:—"Are you not sorry at leaving *auld Ashestiel* for *gude an' a'*, after having been at so much trouble and expense in making it a complete thing? Upon my word I was, on seeing it in the papers."

That Scott had many a pang in quitting a spot which had been the scene of so many innocent and noble pleasures, no one can doubt; but the desire of having a permanent abiding-place of his own, in his ancestorial district, had long been growing upon his mind: and, moreover, he had laboured in adorning Ashestiel, not only to gratify his own taste as a landscape gardener, but because he had for years been looking forward to the day when Colonel (now General) Russell would return from India to claim possession of his romantic inheritance. And he was overpaid for all his exertions, when the gallant soldier sat down at length among the trees which an affectionate kinsman had pruned and planted in his absence. He retained, however, to the end of his life, a certain "tenderness of feeling" towards Ashestiel, which could not perhaps be better shadowed than in Joanna Baillie's similitude. It was not his first country residence—nor could its immediate landscape be said to equal the Vale of the Esk, either in actual picturesqueness, or (before Marmion) in dignity of association. But it was while occupying Ashestiel that he first enjoyed habitually the free presence of wild and solitary nature; and I shall here quote part of a letter, in which he alludes to his favourite wildernesses between Tweed and Yarrow, in language, to my mind, strongly indicative of the regrets and misgivings with which he must have taken his farewell wanderings over them in the summer and autumn of 1811.

Miss Baillie had then in the press a new volume of Tragedies, but had told her friend that the publication, for booksellers' reasons, would not take place until winter. He answers, (August 24th,)—"were it possible for me to hasten the treat I expect by such a composition with you, I would promise to read the volume at the silence of noonday, upon the top of Minchmuir, or Windlestrawlaw. The hour is allowed, by those skilful in demonology, to be as full of witching as midnight itself; and I assure you, I have felt really oppressed with a sort of fearful loneliness, when looking around the naked and towering ridges of desolate barrenness, which is all the eye takes in from the top of such a mountain, the patches of cultivation being all hidden in the little glens and valleys—or only appearing to make one sensible how feeble and inefficient the efforts of art have been to contend with the genius of the soil. It is in such a scene that the unknown author of a fine, but unequal poem, called *Albania*, places the remarkable superstition which consists in hearing the noise of a chase, with the baying of the hounds, the throttling sobs of the deer, the hollos of a numerous band of huntsmen, and the 'hoofs thick beating on the hollow hill.' I have often repeated his verses with some sensations of awe in such a place, and I am sure yours would effect their purpose as completely."*

Miss Baillie sent him, as soon as it was printed, the book to which this communication refers; she told him it was to be her last publication, and that she was getting her knitting needles in order—meaning to begin her new course of industry with a purse, by way of return for his Iona brooch. The poetess mentioned, at the same time, that she had met the evening before with a Scotch lady, who boasted that "she had once been Walter Scott's bedfellow. Don't start," adds Joanna, "it is thirty years since the irregularity took place, and she describes her old bedfellow as the drollest looking, entertaining little urchin that ever was seen. I told her that you are a great strong man, six feet high, but she does not believe me." In point of fact, the assigned date was a lady's one, for the irregularity in question oc-

* This friend was Mr. William Clerk.

* The reader will find these lines from Albania (which Scott was very fond of repeating) quoted in a note to his ballad of "The Wild Huntsman."—*Poetical Works*, vol. vi. p. 203.

gured on board the Leith smack, which conveyed Walter Scott to London on his way to Bath, when he was only four years of age, A. D. 1776.

Miss Baillie's welcome volume contained, among others, her tragedy on the Passion of Fear; and Scott gives so much of himself in the letter acknowledging this present that I must insert it at length.

To Miss Joanna Baillie.

"My dear Friend,

"..... It is too little to say I am enchanted with the said third volume, especially with the two first plays, which in every point not only sustain, but even exalt your reputation as a dramatist. The whole character of Orra *is* exquisitely supported as well as imagined, and the language distinguished by a rich variety of fancy, which I know no instance of excepting in Shakspeare. After I had read Orra twice to myself, Terry read it over to us a third time, aloud, and I have seldom seen a little circle so much affected as during the whole fifth act. I think it would act charmingly, omitting, perhaps, the baying of the hounds, which could not be happily imitated, and retaining only the blast of the horn and the halloo of the huntsman at a distance. Only I doubt if we have now an actress that could carry through the mad scene in the fifth act, which is certainly one of the most sublime that ever were written. Yet I have a great quarrel with this beautiful drama, for you must know you have utterly destroyed a song of mine, precisely in the turn of your outlaw's ditty, and sung by persons in somewhat the same situation. I took out my unfortunate manuscript to look at it, but alas! it was the encounter of the iron and the earthen pitchers in the fable. I was clearly sunk, and the potsherds not worth gathering up. But only conceive that the chorus should have run thus *verbatim*—

> 'Tis mirk midnight with peaceful men,
> With us 'tis dawn of day'—

And again—

> 'Then boot and saddle, comrades boon,
> Nor wait the dawn of day.'*

"I think the Dream extremely powerful indeed, but I am rather glad we did not hazard the representation. It rests so entirely on Osterloo, that I am almost sure we must have made a bad piece of work of it. By-the-by, a story is told of an Italian buffoon, who had contrived to give his master, a petty prince of Italy, a good hearty ducking, and a fright to boot, to cure him of an ague; the treatment succeeded, but the potentate, by way of retaliation, had his audacious physician tried for treason, and condemned to lose his head; the criminal was brought forth, the priest heard his confession, and the poor jester knelt down to the block. Instead of wielding his axe, the executioner, as he had been instructed, threw a pitcher of water on the bare neck of the criminal; here the jest was to have terminated, but poor Gonella was found dead on the spot. I believe the catastrophe is very possible.† The latter half of the volume I have not perused with the same attention, though I have devoured both the Comedy and the Beacon in a hasty manner. I think the approbation of the public will make you alter your intention of taking up the knitting-needle—and that I shall be as much to seek for my purse as for the bank-notes which you say are to stuff it—though I have no idea where they are to come from. But I shall think more of the purse than the notes, come when or how they may.

"To return, I really think *Fear* the most dramatic passion you have hitherto touched, because capable of being drawn to the most extreme paroxysm on the stage. In Orra you have all gradations, from a timidity excited by a strong and irritable imagination, to the extremity which altogether unhinges the understanding. The most dreadful fright I ever had in my life, (being neither constitutionally timid, nor in the way of being exposed to real danger,) was in returning from Hamstead the day which I spent so pleasantly with you. Although the evening was nearly closed, I foolishly chose to take the short cut through the fields, and in that enclosure, where the path leads close by a thick and high hedge—with several gaps in it, however—did I meet one of your very thorough-paced London ruffians, at least judging from the squalid and jail-bird appearance and blackguard expression of countenance. Like the man that met the devil, I had nothing to say to him, if he had nothing to say to me, but I could not help looking back to watch the movements of such a suspicious figure, and to my great uneasiness saw him creep through the hedge on my left hand. I instantly went to the first gap to watch his motions, and saw him stooping, as I thought, either to lift a bundle or to speak to some person who seemed lying in the ditch. Immediately after, he came cowering back up the opposite side of the hedge, as returning towards me under cover of it. I saw no weapons he had, except a stick, but as I moved on to gain the stile which was to let me into the free field—with the idea of a wretch springing upon me from the cover at every step I took—I assure you I would not wish the worst enemy I ever had to undergo such a feeling as I had for about five minutes; my fancy made him of that description which usually combines murder with plunder, and though I was well armed with a stout stick and a very formidable knife, which when opened becomes a sort of *skenedhu*, or dagger, I confess my sensations, though those of a man much resolved not to die like a sheep, were vilely short of heroism; so much so, that when I jumped over the stile, a sliver of the wood run a third of an inch between my nail and flesh, without my feeling the pain, or being sensible such a thing had happened. However, I saw my man no more, and it is astonishing how my spirits rose when I got into the open field;—and when I reached the top of the little mount, and all the bells in London (for aught I know) began to jingle at once, I thought I had never heard any thing so delightful in my life—so rapid are the alternations of our feelings. This foolish story, for perhaps I had no rational ground for the horrible feeling which possessed my mind for a little while, came irresistibly to my pen when writing to you on the subject of terror.

"Poor Grahame, gentle, and amiable, and enthusiastic, deserves all you can say of him; his was really a hallowed harp, as he was himself an Israelite without guile. How often have I teased him, but never out of his good humour, by praising Dundee and laughing at the Covenanters!—but I beg your pardon, you are a Westland Whig too, and will perhaps make less allowance for a descendant of the persecutors. I think his works should be collected and published for the benefit of his family. Surely the wife and orphans of such a man have a claim on the generosity of the public.*

"Pray make my remembrance to the lady who so kindly remembers our early intimacy. I do perfectly remember being an exceedingly spoiled, chattering monkey, whom indifferent health and the cares of a kind Grandmamma and Aunt, had made, I suspect, extremely abominable to every body who had not a great deal of sympathy and good-nature, which I daresay was the case of my *quondam* bedfellow, since she recollects me so favourably. Farewell, and believe me, faithfully and respectfully, your sincere friend,

WALTER SCOTT."

Miss Baillie, in her next letter, mentioned the name of the "old bedfellow," and that immediately refreshed Scott's recollection. "I do," he replies, "remember *Miss Wright* perfectly well. Oh, how I should like to talk over with her our voyage in the good ship the Duchess of Buccleuch, Captain Beatson, master; much of which, from the novelty doubtless of the scene, is strongly impressed on my memory. A long voyage it was—of twelve days, if I mistake not, with the variety of a day or two in Yarmouth Roads. I believe the passengers had a good deal of fun with me; for I remember being persuaded to shoot one of them with an air-gun, who, to my great terror, lay obstinately dead on the deck, and would not revive till I fell a-crying, which proved the remedy specific upon the occasion."

The mention of Mr. Terry, in the letter about Orra, reminds me to observe that Scott's intimacy with that gentleman began to make very rapid progress from the date of the first purchase of Abbotsford. He spent several weeks of that autumn at Ashestiel, riding over daily to the new farm, and assisting his friend with advice, which his acquirements as an architect and draughtsman rendered exceedingly valu-

*These lines were accordingly struck out of the outlaw's song in Rokeby. The verses of *Orra*, to which Scott alludes, are no doubt the following:—

> "The wild-fire dances on the fen,
> The red star sheds its ray,
> Up rouse ye, then, my merry men,
> It is our opening day." &c.
>
> *Plays on the Passions*, vol. iii. p. 44.

† This story is told, among others, by Montaigne.

* James Grahame, author of The Sabbath, had been originally a member of the Scotch Bar, and was an early friend of Scott's. Not succeeding in the law, he—(with all his love for the Covenanters)—took orders in the Church of England, obtained a curacy in the county of Durham, and died there, on the 14th of September, 1811, in the 47th year of his age. See a Memoir of his Life and Writings in the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1810. Part ii., pp. 364—415.

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able, as to the future arrangements about both house and grounds. Early in 1812, Terry proceeded to London, and made, on the 20th May, a very successful *debut* on the boards of the Haymarket as Lord Ogleby. He continued, however, to visit Scotland almost every season, and no ally had more to do either with the plans ultimately adopted as to Scott's new structure, or with the collection of literary and antiquarian curiosities which now constitutes its museum. From this time the series of letters between them is an ample one. The intelligent zeal with which the actor laboured to promote the gratification of the poet's tastes and fancies on the one side—on the other, Scott's warm anxiety for Terry's professional success, the sagacity and hopefulness with which he counsels and cheers him throughout, and the good-natured confidence with which he details his own projects—both the greatest and the smallest,—all this seems to me to make up a very interesting picture. To none of his later correspondents, with the one exception of Mr. Morritt, does Scott write with a more perfect easy-heartedness than to Terry; and the quaint dramatic turns and allusions with which these letters abound, will remind all who knew him of the instinctive courtesy with which he uniformly adopted in conversation a strain the most likely to fall in with the habits of any companion. It has been mentioned that his acquaintance with Terry sprung from Terry's familiarity with the Ballantynes; as it ripened, he had, in fact, learned to consider the ingenious comedian as another brother of that race; and Terry, transplanted to the south, was used and trusted by him, and continued to serve and communicate with him, very much as if one of themselves had found it convenient to establish his headquarters in London.

Among the letters written immediately after Scott had completed his bargain with Dr. Douglas, is one which (unlike the rest) I found in his own repositories:—

"*For Doctor Leyden, Calcutta.—Favoured by the Hon. Lady Hood.*

"Ashestiel, 25th August, 1811.

"My dear Leyden,

"You hardly deserve I should write to you, for I have written you two long letters since I saw Mr. Purves, and received from him your valued dagger,* which I preserve carefully till Buonaparte shall come or send for it. I might take a cruel revenge on you for your silence, by declining Lady Hood's request to make you acquainted with her; in which case, I assure you, great would be your loss. She is quite a congenial spirit; an ardent Scotswoman, and devotedly attached to those sketches of traditionary history, which all the waters of the Burrampooter cannot, I suspect, altogether wash out of your honour's memory. This, however, is the least of her praises. She is generous and feeling, and intelligent, and has contrived to keep her heart and social affections broad awake amidst the chilling and benumbing atmosphere of London fashion. I ought perhaps first to have told you, that Lady H. *was* the honourable Mary Mackenzie, daughter of Lord Seaforth, and is the wife of Sir Samuel Hood, one of our most distinguished naval heroes, who goes out to take the command in your seas. Lastly, she is a very intimate friend of Mrs. Scott's and myself, and first gained my heart by her admiration of the Scenes of Infancy. So you see, my good friend, what your laziness would have cost you, if, listening rather to the dictates of revenge than generosity, I had withheld my pen from the inkhorn. But, to confess the truth, I fear two such minds would soon have found each other out, like good dancers in a ball-room, without the assistance of a master of ceremonies. So I may even play Sir Clement Cottrel with a good grace, since I cannot further my vengeance by withholding my good offices. My last went by favour of John Pringle,† who carried you a copy of the Lady of the Lake, a poem which I really think you will like better than Marmion on the whole, though not perhaps in particular passages. Pray let me know if it carried you back to the land of mist and mountain?

"Lady Hood's departure being sudden, and your deserts not extraordinary, (speaking as a correspondent,) I have not time to write you much news. The best domestic intelligence is, that the Sheriff of Selkirkshire, his lease of Ashestiel being out, has purchased about 100 acres, extending along the banks of the Tweed, just above the confluence of the Gala, and about three miles from Melrose. There, saith fame, he designs to bigg himself a bower—*sibi et amicis*—and happy will he be when he'll shall return you to a social meal at his cottage. The place looks at present very like 'poor Scotland's gear.' It consists of a bank and a haugh as poor and bare as Sir John Falstaff's regiment; though I fear, ere you come to see, the verdant screen I am about to spread over its nakedness will have in some degree removed this reproach. But it has a wild solitary air, and commands a splendid reach of the Tweed; and, to sum all in the words of Touchstone, 'it is a poor thing, but mine own.'

"Our little folks, whom you left infants, are now shooting fast forward to youth, and show some blood, as far as aptitude to learning is concerned. Charlotte and I are wearing on as easily as this fashious world will permit. The outside of my head is waxing grizzled, but I cannot find that this snow has cooled either my brain or my heart.—Adieu, dear Leyden!—Pray, brighten the chain of friendship by a letter when occasion serves; and believe me ever yours, most affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

On the 28th of August, 1811, just three days after this letter was penned, John Leyden died. On the very day when Scott was writing it, he, having accompanied the Governor-General, Lord Minto, on the expedition against Java, dashed into the surf, that he might be the first Briton in the armament who should set foot on the island. "When," says Scott, in his Sketch of Leyden's Life, "the well-concerted movements of the invaders had given them possession of the town of Batavia, he displayed the same ill-omened precipitation in his haste to examine a library, or rather warehouse of books, in which many Indian MSS. of value were said to be deposited. The apartment had not been regularly ventilated, and either from this circumstance, or already affected by the fatal sickness peculiar to Batavia, Leyden, when he left the place, had a fit of shivering, and declared the atmosphere was enough to give any mortal a fever. The presage was too just. He took to his bed, and died in three days, on the eve of the battle which gave Java to the British empire—

'Grata quies patriæ, sed et omnis terra sepulchrum.'"*

The packet in which Lady Hood, on her arrival in India, announced this event, and returned Scott's unopened letter, contained also a very touching one from the late Sir John Malcolm, who, although he had never at that time seen the poet, assumed, as a brother Borderer lamenting a common friend, the language of old acquaintanceship; and to this Scott replied in the same style, which, from their first meeting in the autumn of the next year, became that, on both sides, of warm and respectful attachment. I might almost speak in the like tenor of a third letter in the same melancholy packet, from another enthusiastic admirer of Leyden, Mr. Henry Ellis,† who also communicated to Scott his spirited stanzas on that untimely fate; but his personal intercourse with this distinguished diplomatist took place at a later period.

Before passing from the autumn of 1811, I may mention, that the letter of James Hogg, from which I have quoted an expression of regret as to Ashestiel, was one of many from the Shepherd bearing about this date, which Scott esteemed worthy of preservation. Strange as the fact may appear, Hogg, on the other hand, seems to have preserved none of the answers; but the half of the correspondence is quite sufficient to show how constantly and earnestly, in the midst of his own expanding toils and interests, Scott had continued to watch over the struggling fortunes of the wayward and imprudent Shepherd. His letters to the different members of the Buccleuch family at this time are full of the same subject. I shall insert one, addressed, on the 24th of August, to

* A Malay crease, now at Abbotsford.
† A son of Mr. Pringle of Whythank.

* This little biography of Leyden is included in Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. iv. p. 137.
† Now the Right Honourable Henry Ellis, appointed, in 1834, ambassador from the Court of St. James's to the Shah of Persia.

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the Countess of Dalkeith, along with a presentation copy of Hogg's "Forest Minstrel." It appears to me a remarkable specimen of the simplest natural feelings on more subjects than one, couched in a dialect which, in any hands but the highest, is apt to become a cold one :—

"Ashestiel, Aug. 24, 1811.

"Dear Lady Dalkeith,

"The Ettrick Bard, who compiled the enclosed collection, which I observe is inscribed to your Ladyship, has made it his request that I would transmit a copy for your acceptance. I fear your Ladyship will find but little amusement in it; for the poor fellow has just talent sufficient to spoil him for his own trade, without having enough to support him by literature. But I embrace the more readily an opportunity of intruding upon your Ladyship's leisure, that I might thank you for the very kind and affecting letter with which you honoured me some time ago. You do me justice in believing that I was deeply concerned at the irreparable loss you sustained, in the dear and hopeful boy,* to whom all the friends of the Buccleuch family looked forward with so much confidence. I can safely say, that since that inexpressible misfortune, I almost felt as if the presence of one with whom the recollection of past happiness might in some degree be associated, must have awakened and added to your Ladyship's distress, from a feeling that scenes of which we were not to speak, were necessarily uppermost in the recollection of both. But your Ladyship knows better than I can teach, that, where all common topics of consolation would be inapplicable, Heaven provides for us the best and most effectual lenitive in the progress of time, and in the constant and unremitting discharge of the duties incumbent on the station in which we are placed. Those of your Ladyship are important, in proportion to the elevation of your rank, and the promising qualities of the young minds which I have with so much pleasure seen you forming and instructing to be comforts, I trust, to yourself, and an honour to society. Poor Lady Rosslyn† is gone, with all the various talent and vivacity that rendered her society so delightful. I regret her loss the more, as she died without ever making up some unkindness she had towards me for these foolish politics. It is another example of the great truth, that life is too short for the indulgence of animosity. I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, your Ladyship's obliged and very humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

The Countess, in acknowledgment of the dedication of the Forest Minstrel, sent Hogg, through Scott's hands, the donation of a hundred guineas—a sum which, to him, in those days, must have seemed a fortune; but which was only the pledge and harbinger of still more important benefits, conferred soon after her Ladyship's husband became the head of his house.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE POEM OF ROKEBY BEGUN—CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. MORRITT—DEATH OF HENRY DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—GEORGE ELLIS—JOHN WILSON—APPRENTICES OF EDINBURGH—SCOTT'S "NICK-NACKATORIES"—LETTER TO MISS BAILLIE ON THE PUBLICATION OF CHILDE HAROLD—CORRESPONDENCE WITH LORD BYRON.—1811—1812.

Of the £4000 which Scott paid for the original farm of Abbotsford, he borrowed one half from his eldest brother, Major John Scott; the other moiety was raised by the Ballantynes, and advanced on the security of the as yet unwritten, though long meditated poem of Rokeby. He immediately, I believe by Terry's counsel, requested Mr. Stark of Edinburgh, an architect of whose talents he always spoke warmly, to give him a design for an ornamental cottage in the style of the old English vicarage-house. But before this could be done, Mr. Stark died; and Scott's letters will show, how, in the sequel, his building plans, checked for a season by this occurrence, gradually expanded,—until, twelve years afterwards, the *ate* was occupied not by a cottage but a castle.

His first notions are sketched as follows, in a letter addressed to Mr. Morritt, very shortly after the purchase. "We stay at Ashestiel this season, but migrate the next to our new settlements. I have fixed only two points respecting my intended cottage—one is, that it shall be *in* my garden, or rather kailyard—the other, that the little drawing-room shall open into a little conservatory, in which conservatory there shall be a fountain. These are articles of taste which I have long since determined upon; but I hope before a stone of my paradise is begun, we shall meet and collogue upon it."

Three months later, (December 20th, 1811,) he opens the design of his new poem in another letter to the Lord of Rokeby, whose household, it appears, had just been disturbed by the unexpected *accouchement* of a fair visitant. The allusion to the Quarterly Review, towards the close, refers to an humorous article on Sir John Sinclair's pamphlets about the Bullion Question—a joint production of Mr Ellis and Mr. Canning.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq.

"My dear Morritt,

"I received your kind letter a week or two ago. The little interlude of the bantling at Rokeby reminds me of a lady whose mother happened to produce her upon very short notice, between the hands of a game at whist, and who, from a joke of the celebrated David Hume, who was one of the players, lived long distinguished by the name of *The Parenthesis*. My wife had once nearly made a similar blunder in very awkward circumstances. We were invited to dine at Melville Castle, (to which we were then near neighbours,) with the Chief Baron* and his lady, its temporary inhabitants,—when behold, the Obadiah whom I dispatched two hours before dinner from our cottage to summon the Dr. Slop of Edinburgh, halting at Melville Lodge to rest his wearied horse, make apologies, and so forth, encountered the Melville Castle Obadiah sallying on the identical errand, for the identical man of skill, who, like an active knight-errant, relieved the two distressed dames within three hours of each other. A blessed duet they would have made if they had put off their crying bout, as it is called, till they could do it in concert.

"And now, I have a grand project to tell you of. Nothing less than a fourth romance, in verse; the theme, during the English civil wars of Charles I., and the scene, your own domain of Rokeby. I want to build my cottage a little better than my limited finances will permit out of my ordinary income; and although it is very true that an author should not hazard his reputation, yet, as Bob Acres says, I really think Reputation should take some care of the gentleman in return. Now, I have all your scenery deeply imprinted in my memory, and moreover, be it known to you, I intend to refresh its traces this ensuing summer, and to go as far as the borders of Lancashire, and the caves of Yorkshire, and so perhaps on to Derbyshire. I have sketched a story which pleases me, and I am only anxious to keep my theme quiet, for its being piddled upon by some of your *Ready-to-catch*, literati, as John Bunyan calls them, would be a serious misfortune to me. I am not without hope of seducing you to be my guide a little way on my tour. Is there not some book (sense or nonsense, I care not) on the beauties of Teesdale—I mean a descriptive work? If you can point it out, or lend it me,† you will do me a great favour, and no less if you can tell me any traditions of the period. By which party was Barnard Castle occupied? It strikes me that it should be held for the Parliament. Pray, help me in this, by truth, or fiction, or tradition,—I care not which, if it be picturesque. What the deuce is the name of that wild glen, where we had such a clamber on horseback up a stone staircase?—Cat's Cradle, or Cat's Castle, I think it was. I wish also to have the true edition of the traditionary tragedy of your old house at Mortham, and the ghost thereunto appertaining, and you will do me yeoman's service in compiling the relics of so valuable a legend. Item—Do you know any thing of a striking ancient castle belonging, I think, to the Duke of Leeds, called Coningsburgh? Grose notices it, but in a very flimsy manner. I once flew past it on the mail-coach, when its round tower and flying buttresses had a most romantic effect in the morning dawn.

* The late Right Honourable Robert Dundas, Chief Baron of the Scotch Court of Exchequer.

† See note, Ivanhoe, *Waverley Novels*, vol. xvii. pp. 235-239.

* Lord Scott. *See ante*, p. 128.

† The Countess of Rosslyn, born Lady Harriet Bouverie, a very intimate friend of Lady Dalkeith, died 8th August, 1810. She had, as has been mentioned before, written to Scott, requesting somewhat warmly his song at the Melville dinner. See *ante*, p. 114.

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"The Quarterly is beyond my praise, and as much beyond it as I was beyond that of my poor old nurse who died the other day. Sir John Sinclair has gotten the golden fleece at last. Dogberry would not desire a richer reward for having been written down an ass. £6000 a-year!' Good faith, the whole reviews in Britain should rail at me, with my free consent, better cheap by at least a cypher. There is no chance, with all my engagements, to be at London this spring. My little boy Walter is ill with the measles, and I expect the rest to catch the disorder, which appears, thank God, very mild. Mrs. Scott joins in kindest compliments to Mrs. Morritt,—many merry Christmases to you—and believe me, truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

I insert Mr. Morritt's answer, both for the light which it throws on various particular passages in the poem as we have it, and because it shows that some of those features in the general plan, which were unfavourably judged on its publication, had been early and very strongly recommended to the poet's own consideration by the person whom, on this occasion, he was most anxious to please.

To Walter Scott, Esq.

"Rokeby, 28th December, 1811.

"My dear Scott,

"I begin at the top of my paper, because your request must be complied with, and I foresee that a letter on the antiquities of Teesdale will not be a short one. Your project delights me much, and I willingly contribute my mite to its completion. Yet, highly as I approve of the scene where you lay the events of your romance, I have, I think, some observations to make as to the period you have chosen for it. Of this, however, you will be a better judge after I have detailed my antiquarian researches. Now, as to Barnard Castle, it was built in Henry I.'s time, by Barnard, son of Guy Baliol, who landed with the Conqueror. It remained with the Baliols till their attainder by Edward I. The tomb of Alan of Galloway was here in Leland's time; and he gives the inscription. Alan, if you remember, married Margaret of Huntingdon, David's daughter, and was father, by her, of Devorgild, who married John Baliol, and from whom her son, John Baliol, claimed the crown of Scotland. Edward I. granted the castle and liberties to Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick; it descended (with that title) to the Nevills, and by Ann Nevill to Richard, Duke of Gloucester, afterwards King Richard III. It does not appear to whom Henry VII. or his son re-granted it, but it fell soon into the hands of the Nevills, Earls of Westmoreland, by whom it was forfeited in the rising of the North. It was granted by James I. to the citizens of London, from whom Sir Henry Vane received it by purchase. It does not seem to have ever been used as a place of strength after the rising of the North; and when the Vanes bought it of the citizens, it was probably in a dismantled state. It was, however, a possession of the Vanes before the Civil Wars, and, therefore, with a safe conscience you may swear it stood for the Parliament. The lady for whose ghost you inquire at Rokeby, has been so buried in uncertainty, you may make what you like of her. The most interesting fiction makes her the heiress of the Rokebys, murdered in the woods of the Greta by a greedy collateral who inherited the estate. She reached the house before she expired, and her blood was extant in my younger days at Mortham tower. Others say it was a Lady Rokeby, the wife of the owner, who was shot in the walks by robbers; but she certainly became a ghost, and under the very poetic *nom de guerre* of Mortham Dobby, she appeared dressed as a fine lady, with a piece of white silk trailing behind her—without a head, indeed, (though no tradition states how she lost so material a member,) but with many of its advantages, for she had long hair on her shoulders—and eyes, nose, and mouth, in her breast. The person once by talking Latin to her, confined her under the bridge that crosses the Greta at my dairy, but the arch being destroyed by floods in 1771, became incapable of containing a ghost any longer, and she was seen after that time by some of the older parishioners. I often heard of her in my early youth, from a sibyl who lived in the park to the age of 105, but since her death I believe the history has become obsolete.

"The Rokebys were at all times loyal, at least from Henry IV. downward. They lived early at Mortham tower, which was, I believe, a better building than the tower of Rokeby, for here also was one where my house now stands. I fancy they got Mortham by marriage.* Colonel Rokeby, the last possessor of the old blood, was ruined in the Civil Wars by his loyalty and unthriftiness, and the estates were bought by the Robinsons, one of whom, the *long* Sir Thomas Robinson, so well-known and well-quizzed in the time of our grandfathers, after laying out most of the estate on this place, sold the place and the estate together to my father in 1769. Oliver Cromwell paid a visit to Barnard Castle in his way from Scotland, October, 1648. He does not seem to have been in the castle, but lodged in the town, whence I conclude the castle was then uninhabitable. Now I would submit to you, whether, considering the course of events, it would not be expedient to lay the time of your romance as early as the War of the Roses. For, 1st. As you seem to hint that there will be a ghost or two in it, like the King of Bohemia's giants, they will be 'more out of the way.' 2d. Barnard Castle, at the time I propose, belonged to Nevills and Plantagenets, of whom something advantageous (according to your cavalier views) may be brought forward; whereas, a short time before the Civil Wars of the Parliament, the Vanes became possessors, and still remain so; of whom, if any Tory bard should be able to say any thing obliging, it will certainly be '*insigne, recens, adhuc indictum ore alio*,' and do honour to his powers of imagination. 3d. The knights of Rokeby itself were of high rank and fair domain at the earlier period, and were ruining themselves ignobly at the other. 4th. Civil war for civil war; the first had two poetical sides, and the last only one; for the roundheads, though I always thought them politically right, were sad materials for poetry; even Milton cannot make much of them. I think no time suits so well with a romance, of which the scene lies in this country, as the Wars of the two Roses—unless you sing the rising of the North; and then you will abuse Queen Elizabeth, and be censured as an abettor of Popery. How you would be involved in political controversy—with all our Whigs, who are anti-Stuarts; and all our Tories, who are anti-Papistical! I therefore see no alternative but boldly to venture back to the days of the holy King Harry; for, God knows, it is difficult to say any thing civil of us since that period. Consider only, did not Cromwell himself pray that the Lord would deliver him from Sir Harry Vane? and what will you do with him?—still more, if you take into the account the improvements in and about the castle, to which yourself was witness when we visited it together?†

"There is a book of a few pages, describing the rides through and about Teesdale; I have it not, but if I can get it I will send it. It is very bare of information, but gives names. If you can get the third volume of Hutchinson's History of Durham, it would give you some useful bits of information, though very ill written. The glen where we clambered up to Cat-castle is itself called Deepdale. I fear we have few traditions that have survived the change of farms and property of all sorts, which has long taken place in this neighbourhood. But we have some poetical names remaining, of which none of us know the antiquity, or at least the origin. Thus, in the scamper we took from Deepdale and Cat-castle, we rode next, if you remember, to Cotherstone, an ancient village of the Fitzhughs on the Tees, whence I showed you a rock rising over the crown of the wood, still called Pendragon Castle. The river that joins the Tees at Cotherstone is yclept the Balder, I fancy in honour of the son of Odin; for the farm contiguous to it retains the name of Woden's Croft. The parish in which it stands is Romaldkirk, the church of St. Romald the hermit, and was once a hermitage itself in Teesdale forest. The parish next to Rokeby, on the Tees below my house, is Wycliff, where the old Reformer was born, and the day-star of Reformation first rose on England. The family of Rokeby, who were the proprietors of this place, were valiant and knightly. They seem to have had good possessions at the Conquest (see Doomsday Book;) in Henry III.'s reign they were Sheriffs of Yorkshire. In Edward II.'s reign, Froissart informs us, that, when the Scotch army decamped in the night so ingeniously from Weardale that nobody knew the direction of their march, a hue and cry was raised after them, and a reward of a hundred merks annual value in land was offered by the crown for whoever could discover them, and that de Rokeby—I think Sir Ralph—was the fortunate knight who ascertained their

* Shortly after the appearance of the article alluded to, Sir John Sinclair was appointed cashier of Excise for Scotland. "It should be added," says his biographer, "that the emoluments of the situation were greatly reduced at the death of Sir James Grant, his predecessor."—*Quarterly Journal of Agriculture, September*. 1836, p. 125.

* The heiress of Mortham married Rokeby in the reign of Edward II.; and his own castle at Rokeby having been destroyed by the Scotch after the battle of Bannockburn, he built one on his wife's estate—the same of which considerable remains still exist—on the northern bank of the Greta.

† Mr. Morritt alludes to the mutilation of a curious vaulted roof of extreme antiquity, in the great tower of Barnard Castle, occasioned by its conversion into a manufactory of patent shot;—an *improvement* at which the Poet had expressed some indignation.

quarters on the moors near Hexham. In the time of Henry IV., the High-Sheriff of Yorkshire, who overthrew Northumberland, and drove him to Scotland after the battle at Shrewsbury, was also a Rokeby. Tradition says that this sheriff was before this an adherent of the Percy's, and was the identical knight who dissuaded Hotspur from the enterprise, on whose letter the angry warrior comments so freely in Shakspeare. They are indeed, I think, mentioned as adherents of the Percys in Chevy Chace, and fought under their banner; I hope, therefore, that they broke that connexion from pure patriotism, and not for filthy lucre. Such are all the annals that occur to me at present. If you will come here, we can summon a synod of the oldest women in the country, and you shall cross-examine them as much as you please. There are many romantic spots, and old names rather than remains of peels and towers, once called castles, which belonged to Scroops, Fitzhughs, and Nevills, with which you should be intimate before you finish you poem,—and also the abbots and monks of Egglestone, who were old and venerable people, if you carry your story back into Romish times; and you will allow that the beauty of the situation deserves it, if you recollect the view from and near the bridge between me and Barnard Castle. Coningsburgh Castle, a noble building as you say, stands between Doncaster and Rotherham. I think it belongs to Lord Fitzwilliam, but am not sure. You may easily find the account of it in Grose, or any of the other antiquarians. The building is a noble circular tower, buttressed all round, and with walls of immoderate thickness. It is of a very early era, but I do not know its date.

"I have almost filled my letter with antiquarianism; but will not conclude without repeating how much your intention has charmed us. The scenery of our rivers deserves to become classic ground, and I hope the scheme will induce you to visit and revisit it often. I will contrive to ride with you to Wensly dale and the Caves at least, and the border of Lancashire, &c. if I can; and to facilitate that trip, I hope you will bring Mrs. Scott here, that our dames may not be impatient of our absence. 'I know each dale, and every alley green,' between Rokeby and the Lakes and Caves, and have no scruple in recommending my own guidance, under which you will be far more likely to make discoveries than by yourself; for the people have many of them no knowledge of their own country. Should I, in consequence of your celebrity, be obliged to leave Rokeby from the influx of cockney romancers, artists, illustrators, and sentimental tourists, I shall retreat to Ashestiel, or to your new cottage, and thus visit on you the sins of your writings. At all events, however, I shall raise the rent of my inn at Greta bridge on the first notice of your book, as I hear the people at Callander have made a fortune by you. Pray give our kindest and best regards to Mrs. Scott, and believe me ever, dear Scott, yours very truly,

J. B. S. MORRITT."

In January, 1812, Scott entered upon the enjoyment of his proper salary as a clerk of Session, which, with his sheriffdom, gave him from this time till very near the close of his life, a professional income of £1600 a-year. On the 11th of the same month he lost his kind friend and first patron, Henry, third Duke of Buccleuch, and fifth of Queensberry. Both these events are mentioned in the following letter to Joanna Baillie, who, among other things, had told Scott that the materials for his purse were now on her table, and expressed her anxiety to know who was the author of some beautiful lines on the recent death of their friend, James Grahame, the poet of the Sabbath. These verses had, it appears, found their way anonymously into the newspapers.

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"January 17th, 1812.

"My dear friend,

"The promise of the purse has flattered my imagination so agreeably, that I cannot help sending you an ancient silver mouth-piece, to which, if it pleases your taste, you may adapt your intended labours: this, besides, is a genteel way of tying you down to your promise; and to bribe you still farther, I assure you it shall not be put to the purpose of holding bank notes or vulgar bullion, but reserved as a place of deposit for some of my pretty little medals and nicknackatories. When I do make another poetical effort, I shall certainly expect the sum you mention from the booksellers, for they have had too good bargains of me hitherto, and I fear I shall want a great deal of money to make my cottage exactly what I should like it. Meanwhile, between ourselves, my income has been very much increased since I wrote to you, in a different way. My predecessor in the office of Clerk of Session retired to make room for me, on the amiable condition of retaining all the emoluments during his life, which, from my wish to retire from the bar and secure a certain though distant income, I was induced to consent to; and considering his advanced age and uncertain health, the bargain was really not a bad one. But alas! like Sindbad's old man of the sea, my coadjutor's strength increased prodigiously after he had fairly settled himself on my shoulders, so that after five years' gratuitous labour, I began to tire of my burden. Fortunately, Mr. Banks's late superannuation act provides a rateable pension for office-holders obliged to retire after long and faithful services; and my old friend very handsomely consented to be transferred from my galled shoulders to the broad back of the public, although he is likely to sustain a considerable diminution of income by the exchange, to which he has declared himself willing to submit as a penalty for having lived longer than he or I expected. To me it will make a difference of £1300 a-year, no trifle to us who have no wish to increase our expense in a single particular, and who could support it on our former income without inconvenience. This I tell you in confidence, because I know you will be very well pleased with any good fortune which comes in my way. Every body who cares a farthing for poetry is delighted with your volume, and well they may. You will neither be shocked nor surprised at hearing that Mr. Jeffrey has announced himself of a contrary opinion. So, at least, I understand, for our very ideas of what is poetry differ so widely, that we rarely talk upon these subjects. There is something in his mode of reasoning that leads me greatly to doubt whether, notwithstanding the vivacity of his imagination, he really has any *feeling* of poetical genius, or whether he has worn it all off by perpetually sharpening his wit on the grindstone of criticism.

"I am very glad that you met my dear friend George Ellis,—a wonderful man, who, through the life of a statesman and politician, conversing with princes, wits, fine ladies, and fine gentlemen, and acquainted with all the intrigues and tracasseries of the cabinets and *ruelles* of foreign courts, has yet retained all warm and kindly feelings which render a man amiable in society, and the darling of his friends.

"The author of the elegy upon poor Grahame, is John Wilson, a young man of very considerable poetical powers. He is now engaged in a poem called the *Isle of Palms*, something in the style of Southey. He is an eccentric genius, and has fixed himself upon the banks of Windermere, but occasionally resides in Edinburgh, where he now is. Perhaps you have seen him;—his father was a wealthy Paisley manufacturer—his mother a sister of Robert Sym. He seems an excellent, warm-hearted, and enthusiastic young man; something too much, perhaps, of the latter quality, places him among the list of originals.

"Our streets in Edinburgh are become as insecure as your houses in Wapping. Only think of a formal association among nearly fifty apprentices, aged from twelve to twenty, to scour the streets and knock down and rob all whom they found in their way. This they executed on the last night of the year with such spirit, that two men have died, and several others are dangerously ill, from the wanton treatment they received. The watch-word of these young heroes when they met with resistance was—*Mar him*, a word of dire import; and which, as they were all armed with bludgeons loaded with lead, and were very savage, they certainly used in the sense of Ratcliffe Highway. The worst of all this is not so much the immediate evil, which a severe example* will probably check for the present, as that the formation and existence of such an association, holding regular meetings and keeping regular minutes, argues a woful negligence in the masters of these boys, the tradesmen and citizens of Edinburgh, of that wholesome domestic discipline which they ought, in justice to God and to man, to exercise over the youth intrusted to their charge; a negligence which cannot fail to be productive of every sort of vice, crime, and folly, among boys of that age.

"Yesterday I had the melancholy task of attending the funeral of the good old Duke of Buccleuch. It was, by his own direction, very private; but scarce a dry eye among the assistants—a rare tribute to a person whose high rank and large possessions removed him so far out of the social sphere of private friendship. But the Duke's mind was moulded upon the kindliest and most single-hearted model, and arrested the affections of all who had

* Three of these lads, all under eighteen years of age, were executed on the scene of one of the murders here alluded to, April the 22d, 1812. Their youth and penitence excited the deepest compassion; but never certainly was a severe example more necessary.

any connexion with him. He is truly a great loss to Scotland, and will be long missed and lamented, though the successor to his rank is heir also to his generous spirit and affections. He was my kind friend. Ever yours,
W. Scott."

The next of his letters to Joanna Baillie is curious, as giving his first impressions on reading Childe Harold. It contains also a striking sketch of the feelings he throughout life expressed, as to what he had observed of society in London—with a not less characteristic display of some of his own minor amusements.

To Miss Joanna Baillie.

"Ashestiel, April 4th, 1812.

"I ought not, even in modern gratitude, which may be moved by the gift of a purse, much less in minstrel sympathy, which values it more as your work than if it were stuffed with guineas, to have delayed thanking you, my kind friend, for such an elegant and acceptable token of your regard. My kindest and best thanks also attend the young lady who would not permit the purse to travel untenanted.* I shall be truly glad when I can offer them in person, but of that there is no speedy prospect. I don't believe I shall see London this great while again, which I do not very much regret, were it not that it postpones the pleasure of seeing you and about half-a-dozen other friends. Without having any of the cant of loving retirement, and solitude, and rural pleasures, and so forth, I really have no great pleasure in the general society of London; I have never been there long enough to attempt any thing like living in my own way, and the immense length of the streets separates the objects you are interested in so widely from each other, that three parts of your time are past in endeavouring to dispose of the fourth to some advantage. At Edinburgh, although in general society we are absolute mimics of London, and imitate them equally in late hours, and in the strange precipitation with which we hurry from one place to another, in search of the society which we never sit still to enjoy, yet still people may manage their own parties and motions their own way. But all this is limited to my own particular circumstances,—for in a city like London, the constant resident has beyond all other places the power of conducting himself exactly as he likes. Whether this is entirely to be wished or not may indeed be doubted. I have seldom felt myself so fastidious about books, as in the midst of a large library, where one is naturally tempted to imitate the egregious epicure who condescended to take only one bite out of the sunny side of a peach. I suspect something of scarcity is necessary to make you devour the intellectual banquet with a good relish and digestion, as we know to be the case with respect to corporeal sustenance. But to quit all this egotism, which is as little as possible to the purpose, you must be informed that Erskine has enshrined your letter among his household papers of the most precious kind. Among your thousand admirers you have not a warmer or more kindly heart; he tells me Jeffrey talks very favourably of this volume. I should be glad, for his own sake, that he took some opportunity to retrace the paths of his criticism; but after pledging himself so deeply as he has done, I doubt much his giving way even unto conviction. As to my own share, I am labouring sure enough, but I have not yet got on the right path where I can satisfy myself I shall go on with courage, for diffidence does not easily beset me, and the public, still more than the ladies, 'stoop to the forward and the bold;' but then in either case, I fancy, the suitor for favour must be buoyed up by some sense of deserving it, whether real or supposed. The celebrated apology of Dryden for a passage which he could not defend, 'that he knew when he wrote it, it was bad enough to succeed,' was, with all deference to his memory, certainly invented to justify the fact after it was committed.

"Have you seen the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold, by Lord Byron? It is, I think, a very clever poem, but gives no good symptom of the writer's heart or morals; his hero, notwithstanding the affected antiquity of the style in some parts, is a modern man of fashion and fortune, worn out and satiated with the pursuits of dissipation; and although there is a caution against it in the preface, you cannot for your soul avoid concluding that the author, as he gives an account of his own travels, is also doing so in his own character. Now really this is too bad; vice ought to be a little more modest, and it must require impudence at least equal to the noble Lord's other powers, to claim sympathy gravely for the ennui arising from his being tired of his companions and his paramours. There is a monstrous deal of conceit in it too, for it is informing the inferior part of the world that their little old-fash'ioned scruples of limitation are not worthy of his regard, while his fortune and possessions are such as have put all sorts of gratifications too much in his power to afford him any pleasure. Yet with all this conceit and assurance, there is much poetical merit in the book, and I wish you would read it.

"I *have* got Rob Roy's gun, a long Spanish-barrelled piece, with his initials, R. M. C., for Robert Macgregor Campbell, which latter name he assumed in compliment to the Argyle family, who afforded him a good deal of private support, because he was a thorn in the side of their old rival house of Montrose. I have, moreover, a relic of a more heroic character; it is a sword which was given to the great Marquis of Montrose by Charles I., and appears to have belonged to his father, our gentle King Jamie. It had been preserved for a long time at Gartmore, but the present proprietor was selling his library, or great part of it, and John Ballantyne, the purchaser, wishing to oblige me, would not conclude a bargain, which the gentleman's necessity made him anxious about, till he flung the sword into the scale; it is, independent of its other merits, a most beautiful blade. I think a dialogue between this same sword and Rob Roy's gun, might be composed with good effect.

"We are here in a most extraordinary pickle—considering that we have just entered upon April, when, according to the poet, 'primroses paint the gay plain,' instead of which both hill and valley are doing penance in a sheet of snow of very respectable depth. Mail-coaches have been stopt—shepherds, I grieve to say, lost in the snow; in short, we experience all the hardships of a January storm at this late period of the spring; the snow has been near a fortnight, and if it departs with dry weather, we may do well enough, but if wet weather should ensue, the wheat crop through Scotland will be totally lost. My thoughts are anxiously turned to the Peninsula, though I think the Spaniards have but one choice, and that is to choose Lord Wellington dictator; I have no doubt he could put things right yet. As for domestic politics, I really give them very little consideration. Your friends, the Whigs, are angry enough, I suppose, with the Prince Regent, but those who were most apt to flatter his follies, have little reason to complain of the usage they have met with—and he may probably think that those who were true to the father in his hour of calamity, may have the best title to the confidence of the son. The excellent private character of the old King gave him great advantages as the head of a free government. I fear the Prince will long experience the inconveniences of not having attended to his own. Mrs. Siddons, as fame reports, has taken another engagement at Covent Garden: surely she is wrong; she should have no twilight, but set in the full possession of her powers.†

"I hope Campbell's plan of lectures will answer.‡ I think the brogue may be got over, if he will not trouble himself by attempting to correct it, but read with fire and feeling; he is an animated reciter, but I never heard him read.

"I have a great mind, before sealing this long scrawl, to send you a list of the contents of the purse, as they at present stand

"1st. Miss Elizabeth Baillie's purse-penny, called by the learned a denarius of the Empress Faustina.

"2d. A gold brooch, found in a bog in Ireland, which, for aught I know, fastened the mantle of an Irish Princess in the days of Cuthullin, or Neal of the nine hostages.

"3d. A toadstone—a celebrated amulet, which was never lent to any one unless upon a bond for a thousand merks for its being safely restored. It was sovereign for protecting new born children and their mothers from the power of the fairies, and has been repeatedly borrowed from my mother, on account of this virtue.

"4th. A coin of Edward I., found in Dryburgh Abbey.

"5th. A funeral ring, with Dean Swift's hair.

"So you see my nicknackatory is well supplied, though the purse is more valuable than all its contents.

"Adieu, my dear friend. Mrs. Scott joins in kind respects to your sister, the Doctor, and Mrs. Baillie.
Walter Scott."

A month later, the Edinburgh Review on Lord Byron's Romaunt having just appeared, Scott says to Mr. Morritt, (May 12,) "I agree very much in

* The purse contained an old coin from Joanna Baillie's niece, the daughter of the Doctor.

† Mrs. Siddons made a farewell appearance at Covent Garden, as Lady Macbeth, on the 29th of June, 1812; but she afterwards resumed her profession for short intervals more than once, and did not finally bid adieu to the stage until the 9th of June, 1819.

‡ Mr. Thomas Campbell had announced his first course of lectures on English Poetry about this time.

what we say of Childe Harold. Though there is something provoking and insulting to morality and to feeling in his misanthropical ennui, it gives, nevertheless, an odd piquancy to his descriptions and reflections. This is upon the whole a piece of most extraordinary power, and may rank its author with our first poets. I see the Edinburgh Review has hauled its wind."

Lord Byron was, I need not say, the prime object of interest this season in the fashionable world of London; nor did the Prince Regent owe the subsequent hostilities of the noble Poet to any neglect on his part of the brilliant genius which had just been fully revealed in the Childe Harold. Mr. Murray, the publisher of the Romaunt, on hearing, on the 29th of June, Lord Byron's account of his introduction to his Royal Highness, conceived that, by communicating it to Scott, he might afford the opportunity of such a personal explanation between his two poetical friends, as should obliterate on both sides whatever painful feelings had survived the offensive allusions to Marmion in the English Bards and Scotch Reviewers; and this good-natured step had the desired consequences. Mr. Moore says that the correspondence "began in some inquiries which Mr. Scott addressed to Lord Byron on the subject of his interview with Royalty:"[1] but he would not have used that expression, had he seen the following letter:—

To the Right Honourable Lord Byron, &c. &c.—Care of John Murray, Esq., Fleet Street, London.

"Edinburgh, July 3d, 1812.

"My Lord,

"I am uncertain if I ought to profit by the apology which is afforded me, by a very obliging communication from our acquaintance, John Murray of Fleet Street, to give your Lordship the present trouble. But my intrusion concerns a large debt of gratitude due to your Lordship, and a much less important one of explanation, which I think I owe to myself, as I dislike standing low in the opinion of any person whose talents rank so highly as my own, as your Lordship's most deservedly do.

"The first *count*, as our technical language expresses it, relates to the high pleasure I have received from the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold, and from its precursors; the former, with all its classical associations, some of which are lost on so poor a scholar as I am, possesses a the additional charm of vivid and animated description, imbued with original sentiment;—but besides this debt, which I owe your Lordship in common with the rest of the reading public, I have to acknowledge my particular thanks for your having distinguished by praise, in the work which your Lordship rather dedicated in general to satire, some of my own literary attempts. And this leads me to put your Lordship right in the circumstances respecting the sale of Marmion, which had reached you in a distorted and misrepresented form, and which, perhaps, I have some reason to complain, were given to the public without more particular inquiry. The poem, my Lord, was *not* written upon contract for a sum of money—though it is too true that it was sold and published in a very unfinished state, which I have since regretted, to enable me to extricate myself from some engagements which fell suddenly upon me, by the unexpected misfortunes of a very near relation. So that, to quote statute and precedent, I really come under the case cited by Juvenal, though not quite in the extremity of the classic author—

Esurit, intactam Paridi nisi vendit Agaven.

And so much for a mistake into which your Lordship might easily fall, especially as I generally find it the easiest way of stopping sentimental compliments on the beauty, &c., of certain poetry, and the delights which the author must have taken in the composition, by assigning the readiest reason that will cut the discourse short, upon a subject where one must appear either conceited, or affectedly rude and cynical.

"As for my attachment to literature, I sacrificed for the pleasure of pursuing it very fair chances of opulence and professional honours, at a time of life when I fully knew their value, and I am not ashamed to say, that in deriving advantages in compensation from the partial favour of the public, I have added some comforts and elegancies to a bare independence. I am sure your Lordship's good sense will easily put this unimportant question to the right account, for—though I do not know the motive which would make me enter into controversy with a fair or an unfair literary critic—I may be well excused for a wish to clear my personal character from any tinge of mercenary or sordid feeling in the eyes of a contemporary of genius. Your Lordship will likewise permit me to add, that you would have escaped the trouble of this explanation, had I not understood that the satire alluded to had been suppressed, not to be reprinted. For in removing a prejudice on your Lordship's own mind, I had no intention of making any appeal by or through you to the public, since my own habits of life have rendered my defence as to avarice or rapacity rather too easy.

"Leaving this foolish matter where it lies, I have to request your Lordship's acceptance of my best thanks for the flattering communication which you took the trouble to make Mr. Murray on my behalf, and which could not fail to give me the gratification, which I am sure you intended. I dare say our worthy bibliopolist overcoloured his report of your Lordship's conversation with the Prince Regent, but I owe my thanks to him nevertheless, for the excuse he has given me for intruding these pages on your Lordship. Wishing you health, spirit, and perseverance, to continue your pilgrimage through the interesting countries which you have still to pass with Childe Harold, I have the honour to be, my Lord, your Lordship's obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S. Will your Lordship permit me a verbal criticism on Childe Harold, were it only to show I have read his Pilgrimage with attention? 'Nuestra Dama de la Pena' means, I suspect, not our Lady of Crime or Punishment, but our Lady of the Cliff; the difference is, I believe, merely in the accentuation of 'pena.'"

Lord Byron's answer was in these terms:—

To Walter Scott, Esq. Edinburgh.

"St. James's Street, July 6, 1812.

"Sir,

"I have just been honoured with your letter.—I feel sorry that you should have thought it worth while to notice the evil works of my nonage, as the thing is suppressed *voluntarily*, and your explanation is too kind not to give me pain. The Satire was written when I was very young and very angry, and fully bent on displaying my wrath and my wit, and now I am haunted by the ghosts of my wholesale assertions. I cannot sufficiently thank you for your praise; and now, waiving myself, let me talk to you of the Prince Regent. He ordered me to be presented to him at a ball; and after some sayings, peculiarly pleasing from royal lips, as to my own attempts, he talked to me of you and your immortalities; he preferred you to every bard past and present, and asked which of your works pleased me most. It was a difficult question. I answered, I thought the Lay. He said his own opinion was nearly similar. In speaking of the others, I told him that I thought you more particularly the poet of *Princes*, as *they* never appeared more fascinating than in Marmion and the Lady of the Lake. He was pleased to coincide, and to dwell on the description of your Jameses as no less royal than poetical. He spoke alternately of Homer and yourself, and seemed well acquainted with both; so that (with the exception of the Turks and your humble servant) you were in very good company. I defy Murray to have exaggerated his Royal Highness's opinion of your powers, nor can I pretend to enumerate all he said on the subject; but it may give you pleasure to hear that it was conveyed in language which would only suffer by my attempting to transcribe it; and with a tone and taste which gave me a very high idea of his abilities and accomplishments, which I had hitherto considered as confined to *manners*, certainly superior to those of any living *gentleman*.

"This interview was accidental. I never went to the levee; for having seen the courts of Mussulman and Catholic sovereigns, my curiosity was sufficiently allayed; and my politics being as perverse as my rhymes, I had, in fact, no business there. To be thus praised by your Sovereign must be gratifying to you; and if that gratification is not alloyed by the communication being made through me, the bearer of it will consider himself very fortunately, and sincerely, your obliged and obedient servant,

BYRON.

"P. S.—Excuse this scrawl, scratched in a great hurry, and just after a journey."

Scott immediately replied as follows:—

To the Right Hon. Lord Byron, &c. &c. &c.

"Abbotsford, near Melrose, 16th July, 1812.

"My Lord,

"I am much indebted to your Lordship for your

[1] Life and Works of Lord Byron, vol. ii. p. 185.

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kind and friendly letter; and much gratified by the Prince Regent's good opinion of my literary attempts. I know so little of courts or princes, that any success I may have had in hitting off the Stuarts is, I am afraid, owing to a little old Jacobite leaven which I sucked in with the numerous traditionary tales that amused my infancy. It is a fortunate thing for the Prince himself that he has a literary turn, since nothing can so effectually relieve the ennui of state, and the anxieties of power.

"I hope your Lordship intends to give us more of Childe Harold. I was delighted that my friend Jeffrey—for such, in despite of many a feud, literary and political, I always esteem him—has made so handsomely the *amende honorable* for not having discovered in the bud the merits of the flower; and I am happy to understand that the retraction so handsomely made was received with equal liberality. These circumstances may perhaps some day lead you to revisit Scotland, which has a maternal claim upon you; and I need not say what pleasure I should have in returning my personal thanks for the honour you have done me. I am labouring here to contradict an old proverb, and make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, namely, to convert a bare *haugh* and *brae*, of about 100 acres, into a comfortable farm. Now, although I am living in a gardener's hut, and although the adjacent ruins of Melrose have little to tempt one who has seen those of Athens, yet, should you take a tour which is so fashionable at this season, I should be very happy to have an opportunity of introducing you to any thing remarkable in my fatherland. My neighbour, Lord Somerville, would, I am sure, readily supply the accommodations which I want, unless you prefer a couch in a closet, which is the utmost hospitality I have at present to offer. The fair, or shall I say the sage, Apreece that was, Lady Davy that is, is soon to show us how much science she leads captive in Sir Humphrey; so your Lordship sees, as the citizen's wife says in the farce—'Threadneedle Street has some charms,' since they procure us such celebrated visitants. As for me, I would rather cross-question your Lordship about the outside of Parnassus, than learn the nature of the contents of all the other mountains in the world. Pray, when under 'its cloudy canopy,' did you hear any thing of the celebrated Pegasus? Some say he has been brought off with other curiosities to Britain, and now covers at Tattersal's. I would fain have a cross from him out of my little moss-trooper's Galloway, and I think your Lordship can tell me how to set about it, as I recognise his true paces in the high-mettled description of Ali Pacha's military court.

"A wise man said—or, if not, I, who am no wise man, now say, that there is no surer mark of regard, than when your correspondent ventures to write nonsense to you. Having, therefore, like Dogberry, bestowed all my tediousness upon your Lordship, you are to conclude that I have given you a convincing proof that I am very much your Lordship's obliged and very faithful servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

From this time the epistolary intercourse between Scott and Byron continued to be kept up; and it ere-long assumed a tone of friendly confidence equally honourable to both these great competitors, without rivalry, for the favour of the literary world.

The date of the letter last quoted immediately preceded that of Scott's second meeting with another of the most illustrious of his contemporaries. He had met Davy at Mr. Wordsworth's when in the first flush of his celebrity in 1804, and been, as one of his letters states, much delighted with "the simple and unaffected style of his bearing—the most agreeable characteristic of high genius." Sir Humphrey, now at the summit of his fame, had come by his marriage with Scott's accomplished relation, into possession of an ample fortune; and he and his bride were among the first of the poet's visitants in the original cabin at Abbotsford.

The following letter is an answer to one in which Mr. Southey had besought Scott's good offices in behalf of an application which he thought of making to be appointed Historiographer Royal, in the room of Mr. Dutens, just dead. It will be seen that both poets regarded with much alarm the symptoms of popular discontent which appeared in various districts, particularly among the *Luddites*, as they were called, of Yorkshire, during the uncertain condition of public affairs consequent on the assassination of the Prime Minister, Mr. Percival, by Bellingham, in the lobby of the House of Commons, on the 11th of May, 1812; and that Scott had, in his capacity of Sheriff, had his own share in suppressing the tumults of the only manufacturing town of Selkirkshire. The last sentence of the letter alludes to a hint dropped in the Edinburgh Review, that the author of the historical department of the Edinburgh Annual Register, ought to be called to the bar of the House of Commons, in consequence of the bold language in which he had criticized the parliamentary hostility of the Whigs to the cause of Spain.

To Robert Southey, Esq. Keswick.

"Edinburgh, 4th June, 1812.

"My dear Southey,

"It is scarcely necessary to say that the instant I had your letter, I wrote to the only friend I have in power, Lord Melville, (if indeed he be now in power,) begging him, for the sake of his own character, for the remembrance of his father who wished you sincerely well and by every other objuration I could think of, to back your application. All I fear, if administration remain, is the influence of the clergy, who have a strange disposition to job away among themselves the rewards of literature. But I fear they are all to pieces above stairs, and much owing to rashness and mismanagement; for if they could not go on without Canning and Wellesley, they certainly should from the beginning have invited them in as companions, and not mere retainers. On the whole, that cursed compound of madness and villany has contrived to do his country more mischief at one blow than all her sages and statesmen will be able to repair perhaps in our day. You are quite right in apprehending a *Jacquerie*; the country is mined below our feet. Last week, learning that a meeting was to be held among the weaver's of the large manufacturing village of Galashiels, for the purpose of cutting a man's web from his loom, I apprehended the ringleaders, and disconcerted the whole project; but in the course of my inquiries, imagine my surprise at discovering a bundle of letters and printed manifestoes, from which it appeared that the Manchester Weavers' Committee corresponds with every manufacturing town in the South and West of Scotland, and levies a subsidy of 2s. 6d. per man—(an immense sum)—for the ostensible purpose of petitioning Parliament for redress of grievances, but doubtless to sustain them in their revolutionary movements. An energetic administration, which had the confidence of the country, would soon check all this; but it is our misfortune to lose the pilot when the ship is on the breakers. But it is sickening to think of our situation.

"I can hardly think there could have been any serious intention of taking the hint of the Review, and yet *liberty* has so often been made the pretext of crushing its own best supporters, that I am always prepared to expect the most tyrannical proceedings from professed demagogues.

"I am uncertain whether the Chamberlain will be liable to removal—if not, I should hope you may be pretty sure of your object. Believe me ever yours faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT.

"4th June.—What a different birth-day from those I have seen! It is likely I shall go to Rokeby for a few days this summer; and if so, I will certainly diverge to spend a day at Keswick."

Mr. Southey's application was unsuccessful—the office he wished for having been bestowed, as soon as it fell vacant, on a person certainly of vastly inferior literary pretensions—the late Rev. J. S. Clarke, D.D., private librarian to the Regent.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE "FLITTING" TO ABBOTSFORD—PLANTATIONS—GEORGE THOMSON—ROKEBY AND TRIERMAIN IN PROGRESS—EXCURSION TO FLODDEN—BISHOP-AUCKLAND—AND ROKEBY PARK—CORRESPONDENCE WITH CRABBE—LIFE OF PATRICK CAREY, ETC.—PUBLICATION OF ROKEBY—AND OF THE BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.—1812-1813.

TOWARDS the end of May, 1812, the Sheriff finally removed from Ashestiel to Abbotsford. The day when this occurred was a sad one for many a poor neighbour—for they lost, both in him and his wife, very generous protectors. In such a place, among the few evils which counterbalance so many good things in the condition of the peasantry, the most afflicting is the want of access to medical advice. As far as their means and skill would go, they had both done their utmost to supply this want; and

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Mrs. Scott, in particular, had made it so much her business to visit the sick in their scattered cottages, and bestowed on them the contents of her medicine-chest as well as of the larder and cellar, with such unwearied kindness, that her name is never mentioned there to this day without some expression of tenderness. Scott's children remember the parting scene as one of unmixed affliction—but it had, as we shall see, its lighter features.

Among the many amiable English friends whom he owed to his frequent visits at Rokeby Park, there was, I believe, none that had a higher place in his regard than the late Anne, Lady Alvanley, the widow of the celebrated Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. He was fond of female society in general, but her ladyship was a woman after his heart; well born, and highly bred, but without the slightest tinge of the frivolities of modern fashion; soundly informed, and a warm lover of literature and the arts, but holding in as great horror as himself the imbecile chatter and affected ecstasies of the bluestocking generation. Her ladyship had written to him early in May, by Miss Sarah Smith, (now Mrs. Bartley,) whom I have already mentioned as one of his theatrical favourites; and his answer contains, among other matters, a sketch of the "Forest Fluting."

To the Right Honourable Lady Alvanley.

"Ashestiel, 25th May, 1812.

"I was honoured, my dear Lady Alvanley, by the kind letter which you sent me with our friend Miss Smith, whose talents are, I hope, receiving at Edinburgh the full meed of honourable applause which they so highly merit. It is very much against my will that I am forced to speak of them by report alone, for this being the term of removing, I am under the necessity of being at this farm to superintend the transference of my goods and chattels, a most miscellaneous collection, to a small property, about five miles down the Tweed, which I purchased last year. The neighbours have been much delighted with the procession of my furniture, in which old swords, bows, targets, and lances, made a very conspicuous show. A family of turkeys was accommodated within the helmet of some *preux* chevalier of ancient Border fame; and the very cows, for aught I know, were bearing banners and muskets. I assure your ladyship that this caravan, attended by a dozen of ragged rosy peasant children, carrying fishing-rods and spears, and leading ponies, greyhounds, and spaniels, would, as it crossed the Tweed, have furnished no bad subject for the pencil, and really reminded me of one of the gypsey groupes of Callot upon their march.

"Edinburgh, 28th May.

"I have got here at length, and had the pleasure to hear Miss Smith speak the Ode on the Passions charmingly last night. It was her benefit, and the house was tolerable, though not so good as she deserves, being a very good girl, as well as an excellent performer.

"I have read Lord Byron with great pleasure, though pleasure is not quite the appropriate word. I should say admiration—mixed with regret, that the author should have adopted such an unamiable misanthropical tone.—The reconciliation with Holland-house is extremely edifying, and may teach young authors to be in no hurry to exercise their satirical vein. I remember an honest old Presbyterian, who thought it right to speak with respect even of the devil himself, since no one knew in what corner he might one day want a friend. But Lord Byron is young, and certainly has great genius, and has both time and capacity to made amends for his errors. I wonder if he will pardon the Edinburgh reviewers, who have read their recantation of their former strictures.

"Mrs. Scott begs to offer her kindest and most respectful compliments to your ladyship and the young ladies. I hope we shall get into Yorkshire this season to see Morritt: he and his lady are really delightful persons. Believe me, with great respect, dear Lady Alvanley, your much honoured and obliged

WALTER SCOTT."

A week later, in answer to a letter, mentioning the approach of the celebrated sale of books in which the Roxburghe Club originated, Scott says to his trusty ally, Daniel Terry:—

"Edinburgh, 9th June, 1812.

My dear Terry,

"I wish you joy of your success, which, although all reports unite it as most highly flattering, does not exceed what I had hoped for you. I think I shall do you a sensible pleasure in requesting that you will take a walk over the fields, to Hampstead one of these fine days, and deliver the enclosed to my friend Miss Baillie, with whom, I flatter myself, you will be much pleased, as she has all the simplicity of real genius. I mentioned to her some time ago that I wished to make you acquainted, so that the sooner you can call upon her the compliment will be the more gracious. As I suppose you will sometimes look in at the Roxburghe sale, a memorandum respecting any remarkable articles will be a great favour.

"Abbotsford was looking charming, when I was obliged to mount my wheel in this court, too fortunate that I have at length some share in the roast meat I am daily engaged in turning. Our flitting and removal from Ashestiel baffled all description; we had twenty-four cart-loads of the veriest trash in nature, besides dogs, pigs, ponies, poultry, cows, calves, bare-headed wenches, and bare-breeched boys. In other respects we are going on in the old way, only poor Percy is dead. I intend to have an old stone set up by his grave, with '*Cy gist li preux Percie*,' and I hope future antiquaries will debate which hero of the house of Northumberland has left his bones in Teviotdale.* Believe me yours very truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

This was one of the busiest summers of Scott's busy life. Till the 12th of July he was at his post in the Court of Session five days every week; but every Saturday evening found him at Abbotsford, to observe the progress his labourers had made within doors and without in his absence; and on Monday night he returned to Edinburgh. Even before the Summer Session commenced, he appears to have made some advance in his Rokeby, for he writes to Mr. Morritt, from Abbotsford, on the 4th of May—"As for the house and the poem, there are twelve masons hammering at the one and one poor noddle at the other—so they are both in progress;" and his literary labours throughout the long vacation, were continued under the same sort of disadvantage. That autumn he had, in fact, no room at all for himself. The only parlour which had been hammered into any thing like habitable condition, served at once for dining-room, drawing-room, school-room, and study. A window looking to the river was kept sacred to his desk; an old bed-curtain was nailed up across the room close behind his chair, and there, whenever the spade, the dibble, or the chisel, (for he took his full share in all the work on hand,) was laid aside, he pursued his poetical tasks, apparently undisturbed and unannoyed by the surrounding confusion of masons and carpenters, to say nothing of the lady's small talk, the children's babble among themselves, or their repetition of their lessons. The truth no doubt was, that when at his desk he did little more, as far as regarded *poetry*, than write down the lines which he had fashioned in his mind while pursuing his vocation as a planter, upon that bank which received originally, by way of joke, the title of *the thicket*. "I am now," he says to Ellis, (Oct. 17,) "adorning a patch of naked land with trees, *facturis nepotibus umbram*, for I shall never live to enjoy their shade myself otherwise than in the recumbent posture of Tityrus or Menalcas." But he did live to see *the thicket* deserve not only that name, but a nobler one; and to fell with his own hand many a well-grown tree that he had planted there.

Another plantation of the same date, by his eastern boundary, was less successful. For this he had asked and received from his early friend the Marchioness of Stafford, a supply of acorns from Trentham, and it was named in consequence *Sutherland bower*; but the fieldmice, in the course of the ensuing winter, contrived to root up and devour the whole of her ladyship's goodly benefaction. A third space had been set apart, and duly enclosed, for the reception of some Spanish chestnuts offered to him by an admirer established in merchandise at Seville; but that gentleman had not been a very knowing ally as to such matters, for when the chestnuts arrived, it turned out that they had been boiled.

* The epitaph of this favourite greyhound may be seen on the edge of the bank, a little way below the house of Abbotsford.

Scott writes thus to Terry, in September, while the Roxburghe sale was still going on:—

"I have lacked your assistance, my dear sir, for twenty whimsicalities this autumn. Abbotsford, as you will readily conceive, has considerably changed its face since the auspices of Mother Retford were exchanged for ours. We have got up a good garden wall, complete stables in the haugh, according to Stark's plan, and the old farmyard being enclosed with a wall, with some little picturesque additions in front, has much relieved the stupendous height of the Doctor's barn. The new plantations have thriven amazingly well, the acorns are coming up fast, and Tom Purdie is the happiest and most consequential person in the world. My present work is building up the well with some *debris* from the Abbey. O for your assistance, for I am afraid we shall make but a botched job of it, especially as our materials are of a very miscellaneous complexion. The worst of all is, that while my trees grow and my fountain fills, my purse, in an inverse ratio, sinks to zero. This last circumstance will, I fear, make me a very poor guest at the literary entertainment your researches hold out for me. I should, however, like much to have the Treatise on Dreams, by the author of the New Jerusalem, which, as John Cuthbertson the smith said of the minister's sermon, must be neat work. The Loyal Poems by N. T. are probably by poor Nahum Tate, who associated with Brady in versifying the Psalms, and more honourably with Dryden in the second part of Absalom and Achitophel. I never saw them, however, but would give a guinea or thirty shillings for the collection. Our friend John Ballantyne has, I learn, made a sudden sally to London, and doubtless you will crush a quart with him or a pottle pot; he will satisfy your bookseller for 'The Dreamer,' or any other little purchase you may recommend for me. You have pleased Miss Baillie very much both in public and in society, and though not fastidious, she is not, I think, particularly lavish of applause either way. A most valuable person is she, and as warm-hearted as she is brilliant.—Mrs. Scott and all our little folks are well. I am relieved of the labour of hearing Walter's lesson by a gallant son of the church, who with one leg of wood, and another of oak, walks to and fro from Melrose every day for that purpose. Pray stick to the dramatic work," and never suppose either that you can be intrusive, or that I can be uninterested in whatever concerns you. Yours,

W. S."

The tutor alluded to at the close of this letter was Mr. George Thomson, son of the minister of Melrose, who, when the house afforded better accommodation, was and continued for many years to be domesticated at Abbotsford. Scott had always a particular tenderness towards persons afflicted with any bodily misfortune; and Thomson, whose leg had been amputated in consequence of a rough casualty of his boyhood, had a special share in his favour, from the high spirit with which he refused at the time to betray the name of the companion that had occasioned his mishap, and continued ever afterwards to struggle against its disadvantages. Tall, vigorous, athletic, a dauntless horseman, and expert at the singlestick, George formed a valuable as well as picturesque addition to the *tail* of the new laird, who often said, "In the Dominie, like myself, accident has spoiled a capital lifeguardsman." His many oddities and eccentricities in no degree interfered with the respect due to his amiable feelings, upright principles, and sound learning; nor did *Dominie Thomson* at all quarrel in after times with the universal credence of the neighbourhood, that he had furnished many features for the inimitable personage whose designation so nearly resembled his own; and if he has not yet 'wagged his head' in a 'pulpit o' his ain,' he well knows it has not been so for want of earnest and long-continued intercession on the part of the author of Guy Mannering.

For many years Scott had accustomed himself to proceed in the composition of poetry along with that of prose essays of various descriptions: but it is a remarkable fact that he chose this period of perpetual noise and bustle, when he had not even a summer-house to himself, for the new experiment of carrying on two poems at the same time—and this too without suspending the heavy labour of his edition of Swift, to say nothing of the various lesser matters in which the Ballantynes were, from day to day, calling for the assistance of his judgment and his pen. In the same letter in which William Erskine acknowledges the receipt of the first four pages of Rokeby, he adverts also to the Bridal of Triermain as being already in rapid progress. The fragment of this second poem, inserted in the Register of the preceding year, had attracted considerable notice; the secret of their authorship had been well kept; and by some means, even in the shrewdest circles of Edinburgh, the belief had become prevalent that they proceeded not from Scott but from Erskine. Scott had no sooner completed his bargain as to the copyright of the unwritten Rokeby, than he resolved to pause from time to time in its composition, and weave those fragments into a shorter and lighter romance, executed in a different metre, and to be published anonymously, in a small pocket volume, as nearly as possible on the same day with the avowed quarto. He expected great amusement from the comparisons which the critics would no doubt indulge themselves in drawing between himself and this humble candidate; and Erskine good-humouredly entered into the scheme, undertaking to do nothing which should effectually suppress the notion of his having set himself up as a modest rival to his friend. Nay, he suggested a further refinement, which in the sequel had no small share in the success of this little plot upon the sagacity of the reviewers. Having said that he much admired the opening of the first canto of Rokeby, Erskine adds, "I shall request your *acoucheur* to send me your *little Dugald* too as he gradually makes his progress. What I have seen is delightful. You are aware how difficult it is to form any opinion of a work, the general plan of which is unknown, transmitted merely in legs and wings as they are formed and feathered. Any remarks must be of the most minute and superficial kind, confined chiefly to the language, and other such subordinate matters. I shall be very much amused if the secret is kept and the knowing ones taken in. To prevent any discovery from your prose, what think you of putting down your ideas of what the preface ought to contain, and allowing me to write it over? And perhaps a quizzing review might be concocted."

This last hint was welcome; and among other parts of the preface to Triermain which threw out "the knowing ones," certain Greek quotations interspersed in it are now accounted for. Scott, on his part, appears to have studiously interwoven into the piece allusions to personal feelings and experiences more akin to his friend's history and character than to his own; and he did so still more largely, when repeating this experiment, in the introductory parts of Harold the Dauntless.

The same post which conveyed William Erskine's letter above quoted, brought him an equally wise and kind one from Mr. Morritt, in answer to a fresh application for some minute details about the scenery and local traditions of the Valley of the Tees. Scott had promised to spend part of this autumn at Rokeby Park himself; but now, busied as he was with his planting operations at home, and continually urged by Ballantyne to have the poem ready for publication by Christmas, he would willingly have trusted his friend's knowledge in place of his own observation and research. Mr. Morritt gave him in reply various particulars, which I need not here repeat, but added, "I am really sorry, my dear Scott, at your abandonment of your kind intention of visiting Rokeby—and my sorrow is not quite selfish—for seriously, I wish you could have come, if but for a few days, in order, on the spot, to settle accurately in your mind the localities of the new poem, and all their petty circumstances, of which there are many that would give interest and ornament to your descriptions. I am too much flattered by your proposal of inscribing the poem to me, not to accept it with gratitude and pleasure. I shall always feel your friendship as an honour—we all wish our honours to be permanent—and yours promises mine at least a fair chance of immortality. I hope, however, you will not be obliged to write in a hurry on account of the impatience of your booksellers. They are, I think, ill advised in

* An edition of the British Dramatists had, I believe, been projected by Mr. Terry.

this proceeding, for surely the book will be the more likely to succeed from not being forced prematurely upon the critical world. Do not be persuaded to risk your established fame on this hazardous experiment. If you want a few hundreds independent of these booksellers, your credit is so very good, now that you have got rid of your Old Man of the Sea, that it is no great merit to trust you, and I happen at this moment to have five or six for which I have no sort of demand—so rather than be obliged to spur Pegasus beyond the power of pulling him up when he is going too fast, do consult your own judgment, and set the midwives of the trade at defiance. Don't be scrupulous to the disadvantage of your muse, and above all be not offended at me for a proposition which is meant in the true spirit of friendship. I am more than ever anxious for your success—the Lady of the Lake more than succeeded—I think Don Roderick is less popular—I want this work to be another Lady at the least. Surely it would be worth your while for such an object to spend a week of your time, and a portion of your Old Man's salary, in a mail-coach flight hither, were it merely to renew your acquaintance with the country, and to rectify the little misconceptions of a cursory view. Ever affectionately yours—J. B. S. M."

This appeal was not to be resisted. Scott, I believe, accepted Mr. Morritt's friendly offer, so far as to ask his assistance in having some of Ballantyne's bills discounted; and he proceeded the week after to Rokeby, by the way of Flodden and Hexham, travelling on horseback, his eldest boy and girl on their ponies, while Mrs. Scott followed them in the carriage. Two little incidents that diversified this ride through Northumberland have found their way into print already; but, as he was fond of telling them both down to the end of his days, I must give them a place here also. Halting at Flodden to expound the field of battle to his young folks, he found that Marmion had, as might have been expected, benefitted the keeper of the public-house there very largely; and the village Boniface, overflowing with gratitude, expressed his anxiety to have a *Scott's Head* for his sign-post. The poet demurred to this proposal, and assured mine host that nothing could be more appropriate than the portraiture of a foaming tankard, which already surmounted his door-way. "Why, the painter-man has not made an ill job," said the landlord, "but I would fain have something more connected with the book that has brought me so much good custom." He produced a well-thumbed copy, and handing it to the author, begged he would at least suggest a motto from the Tale of Flodden Field. Scott opened the book at the death-scene of the hero, and his eye was immediately caught by the "inscription" in black letter—

"Drink, weary pilgrim, drink, and pray
For the kind soul of Sibyl Grey," &c.

"Well, my friend," said he, "what more would you have? You need but strike out one letter in the first of these lines, and make your painter-man, the next time he comes this way, print between the jolly tankard and your own name,

"Drink, weary pilgrim, drink, and PAY."

Scott was delighted to find, on his return, that this suggestion had been adopted, and for aught I know the romantic legend may still be visible.

The other story I shall give in the words of Mr. Gillies. "It happened at a small country town that Scott suddenly required medical advice for one of his servants, and, on inquiring if there was any doctor at the place, was told that there were two—one long established, and the other a new comer. The latter gentleman, being luckily found at home, soon made his appearance;—a grave, sagacious-looking personage, attired in black, with a shovel hat, in whom, to his utter astonishment, Sir Walter recognised a Scotch blacksmith, who had formerly practised, with tolerable success, as a veterinary operator in the neighbourhood of Ashestiel.—'How, in all the world!' exclaimed he, 'can it be possible that this is John Lundie?'—'In troth is it, your honour—just *a' that's for him.*'—'Well, but let us hear; you were a *horse*-doctor before; now, it seems, you are a *man*-doctor; how do you get on?'—'Ou, just extraordinar' weel; for your honour maun ken my practice is vera sure and orthodox. I depend entirely upon twa *simples*.'—'And what may their names be? Perhaps it is a secret?'—'I'll tell your honour,' in a low tone; 'my twa simples are just *laudamy* and *calamy*!'—'Simples with a vengeance!' replied Scott. 'But, John, do you never happen to *kill* any of your patients?'—'Kill? Ou ay, may be sae! Whiles they die, and whiles no; but it's the will o' Providence. *Ony how, your honour, it wad be lang before it makes up for Flodden!*'"*

It was also in the course of this expedition that Scott first made acquaintance with the late excellent and venerable Shute Barrington, Bishop of Durham. The travellers having reached Auckland over night, were seeing the public rooms of the Castle at an early hour next morning, when the Bishop happened, in passing through one of them, to catch a glimpse of Scott's person, and immediately recognising him, from the likeness of the engravings by this time multiplied, introduced himself to the party, and insisted upon acting as cicerone. After showing them the picture-gallery and so forth, his Lordship invited them to join the morning service of the chapel, and when that was over, insisted on their remaining to breakfast. But Scott and his lordship were by this time so much pleased with each other, that they could not part so easily. The good Bishop ordered his horse, nor did Scott observe without admiration the proud curvetting of the animal on which his lordship proposed to accompany him during the next stage of his progress. "Why, yes, Mr. Scott," said the gentle but high-spirited old man, "I still like to feel my horse under me." He was then in his 79th year, and survived to the age of ninety-two, the model in all things of a real prince of the Church. They parted, after a ride of ten miles, with mutual regret; and on all subsequent rides in that direction, Bishop-Auckland was one of the poet's regular halting places.

At Rokeby, on this occasion, Scott remained about a week; and I transcribe the following brief account of his proceedings while there from Mr. Morritt's *Memorandum*:—"I had of course," he says, "had many previous opportunities of testing the almost conscientious fidelity of his local descriptions; but I could not help being singularly struck with the lights which this visit threw on that characteristic of his compositions. The morning after he arrived he said, 'You have often given me materials for romance—now I want a good robber's cave and an old church of the right sort.' We rode out, and he found what he wanted in the ancient slate quarries of Brignal and the ruined Abbey of Egglestone. I observed him noting down even the peculiar little wild flowers and herbs that accidentally grew round and on the side of a bold crag near his intended cave of Guy Denzil; and could not help saying, that as he was not to be upon oath in his work, daisies, violets, and primroses, would be as poetical as any of the humble plants he was examining. I laughed, in short, at his scrupulousness; but I understood him when he replied, 'that in nature herself no two scenes are exactly alike, and that whoever copied truly what was before his eyes, would possess the same variety in his descriptions, and exhibit apparently an imagination as boundless as the range of nature in the scenes he recorded; whereas—whoever trusted to imagination, would soon find his own mind circumscribed, and contracted to a few favourite images, and the repetition of these would sooner or later produce that very monotony and bareness which had always haunted descriptive poetry in the hands of any but the patient worshippers of truth. Besides which,' he said, 'local names and peculiarities make a fictitious story look so much better in the face.' In fact, from his boyish habits, he was but half satisfied with the most beautiful scenery when he could not connect with it some local legend, and when I was forced sometimes to confess, with the Knife-grinder, 'Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, sir'—he

* Reminiscences of Sir Walter Scott, p. 56.

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would laugh, and say, 'then let us make one—nothing so easy as to make a tradition.'" Mr. Morritt adds, that he had brought with him about half the Bridal of Triermain—told him that he meant to bring it out the same week with Rokeby—and promised himself particular satisfaction in *laying a trap for Jeffrey*; who, however, as we shall see, escaped the snare.

Some of the following letters will show with what rapidity, after having refreshed and stored his memory with the localities of Rokeby, he proceeded in the composition of the romance;—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq.

"Abbotsford, 12th October, 1812.

"My dear Morritt,

"I have this morning returned from Dalkeith House, to which I was whisked amid the fury of an election tempest, and I found your letter on my table. More on such a subject cannot be said among friends who give each credit for feeling as they ought.

"We peregrinated over Stanmore, and visited the Castles of Bowes, Brough, Appleby, and Brougham, with great interest. Lest our spirit of chivalry thus excited should lack employment, we found ourselves, that is, *I* did, at Carlisle, engaged in the service of two distressed ladies, being no other than our friends Lady Douglas and Lady Louisa Stuart, who overtook us there, and who would have had great trouble in finding quarters, the election being in full vigour, if we had not anticipated their puzzle, and secured a private house capable of holding us all. Some distress occurred, I believe, among the waiting damsels, whose case I had not so carefully considered, for I heard a sentimental exclamation—'Am I to sleep with the greyhounds?' which I conceived to proceed from Lady Douglas's *suivante*, from the exquisite sensibility of tone with which it was uttered, especially as I beheld the fair one descend from the carriage with three half-bound volumes of a novel in her hand. Not having it in my power to alleviate her woes, by offering her either a part or the whole of my own couch—'*Transeat*,' quoth I, '*cum cæteris erroribus*.'

"I am delighted with your Cumberland admirer,* and give him credit for his visit to the vindicator of Homer: but you missed one of another description, who passed Rokeby with great regret, I mean General John Malcolm, the Persian envoy, the Delhi resident, the poet, the warrior, the polite man, and the Borderer. He is really a fine fellow. I met him at Dalkeith, and we returned together;—he has just left me, after drinking his coffee. A fine time we had of it, talking of Troy town, and Babel, and Persepolis, and Delhi, and Langholm, and Burnfoot†, with all manner of episodes about Iskendier Rustan, and Johnnie Armstrong. Do you know, that poem of Ferdusi's must be beautiful. He read me some very splendid extracts which he had himself translated. Should you meet him in London, I have given him charge to be acquainted with you, for I am sure you will like each other. To be sure I know him little, but I like his frankness and his sound ideas of morality and policy; and I have observed, that when I have had no great liking to persons at the beginning, it has usually pleased Heaven, as Slender says, to decrease it on further acquaintance. Adieu, I must mount my horse. Our last journey was so delightful, that we have every temptation to repeat it. Pray give our kind love to the lady, and believe me ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the same.

"Edinburgh, 29th November, 1812.

"My dear Morritt.

"I have been, and am still working very hard, in hopes to face the public by Christmas, and I think I have hitherto succeeded in throwing some interest into the piece. It is, however, a darker and more gloomy interest than I intended; but involving one's self with bad company, whether in fiction or in reality, is the way not to get out of it easily; so I have been obliged to bestow more pains and trouble upon Bertram, and one or two blackguards whom he picks up in the slate quarries, than what I originally designed. I am very desirous to have your opinion of the three first Cantos, for which purpose, so soon as I can get them collected, I will send the sheets under cover to Mr. Freeling, whose omnipotent frank will transmit them to Rokeby, where, I presume, you have been long since comfortably settled—

'So York shall overlook the town of York.'

"I trust you will read it with some partiality, because, if I have not been so successful as I could wish in describing your lovely and romantic glens, it has partly arisen from my great anxiety to do it well, which is often attended with the very contrary effect. There are two or three songs, and particularly one in praise of Brignal Banks, which I trust you will like—because, *entre nous*, I like them myself. One of them is a little dashing border song, called and entitled Allen-a-Dale. I think you will be able to judge for yourself in about a week. Pray, how shall I send you the *entire goose*, which will be too heavy to travel the same way with its *giblets*—for the Carlisle coach is terribly inaccurate about parcels. I fear I have made one blunder in mentioning the brooks which flow into the Tees. I have made the Balder distinct from that which comes down Thorsgill—I hope I am not mistaken. You will see the passage; and if they are the same rivulet, the leaf must be cancelled.

"I trust this will find Mrs. Morritt pretty well; and I am glad to find she has been better for her little tour. We were delighted with ours, except in respect of its short duration, and Sophia and Walter hold their heads very high among their untravelled companions, from the predominance acquired by their visit to England. You are not perhaps aware of the polish which is supposed to be acquired by the most transitory intercourse with your more refined side of the Tweed. There was an honest carter who once applied to me respecting a plan which he had formed of breeding his son, a great booby of twenty, to the Church. As the best way of evading the scrape, I asked him whether he thought his son's language was quite adapted for the use of a public speaker? to which he answered with great readiness, that he could keep English with any one, having twice driven his father's cart to Etal coal-hill.

"I have called my heroine Matilda. I don't much like Agnes, though I can't tell why, unless it is because it begins like Agag. Matilda is a name of unmanageable length; but after all, it is better than none, and my poor damsel was likely to go without one in my indecision.

"We are all hungering and thirsting for news from Russia. If Boney's devil does not help him, he is in a poor way. The Leith letters talk of the unanimity of the Russians as being most exemplary; and troops pour in from all quarters of their immense empire. Their commissariat is well managed under the Prince Duke of Oldenburgh. This was their weak point in former wars.

"Adieu! Mrs. Scott and the little people send love to Mrs. Morritt and you. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, Thursday, 10th December, 1812.

"My dear Morritt,

"I have just time to say that I have received your letters, and am delighted that Rokeby pleases the owner. As I hope the whole will be printed off before Christmas, it will scarce be worth while to send you the other sheets till it reaches you altogether. Your criticisms are the best proof of your kind attention to the poem. I need not say I will pay them every attention in the next edition. But some of the faults are so interwoven with the story that they must stand. Denzil, for instance, is essential to me, though, as you say, not very interesting; and I assure you that, generally speaking, the *poeta loquitur* has a bad effect in narrative; and when you have twenty things to tell, it is better to be slatternly than tedious. The fact is, that the tediousness of many really good poems arises from an attempt to support the same tone throughout, which often occasions periphrasis, and always stiffness. I am quite sensible that I have often carried the opposite custom too far; but I am apt to impute it partly to not being able to bring out my own ideas well, and partly to haste—not to error in the system. This would, however, lead to a long discussion, more fit for the fireside than for a letter. I need not say that, the poem being in fact your own, you are at perfect liberty to dispose of the sheets as you please. I am glad my geography is pretty correct. It is too late to inquire if Rokeby is insured, for I have burned it down in Canto V.; but I suspect you will bear me no greater grudge than at the noble Russian who burned Moscow. Glorious news to-day from the north—*great taste!* Mrs. Scott, Sophia and Walter join in best compli-

* This alluded to a ridiculous hunter of lions, who, being met by Mr. Morritt in the grounds at Rokeby, disclaimed all taste for picturesque beauties, but overwhelmed their owner with Homeric Greek; of which he had told Scott.

† *Burnfoot* is the name of a farm-house on the Buccleuch estate, not far from Langholm, where the late Sir John Malcolm and his distinguished brothers were born. Their grandfather had, I believe, found refuge there after forfeiting a good estate and an ancient baronetcy in the *affair* of 1715. A monument to the gallant General's memory has recently been erected near the spot of his birth.

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ments to Mrs. Morritt; and I am, in great haste, ever faithfully yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

"P.S.—I have heard of Lady Hood by a letter from herself. She is well and in high spirits, and sends me a pretty topaz seal, with a talisman which secures this letter, and signifies, (it seems,) which one would scarce have expected from its appearance, my name."

We are now close upon the end of this busy twelvemonth; but I must not turn the leaf to 1813, without noticing one of its miscellaneous incidents—his first intercourse by letter with the poet Crabbe. Mr Hatchard, the publisher of his "Tales," forwarded a copy of the book to Scott as soon as it was ready; and, the bookseller having communicated to his author some flattering expressions in Scott's letter of acknowledgment, Mr. Crabbe addressed him as follows:—

To Walter Scott, Esq. Edinburgh.

"Merston, Grantham, 13th October, 1812.

"Sir,

"Mr. Hatchard, judging rightly of the satisfaction it would afford me, has been so obliging as to communicate your two letters, in one of which you desire my 'Tales' to be sent; in the other, you acknowledge the receipt of them; and in both you mention my verses in such terms, that it would be affected in me were I to deny, and I think unjust if I were to conceal, the pleasure you give me. I am indeed highly gratified.

"I have long entertained a hearty wish to be made known to a poet whose works are so greatly and so universally admired; and I continued to hope that I might at some time find a common friend, by whose intervention I might obtain that honour; but I am confined by duties near my home, and by sickness in it. It may be long before I be in town, and then no such opportunity might offer. Excuse me, then, sir, if I gladly seize this which now occurs to express my thanks for the politeness of your expressions, as well as my desire of being known to a gentleman who has delighted and affected me, and moved all the passions and feelings in turn, I believe—Envy surely excepted—certainly, if I know myself, but in a moderate degree. I truly rejoice in your success: and while I am entertaining in my way, a certain set of readers, for the most part, probably of a peculiar turn and habit, I can with pleasure see the effect you produce on all. Mr. Hatchard tells me that he hopes or expects that thousands will read my 'Tales,' and I am convinced that your publisher might, in like manner, so speak of your ten thousands; but this, though it calls to mind the passage, is no true comparison with the related prowess of David and Saul, because I have no evil spirit to arise and trouble me on the occasion; though, if I had, I know no David whose skill is so likely to allay it. Once more, sir, accept my best thanks, with my hearty wishes for your health and happiness, who am, with great esteem, and true respect,

Dear sir, your obedient servant,

GEORGE CRABBE."

I cannot produce Scott's reply to this communication. Mr. Crabbe appears to have, in the course of the year, sent him a copy of all his works, "ex dono auctoris," and there passed between them several letters, one or two of which I must quote.

To Walter Scott, Esq. Edinburgh.

"Know you, sir, a gentleman in Edinburgh, A. Brunton, (the Rev.,) who dates St. John Street, and who asks my assistance in furnishing hymns which have relation to the Old or New Testament—any thing which might suit the purpose of those who are cooking up a book of Scotch Psalmody? Who is Mr. Brunton? what is his situation? If I could help one who needed help I would do it cheerfully—but have no great opinion of this undertaking. . . . . With every good wish, yours sincerely,

GEO. CRABBE."

Scott's answer to this letter expresses the opinions he always held in conversation on the important subject to which it refers; and acting upon which, he himself at various times declined taking any part in the business advocated by Dr. Brunton.

To the Rev. George Crabbe, Merston, Grantham.

"My dear Sir,

"I was favoured with your kind letter some time ago. Of all people in the world, I am least entitled to demand regularity of correspondence; for being, one way and another, doomed to a great deal more writing than suits my indolence, I am sometimes tempted to envy the reverend hermit of Prague, confessor to the niece of Queen Gorboduc, who never saw either pen or ink. Mr. Brunton is a very respectable clergyman of Edinburgh, and I believe the work in which he has solicited your assistance is one adopted by the General Assembly, or Convocation of the Kirk. I have no notion that he has any individual interest in it; he is a well-educated and liberal-minded man, and generally esteemed. I have no particular acquaintance with him myself, though we speak together. He is at this very moment sitting on the outside of the bar of our Supreme Court, within which I am fagging as a clerk; but as he is hearing the opinion of the judges upon an action for augmentation of stipend to him and to his brethren, it would not, I conceive, be a very favourable time to canvass a literary topic. But you are quite safe with him; and having so much command of scriptural language, which appears to me essential to the devotional poetry of Christians, I am sure you can assist his purpose much more than any man alive.

"I think those hymns which do not immediately recall the warm and exalted language of the Bible, are apt to be, however elegant, rather cold and flat for the purposes of devotion. You will readily believe that I do not approve of the vague and indiscriminate Scripture language which the fanatics of old and the modern Methodists have adopted, but merely that solemnity and peculiarity of diction, which at once puts the reader and hearer upon his guard as to the purpose of the poetry. To my Gothic ear, indeed, the *Stabat Mater*, the *Dies Iræ*, and some of the other hymns of the Catholic Church, are more solemn and affecting than the fine classical poetry of Buchanan; the one has the gloomy dignity of a Gothic church, and reminds us instantly of the worship to which it is dedicated; the other is more like a Pagan temple, recalling to our memory the classical and fabulous deities.* This is, probably, all referable to the association of ideas, that is, if the association of ideas continues to be the universal pick-lock of all metaphysical difficulties, as it was when I studied moral philosophy—or to any other more fashionable universal solvent which may have succeeded to it in reputation. Adieu, my dear sir,—I hope you and your family will long enjoy all happiness and prosperity. Never be discouraged from the constant use of your charming talent. The opinions of reviewers are really too contradictory to found any thing upon them, whether they are favourable or otherwise; for it is usually their principal object to display the abilities of the writers of the critical lucubrations themselves. Your 'Tales' are universally admired here. I go but little out, but the few judges whose opinions I have been accustomed to look up to, are unanimous. Ever yours, most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Walter Scott, Esq. Edinburgh.

"My dear Sir,

"Law, then, is your profession—I mean a profession you give your mind and time to—but how 'fag as a *clerk*?' Clerk is a name for a learned person, I know, in our Church; but how the same hand which held the pen of Marmion, holds that which a clerk fags, unless a clerk means something vastly more than I understand—is not to be comprehended. I wait for elucidation. Know you, dear sir, I have often thought I should love to read *reports*—that is, brief histories of extraordinary cases, with the judgments. If that is what is meant by *reports*, such reading must be pleasant, but, probably, I entertain wrong ideas, and could not undertsand the books I think so engaging. Yet I conclude there are *histories of cases*, and have often thought of consulting Hatchard whether he knew of such kind of reading, but hitherto I have rested in ignorance. . . . . Yours truly,

GEORGE CRABBE."

To the Rev. George Crabbe.

"My dear Sir,

"I have too long delayed to thank you for the most kind and acceptable present of your three volumes. Now am I doubly armed, since I have a set for my cabin at Abbotsford as well as in town; and, to say truth, the auxiliary copy arrived in good time, for my original one suffers as much by its general popularity among my young people, as a popular candidate from the hugs and embraces of his democratical admirers. The clearness and accuracy of your painting, whether natural or moral, renders, I have often remarked, your works generally delightful to those whose youth might render them insensible to the other beauties with which they abound. There are a sort of pictures—surely the most valuable, were it but

* See Life of Dryden, Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. i. p. 293.

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for that reason—which strike the uninitiated as much as they do the connoisseur, though the last alone can render reason for his admiration. Indeed our old friend Horace knew what he was saying when he chose to address his ode, '*Virginibus puerisque*,' and so did Pope when he told somebody he had the mob on the side of his version of Homer, and did not mind the high-flying critics at Button's. After all, if a faultless poem could be produced, I am satisfied it would fire the critics themselves, and annoy the whole reading world with the spleen.

"You must be delightfully situated in the Vale of Belvoir—a part of England for which I entertain a special kindness, for the sake of the gallant hero, Robin Hood, who, as probably you will readily guess, is no small favourite of mine; his indistinct ideas concerning the doctrine of *meum* and *tuum* being no great objection to an outriding Borderer. I am happy to think that your station is under the protection of the Rutland family, of whom fame speaks highly. Our lord of the 'cairn and the scaur,' waste wilderness and hungry hills, for many a league around, is the Duke of Buccleuch, the head of my clan; a kind and benevolent landlord, a warm and zealous friend, and the husband of a lady—*comme il y en a peu*. They are both great admirers of Mr. Crabbe's poetry, and would be happy to know him should he ever come to Scotland, and venture into the Gothic halls of a Border chief. The early and uniform kindness of this family, with the friendship of the late and present Lord Melville, enabled me, some years age, to exchange my toils as a barrister, for the lucrative and respectable situation of one of the Clerks of our Supreme Court, which only requires a certain routine of official duty, neither laborious nor calling for any exertion of the mind; so that my time is entirely at my own command, except when I am attending the Court, which seldom occupies more than two hours of the morning during sitting. I besides hold *in commendam* the Sheriffdom of Ettrick Forest, which is now no forest; so that I am a pluralist as to law appointments, and have, as Dogberry says, 'two gowns and every thing handsome about me.'

"I have often thought it is the most fortunate thing for bards like you and me to have an established profession, and professional character, to render us independent of those worthy gentlemen, the retailers, or, as some have called them, the midwives of literature, who are so much taken up with the abortions they bring into the world, that they are scarcely able to bestow the proper care upon young and flourishing babes like ours. That, however, is only a mercantile way of looking at the matter; but did any of my sons show poetical talent, of which, to my great satisfaction, there are no appearances, the first thing I should do would be to inculcate upon him the duty of cultivating some honourable profession, and qualifying himself to play a more respectable part in society than the mere poet. And as the best corollary of my doctrine, I would make him get your tale of 'The Patron' by heart from beginning to end. It is curious enough that you should have republished the 'Village' for the purpose of sending your young men to college, and I should have written the Lay of the Last Minstrel for the purpose of buying a new horse for the Volunteer Cavalry. I must now send this scrawl into town to get a frank, for, God knows, it is not worthy of postage. With the warmest wishes for your health, prosperity, and increase of fame—though it needs not—I remain most sincerely and affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."*

The contrast of the two poets' epistolary styles is highly amusing; but I have introduced these specimens less on that account, than as marking the cordial confidence which a very little intercourse was sufficient to establish between men so different from each other in most of the habits of life. It will always be considered as one of the most pleasing peculiarities in Scott's history, that he was the friend of every great contemporary poet: Crabbe, as we shall see more largely in the sequel, was no exception to the rule: yet I could hardly name one of them who, manly principles and the cultivation of literature apart, had many points of resemblance to him; and surely not one who had fewer than Crabbe.

Scott continued, this year, his care for the Edinburgh Annual Register—the historical department of which was again supplied by Mr. Southey. The poetical miscellany owed its opening piece, the Ballad of Polydore, to the readiness with which Scott entered into correspondence with its author, who sent it to him anonymously, with a letter which, like the verses, might well have excited much interest in his mind, even had it not concluded with stating the writer's age to be *fifteen*. Scott invited the youth to visit him in the country, was greatly pleased with the modesty of his manners and the originality of his conversation, and wrote to Joanna Baillie, that, "though not one of the crimps for the muses," he thought he could hardly be mistaken in believing that in the boyish author of Polydore he had discovered a true genius. When I mention the name of my friend William Howison of Clydegrove, it will be allowed that he prognosticated wisely. He continued to correspond with this young gentleman and his father, and gave both much advice, for which both were most grateful. There was inserted in the same volume a set of beautiful stanzas, inscribed to Scott by Mr. Wilson, under the title of the "Magic Mirror," in which that enthusiastic young poet also bears a lofty and lasting testimony to the gentle kindness with which his earlier efforts had been encouraged by him whom he designates, for the first time, by what afterwards became one of his standing titles, that of "The Great Magician."

"Onwards a figure came, with stately brow,
And, as he glanced upon the ruin'd pile
A look of regal pride, 'Say, who art thou
(His countenance bright'ning with a scornful smile
He sternly cried,) 'whose footsteps rash profane
The wild romantic realm where I have willed to reign?'

"But ere to these proud words I could reply,
How changed that scornful face to soft and mild!
A witching frenzy glitter'd in his eye,
Harmless, withal, as that of playful child.
And when once more the gracious vision spoke,
I felt the voice familiar to mine ear;
While many a faded dream of earth awoke,
Connected strangely with that unknown seer,
Who now stretch'd forth his arm, and on the sand
A circle round me traced, as with magician's wand,"
&c. &c.

Scott's own chief contribution to this volume was a brief account of the Life and Poems (hitherto unpublished) of Patrick Carey, whom he pronounces to have been not only as stout a cavalier, but almost as good a poet, as his contemporary Lovelace. That Essay was expanded, and prefixed to an edition of Carey's "Trivial Poems and Triolets," which Scott published in 1820; but its circulation in either shape has been limited: and I believe I shall be gratifying the majority of my readers by here transcribing some paragraphs of his beautiful and highly characteristic introduction of this forgotten poet of the 17th century.

"The present age has been so distinguished for research into poetical antiquities, that the discovery of an unknown bard is, in certain chosen literary circles, held as curious as an augmentation of the number of fixed stars would be esteemed by astronomers. It is true, these 'blessed twinklers of the night' are so far removed from us, that they afford no more light than serves barely to evince their existence to the curious investigator; and in like manner the pleasure derived from the revival of an obscure poet is rather in proportion to the rarity of his volume than to its merit; yet this pleasure is not inconsistent with reason and principle. We know by every day's experience the peculiar interest which the lapse of ages confers upon the works of human art. The clumsy strength of the ancient castles, which, when raw from the hand of the builder, inferred only the oppressive power of the barons who reared them, is now broken by partial ruin into proper subjects for the poet or the painter; and, as Mason has beautifully described the change,

——'Time
Has moulder'ed into beauty many a tower,
Which when it frowned with all its battlements,
Was only terrible.'——

"The monastery, too, which was at first but a fantastic monument of the superstitious devotion of monarchs, or of the purple pride of fattened abbots, has gained by the silent influence of antiquity, the power of impressing awe and devotion. Even the stains and weather-taints upon the battlements of such buildings add, like the scars of a veteran, to the affecting impression:

* Several of these letters having been enclosed in franked covers, which have perished, I am unable to affix the exact dates to them.

'For time has softened what was harsh when new,
And now the stains are all of sober hue;
The living stains which nature's hand alone,
Profuse of life, pours forth upon the stone.'—*Crabbe.*

"If such is the effect of Time in adding interest to the labours of the architect, if partial destruction is compensated by the additional interest of that which remains, can we deny his exerting a similar influence upon those subjects which are sought after by the bibliographer and poetical antiquary? The obscure poet, who is detected by their keen research, may indeed have possessed but a slender portion of that spirit which has buoyed up the works of distinguished contemporaries during the course of centuries, yet still his verses shall, in the lapse of time, acquire an interest, which they did not possess in the eyes of his own generation. The wrath of the critic, like that of the son of Ossian, flies from the foe that is low. Envy, base as she is, has one property of the lion, and cannot prey on carcasses; she must drink the blood of a sentient victim, and tear the limbs that are yet warm with vital life. Faction, if the ancient has suffered her persecution, serves only to endear him to the recollection of posterity, whose generous compassion overpays him for the injuries he sustained while in life. And thus freed from the operation of all unfavourable prepossessions, his merit, if he can boast any, has more than credit with his readers. This, however, is but part of his advantages. The mere tribute of antiquity is of itself sufficient to interest the fancy, by the lively and powerful train of associations which it awakens. Had the pyramids of Egypt, equally disagreeable in form and senseless as to utility, been the work of any living tyrant, with what feelings, save those of scorn and derision, could we have regarded such a waste of labour? But the sight, nay the very mention of these wonderful monuments, is associated with the dark and sublime ideas, which vary their tinge according to the favourite hue of our studies. The Christian divine recollects the land of banishment and of refuge; to the eye of the historian's fancy, they excite the shades of Pharaohs and of Ptolemies, of Cheops and Merops, and Sesostris drawn in triumph by his sceptred slaves; the philosopher beholds the first rays of moral truth as they dawn on the hieroglyphic sculptures of Thebes and Memphis; and the poet sees the fires of magic blazing upon the mystic altars of a land of incantation. Nor is the grandeur of size essential to such feelings, any more than the properties of grace and utility. Even the rudest remnant of a feudal tower, even the obscure and almost undistinguishable vestige of an altogether unknown edifice, has power to awaken such trains of fancy. We have a fellow interest with the 'son of the winged days,' over whose fallen habitation we tread:

'The massy stones, though hewn most roughly, show
The hand of man had once at least been there.'
WORDSWORTH.

"Similar combinations give a great part of the delight we receive from ancient poetry. In the rude song of the Scald, we regard less the strained imagery and extravagance of epithet, than the wild impressions which it conveys of the dauntless resolution, savage superstition, rude festivity, and ceaseless depredations of the ancient Scandinavians. In the metrical romance, we pardon the long, tedious, and bald enumeration of trifling particulars; the reiterated sameness of the eternal combats between knights and giants; the overpowering languor of the love speeches, and the merciless length and similarity of description—when Fancy whispers to us, that such strains may have cheered the sleepless pillow of the Black Prince on the memorable eves of Cressy or Poictiers. There is a certain romance of Ferumbras, which Robert the Bruce read to his few followers to divert their thoughts from the desperate circumstances in which they were placed, after an unsuccessful attempt to rise against the English. Is there a true Scotchman who, being aware of this anecdote, would be disposed to yawn over the romance of Ferumbras? Or, on the contrary, would not the image of the dauntless hero, inflexible in defeat, beguiling the anxiety of his war-worn attendants by the lays of the minstrel, give to these rude lays themselves an interest beyond Greek and Roman fame?"

The year 1812 had the usual share of minor literary labours—such as contributions to the journals: and before it closed, the romance of Rokeby was finished. Though it had been long in hand, the MS. sent to the printer bears abundant evidence of its being the *prima cura:* three cantos at least reached Ballantyne through the Melrose post—written on paper of various sorts and sizes—full of blots and interlineations—the closing couplets of a dispatch now and then encircling the page, and mutilated by the breaking of the seal.

According to the recollection of Mr. Cadell, though James Ballantyne read the poem, as the sheets were advancing through the press, to his usual circle of literary *dilettanti*, their whispers were far from exciting in Edinburgh such an intensity of expectation as had been witnessed in the case of The Lady of the Lake. He adds, however, that it was looked for with undiminished anxiety in the South. "Send me *Rokeby*," Byron writes to Murray, on seeing it advertised.—"Who the devil is he? No matter—he has good connexions, and will be well introduced."* Such I suppose was the general feeling in London. I well remember, being in those days a young student at Oxford, how the booksellers' shops there were beleagured for the earliest copies, and how he that had been so fortunate as to secure one, was followed to his chambers by a tribe of friends, all as eager to hear it read as ever horse-jockeys were to see the conclusion of a match at Newmarket; and indeed not a few of those enthusiastic academies had bets depending on the issue of the struggle, which they considered the elder favourite as making, to keep his own ground against the fiery rivalry of Childe Harold.

The poem was published a day or two before Scott returned to Edinburgh from Abbotsford, between which place and Mertoun he had divided his Christmas vacation. On the 9th and 10th of January, 1813, he thus addresses his friends at Sunninghill and Hampstead:—

To George Ellis, Esq.

"My dear Ellis,

"I am sure you will place it to any thing rather than want of kindness, that I have been so long silent—so very long, indeed, that I am not quite sure whether the fault is on my side or yours—but be it what it may, it can never, I am sure, be laid to forgetfulness in either. This comes to train you on to the merciful reception of a Tale of the Civil Wars; not political, however, but merely a pseudo-romance of pseudo-chivalry. I have converted a lusty buccanier into a hero with some effect; but the worst of all my undertakings is, that my rogue always, in despite of me, turns out my hero. I know not how this should be—I am myself, as Hamlet says, 'indifferent honest;' and my father, though an attorney, (as you will call him,) was one of the most honest men, as well as gentlemanlike, that ever breathed. I am sure I can bear witness to that—for if he had at all *smacked*, or *grown to*, like the son of Lancelot Gobbo, he might have left us all as rich as Crœsus, besides having the pleasure of taking a fine primrose path himself, instead of squeezing himself through a tight gate and up a steep ascent, and leaving us the decent competence of an honest man's children. As to our more ancient pedigree, I should be loath to vouch for them. My grandfather was a horse-jockey and cattle-dealer, and made a fortune; my great-grandfather, a Jacobite and traitor, (as the times called him,) and lost one; and after him intervened one or two half-starved lairds, who rode a lean horse, and were followed by leaner greyhounds; gathered with difficulty a hundred pounds from a hundred tenants; fought duels; cocked their hats,—and called themselves gentlemen. Then we come to the old Border times, cattle-driving, halters, and so forth, for which, in the matter of honesty, very little I suppose can be said—at least in modern acceptation of the word. Upon the whole, I am inclined to think it is owing to the earlier part of this inauspicious generation that I uniformly find myself in the same scrape with my fables, and that, in spite of the most obstinate determination to the contrary, the greatest rogue in my canvass always stands out as the most conspicuous and prominent figure. All this will be a riddle to you, unless you have received a certain packet, which the Ballantynes were to have sent under Freeling's or Croker's cover, as soon as they could get a copy done up.

"And now let me gratulate you upon the renovated vigour of you fine old friends the Russians. By the Lord, sir! it is most famous this campaign of theirs. I was not one of the very sanguine persons who anticipated the actual capture of Buonaparte—a hope which rather proceeded from the ignorance of those who cannot conceive that military movements, upon a large scale, admit of such a force being accumulated upon any particular point as may, by abandonment of other considerations, always ensure the escape of an individual. But I had no

* Byron's Life and Works, vol. ii. p. 189.

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hope, in my time, of seeing the dry bones of the Continent so warm with life again, as this revivification of the Russians proves them to be. I look anxiously for the effect of these great events on Prussia, and even upon Saxony: for I think Boney will hardly trust himself again in Germany, now that he has been plainly shown, both in Spain and Russia, that protracted stubborn unaccommodating resistance will foil those grand exertions in the long run. All laud be to Lord Wellington, who first taught that great lesson.

"Charlotte is with me just now at this little scrub habitation, where we weary ourselves all day in looking at our projected improvements, and then slumber over the fire, I pretending to read, and she to work trout-nets, or cabbage-nets, or some such article. What is Canning about? Is there any chance of our getting him in? Surely ministers cannot hope to do without him. Believe me, dear Ellis, ever truly yours,

W. Scott."

'Abbotsford, 9th January, 1813."

To Miss Joanna Baillie.

"Abbotsford, January 10th, 1813.

"Your kind encouragement, my dear friend, has given me spirits to complete the lumbering quarto, which I hope has reached you by this time. I have gone on with my story *forth right*, without troubling myself excessively about the development of the plot, and other critical matters—

> 'But shall we go mourn for that, my dear?
> The pale moon shines by night;
> And when we wander here and there,
> We then do go most right.'

I hope you will like Bertram to the end; he is a Caravaggio sketch, which I may acknowledge to you—but tell it not in Gath—I rather pique myself upon; and he is within the keeping of Nature, though critics will say to the contrary. It may be difficult to fancy that any one should take a sort of pleasure in bringing out such a character, but I suppose it is partly owing to bad reading, and ill-directed reading, when I was young. No sooner had I corrected the last sheet of Rokeby, than I escaped to this Patmos as blithe as bird on tree, and have been ever since most decidedly idle—that is to say, with busy idleness. I have been banking, and securing, and dyking against the river, and planting willows, and aspens, and weeping-birches, around my new old well, which I think I told you I had constructed last summer. I have now laid the foundations of a famous back-ground of copse, with pendant trees in front; and I have only to beg a few years to see how my colours will come out of the canvass. Alas! who can promise that? But somebody will take my place—and enjoy them, whether I do or no. My old friend and pastor, Principal Robertson, (the historian,) when he was not expected to survive many weeks, still watched the setting of the blossom upon some fruit-trees in the garden, with as much interest as if it was possible he could have seen the fruit come to maturity, and moralized on his own conduct, by observing that we act upon the same inconsistent motive throughout life. It is well we do so for those that are to come after us. I could almost dislike the man who refuses to plant walnut-trees, because they do not bear fruit till the second generation; and so—many thanks to our ancestors, and much joy to our successors, and truce to my fine and very new strain of morality. Yours ever,

W. S."

The following letter lets us completely behind the scenes at the publication of Rokeby. The "horrid story" it alludes to was that of a young woman found murdered on New Year's Day in the highway between Greta Bridge and Barnard Castle—a crime, the perpetrator of which was never discovered. The account of a parallel atrocity in Galloway, and the mode of its detection, will show the reader from what source Scott drew one of the most striking incidents in his Guy Mannering:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park.

"Edinburgh, 12th January, 1813.

"Dear Morritt,

"Yours I have just received in mine office at the Register-House, which will excuse this queer sheet of paper. The publication of Rokeby was delayed till Monday, to give the London publishers a fair start. My copies, that is, my friends', were all to be got off about Friday or Saturday; but yours may have been a little later, as it was to be what they call a picked one. I will call at Ballantyne's as I return from this place, and close the letter with such news as I can get about it there. The book has gone off very bobbishly; for the impression of 3000 and upwards is within two or three score of being exhausted, and the demand for these continuing faster than they can be boarded. I am heartily glad of this, for now I have nothing to fear but a bankruptcy in the Gazette of Parnassus: but the loss of five or six thousand pounds to my good friends and school-companions would have afflicted me very much. I wish we could whistle you here to-day. Ballantyne always gives a christening dinner, at which the Duke of Buccleuch, and a great many of my friends, are formally feasted. He has always the best singing that can be heard in Edinburgh, and we have usually a very pleasant party, at which your health as patron and proprietor of Rokeby will be faithfully and honourably remembered.

"Your horrid story reminds me of one in Galloway, where the perpetrator of a similar enormity on a poor idiot girl, was discovered by means of the print of his foot which he left upon the clay floor of the cottage in the death-struggle. It pleased Heaven (for nothing short of a miracle could have done it) to enlighten the understanding of an old ram-headed sheriff, who was usually nicknamed Leather-head. The steps which he took to discover the murderer were most sagacious. As the poor girl was pregnant, (for it was not a case of violation,) it was pretty clear that her paramour had done the deed, and equally so that he must be a native of the district. The sheriff caused the minister to advertise from the pulpit that the girl would be buried on a particular day, and that all persons in the neighbourhood were invited to attend the funeral, to show their detestation of such an enormous crime, as well as to evince their own innocence. This was sure to bring the murderer to the funeral. When the people were assembled in the kirk, the doors were locked by the sheriff's order, and the shoes of all the men were examined; that of the murderer was detected by the measure of the foot, tread, &c., and a peculiarity in the mode in which the sole of one of them had been patched. The remainder of the curious chain of evidence upon which he was convicted will suit best with twilight, or a blinking candle, being too long for a letter. The fellow bore a most excellent character, and had committed this crime for no other reason that could be alleged, than that, having been led accidentally into an intrigue with this poor wretch, his pride revolted at the ridicule which was likely to attend the discovery.

"On calling at Ballantyne's, I find as I had anticipated, that your copy, being of royal size, requires some particular nicety in hot-pressing. It will be sent by the Carlisle mail *quam primum*. Ever yours,

Walter Scott.

"P.S.—Love to Mrs. Morritt. John Ballantyne says he has just about eighty copies left, out of 3250, this being the second day of publication, and the book a two guinea one."

It will surprise no one to hear that Mr. Morritt assured his friend he considered Rokeby as the best of all his poem. The admirable, perhaps the unique fidelity of the local descriptions, might alone have swayed, for I will not say it perverted, the judgment of the lord of that beautiful and thenceforth classical domain; and, indeed, I must admit that I never understood or appreciated half the charm of this poem until I had become familiar with its scenery. But Scott himself had not designed to rest his strength on these descriptions. He said to James Ballantyne while the work was in progress, (September 2,) "I hope the thing will do, chiefly because the world will not expect from *me* a poem of which the interest turns upon *character*;" and in another letter, (October 28, 1812,) "I think you will see the same sort of difference taken in all my former poems,—of which I would say, if it is fair for me to say any thing, that the force in the Lay is thrown on style—in Marmion, on description—and in the Lady of the Lake, on incident."* I suspect some of these distinctions may have been matters of afterthought; but as to Rokeby there can be no mistake. His own original conceptions of some of its principal characters have been explained in letters already cited; and I believe no one who compares the poem with his novels will doubt that, had he undertaken their portraiture in prose, they would have come forth with effect hardly inferior to any of all the

* Several letters to Ballantyne on the same subject are quoted in the notes to the last edition of Rokeby. See Scott's Poetical Works, 1834, vol. ix. pp. 1–3: and especially the note on p. 298, from which it appears that the closing stanza was added, in deference to Ballantyne and Erskine, though the author retained his own opinion that "it spoiled one effect without producing another."

groupes he ever created. As it is, I question whether even in his prose there is any thing more exquisitely wrought out, as well as fancied, than the whole contrast of the two rivals for the love of the heroine in Rokeby; and that heroine herself, too, has a very particular interest attached to her. Writing to Miss Edgeworth five years after thi time, (10th March, 1818,) he says, "I have not read one of my poems since they were printed, excepting last year the Lady of the Lake, which I liked better than I expected, but not well enough to induce me to go through the rest, so I may truly say with Macbeth—

'I am afraid to think of what I've done—
Look on't again I dare not.'

"This much of *Matilda* I recollect—(for that is not so easily forgotten)—that she was attempted for the existing person of a lady who is now no more, so that I am particularly flattered with your distinguishing it from the others, which are in general mere shadows." I can have no doubt that the lady he here alludes to, was the object of his own unfortunate first love; and as little, that in the romantic generosity, both of the youthful poet who fails to win her higher favour, and of his chivalrous competitor, we have before us something more than "a mere shadow."

In spite of these graceful characters, the inimitable scenery on which they are presented, and the splendid vivacity and thrilling interest of several chapters in the story—such as the opening interview of Bertram and Wycliff—the flight up the cliff on the Greta—the first entrance of the cave at Brignall—the firing of Rokeby Castle—and the catastrophe in Eglistone Abbey;—in spite certainly of exquisitely happy lines profusely scattered throughout the whole composition, and of some detached images—that of the setting of the tropical sun,* for example—which were never surpassed by any poet; in spite of all these merits, the immediate success of Rokeby was greatly inferior to that of the Lady of the Lake; nor has it ever since been so much a favourite with the public at large as any other of his poetical romances. He ascribes this failure, in his introduction of 1830, partly to the radically unpoetical character of the Roundheads; but surely their character has its poetical side also, had his prejudices allowed him to enter upon its study with impartial sympathy; and I doubt not, Mr. Morritt suggested the difficulty on this score, when the outline of the story was as yet undetermined, from consideration rather of the poet's peculiar feelings, and powers as hitherto exhibited, than of the subject absolutely. Partly he blames the satiety of the public ear, which had had so much of his rhythm, not only from himself, but from dozens of mocking birds, male and female, all more or less applauded in their day, and now all equally forgotten.† This circumstance, too, had probably no slender effect; the more that, in defiance of all the hints of his friends, he now, in his narrative, repeated (with more negligence) the uniform octosyllabic couplets of the Lady of the Lake, instead of recurring to the more varied cadence of the Lay or Marmion. It is fair to add that, among the London circles at least, some sarcastic flings in Mr. Moore's "Twopenny Post Bag" must have had an unfavourable influence on this occasion.* But the cause of failure which the Poet himself places last, was unquestionably the main one. The deeper and darker passion of Childe Harold, the audacity of its morbid voluptuousness, and the melancholy majesty of the numbers in which it defied the world, had taken the general imagination by storm; and Rokeby, with many beauties and some sublimities, was pitched, as a whole, on a key which seemed tame in the comparison.

I have already adverted to the fact that Scott felt it a relief, not a fatigue, to compose the Bridal of Triermain *pari passu* with Rokeby. In answer, for example, to one of James Ballantyne's letters, urging accelerated speed with the weightier romance, he says, "I fully share in your anxiety to get forward the grand work; but, I assure you, I feel the more confidence from coquetting with the guerilla."

The quarto of Rokeby was followed, within two months, by the small volume which had been designed for a twin-birth;—the MS. had been transcribed by one of the Ballantynes themselves, in order to guard against any indiscretion of the press-people; and the mystification, aided and abetted by Erskine, in no small degree heightened the interest of its reception. Except Mr. Morritt, Scott had, so far as I am aware, no English confidant upon this occasion. Whether any of his daily companions in the Parliament House were in the secret, I have never heard; but I can scarcely believe that any of those intimate friends, who had known him and Erskine from their youth upwards, could have for a moment believed the latter capable either of the invention or the execution of this airy and fascinating romance in little. Mr. Jeffrey, for whom chiefly "the trap had been set," was far too sagacious to be caught in it; but, as it happened, he made a voyage that year to America, and thus lost the opportunity of immediately expressing his opinion either of Rokeby or of the Bridal of Triermain. The writer in the Quarterly Review seems to have been completely deceived—"We have already spoken of it," says the critic, "as an imitation of Mr. Scott's style of composition; and if we are compelled to make the general approbation more precise and specific, we should say, that if it be inferior in vigour to some of his productions, it equals or surpasses them in elegance and beauty; that it is more uniformly tender, and far less infected with the unnatural prodigies and coarseness of the earlier romances. In estimating its merits, however, we should forget that it is offered as an imitation. The diction undoubtedly reminds us of a rhythm and cadence we have heard before; but the sentiments, descriptions, and characters, have qualities that are native and unborrowed."—*Quarterly Review, July*, 1813.

If this writer was, as I suppose, Ellis, he probably considered it as a thing impossible that Scott should have engaged in such a scheme without giving him a hint of it; but to have admitted into the secret any one who was likely to criticise the piece, would have been to sacrifice the very object of the device. Erskine's own suggestion, that "perhaps a quizzical review might be got up," led, I believe, to nothing more important than a paragraph in one of the Edinburgh newspapers. He may be pardoned for having been not a little flattered to find it generally considered as not impossible that he should have written such a poem; and I have heard Ballantyne say, that nothing could be more amusing than the style of his coquetting on the subject while it was

* "My noontide, India may declare;
Like her fierce sun, I fired the air!
Like him, to wood and cave bade fly
Her natives, from mine angry eye.
And now, my race of terror run,
Mine be the eve of tropic sun!
No pale gradations quench his ray,
No twilight dews his wrath allay;
With disk like battle-target red,
He rushes to his burning bed,
Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once—and all is night."—*Canto* vi. 21.

† "Scott found peculiar favour and imitation among the fair sex. There was Miss Halford, and Miss Mitford, and Miss Francis; but with the greatest respect be it spoken, none of its imitators did much honour to the original, except Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, until the appearance of 'The Bridal of Triermain' and 'Harold the Dauntless,' which, in the opinion of some, equalled if not surpassed him; and, lo! after three or four years, they turned out to be the master's own compositions."—BYRON, vol. xv. p. 96.

* See, for instance, the Epistle of Lady Corke—or that of Messrs. Lackington, booksellers, to one of their dandy authors—

"Should you feel any touch of *poetical* glow
We've a scheme to suggest—Mr. Scott, you must know,
(Who, we're sorry to say it, now works for the *Row*,)
Having quitted the Borders to seek new renown,
Is coming by long Quarto stages to town,
And beginning with Rokeby, (the job's sure to pay,)
Means to do all the gentlemen's seats on the way.
Now the scheme is, though none of our hackneys can beat him,
To start a new Post through Highgate to meet him;
Who by means of quick proofs—no revises—long coaches—
May do a few Villas before Scott approaches;
Indeed if our Pegasus be not surat shabby,
He'll reach, without foundering, at least Woburn-Abbey," &c. &c.

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yet fresh; but when this first excitement was over, his natural feeling of what was due to himself, as well as to his friend, dictated many a remonstrance; and, though he ultimately acquiesced in permitting another minor romance to be put forth in the same manner, he did so reluctantly, and was far from acting his part so well.

Scott says, in the Introduction to the Lord of the Isles, "As Mr. Erskine was more than suspected of a taste for poetry, and as I took care, in several places, to mix something that might resemble (as far as was in my power) my friend's feeling and manner, the train easily caught, and two large editions were sold." Among the passages to which he here alludes, are no doubt those in which the character of the minstrel Arthur is shaded with the colourings of an almost effeminate gentleness. Yet, in the midst of them, the "mighty minstrel" himself, from time to time, escapes; as, for instance, where the lover bids Lucy, in that exquisite picture of crossing a mountain stream, trust to his "stalwart arm"—

"Which could yon oak's prone trunk uprear."

Nor can I pass the compliment to Scott's own fair patroness, where Lucy's admirer is made to confess, with some momentary lapse of gallantry, that he

"Ne'er won—best meed to minstrel true—
One favouring smile from fair Bucoleuch;"

nor the burst of genuine Borderism,—

"Bewcastle now must keep the hold,
Speir-Adam's steeds must bide in stall;
Of Hartley burn the bowmen bold
Must only shoot from battled wall;
And Liddesdale may buckle spur,
And Teviot now may belt the brand,
Taras and Ewes keep nightly stir,
And Eskdale foray Cumberland.'—

But, above all, the choice of the scenery, both of the Introductions and of the story itself, reveals the early and treasured predilections of the poet. For who that remembers the circumstances of his first visit to the vale of St. John, but must see throughout the impress of his own real romance? I own I am not without a suspicion that, in one passage, which always seemed to me a blot upon the composition—that in which Arthur derides the military coxcombries of his rival—

"Who comes in foreign trashery
Of tinkling chain and spur—
A walking haberdashery
Of feathers, lace, and fur;—
In Rowley's antiquated phrase,
Horse-milliner of modern days;"

there is a sly reference to the incidents of a certain ball, of August, 1797, at the Gilsland Spa.*

Among the more prominent Erskinisms, are the eulogistic mention of Glasgow, the scene of Erskine's education; and the lines on Colline,—a supplement to whose Ode on the Highland Superstitions is, as far as I know, the only specimen that ever was published of Erskine's verse.†

As a whole, the Bridal of Triermain appears to me as characteristic of Scott as any of his larger poems. His genius pervades and animates it beneath a thin and playful veil, which perhaps adds as much of grace as it takes away of splendour. As Wordsworth says of the eclipse on the lake of Lugano—

"'Tis sunlight sheathed and gently charmed;"

and I think there is at once a lightness and a polish of versification beyond what he has elsewhere attained. If it be a miniature, it is such a one as a Cooper might have hung fearlessly beside the masterpieces of Vandyke.

The Introductions contain some of the most exquisite passages he ever produced; but their general effect has always struck me as unfortunate. No art can reconcile us to contemptuous satire of the merest frivolities of modern life—some of them already, in twenty years, grown obsolete—interlaid between such bright visions of the old world of romance, when

"Strength was gigantic, valour high,
And wisdom soared beyond the sky,
And beauty had such matchless beam
As lights not now a lover's dream."

The fall is grievous, from the hoary minstrel of Newark, and his feverish tears on Killiecrankie, to a pathetic swain, who can stoop to denounce as objects of his jealousy—

"The landaulet and four blood bays—
The Hessian boot and pantaloon."

Before Triermain came out, Scott had taken wing for Abbotsford; and indeed he seems to have so contrived it in his earlier period, that he should not be in Edinburgh when any unavowed work of his was published; whereas, from the first in the case of books that bore his name on the title-page, he walked as usual to the Parliament House, and bore all the buzz and tattle of friends and acquaintance with an air of good-humoured equanimity, or rather total apparent indifference. The following letter, which contains some curious matter of more kinds than one, was written partly in town and partly in the country:—

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Edinburgh, March 13th, 1812.

"My dearest Friend,

"The pinasters have arrived safe, and I can hardly regret, while I am so much flattered by the trouble you have had in collecting them. I have got some wild larch trees from Loch Katrine, and both are to be planted next week, when, God willing, I shall be at Abbotsford to superintend the operation. I have got a little corner of ground laid out for a nursery, where I shall rear them carefully till they are old enough to be set forth to push their fortune on the banks of Tweed.—What I shall finally make of this villa-work I don't know, but in the mean time it is very entertaining. I shall have to resist very flattering invitations this season; for I have received hints, from more quarters than one, that my bow would be acceptable at Carlton House in case I should be in London, which is very flattering, especially as there were some prejudices to be got over in that quarter. I should be in some danger of giving new offence, too; for, although I utterly disapprove of the present rash and ill-advised course of the princess, yet, as she always was most kind and civil to me, I certainly could not, as a gentleman, decline obeying any commands she might give me to wait upon her, especially in her present adversity. So, though I do not affect to say I should be sorry to take an opportunity of peeping at the splendours of royalty, prudence and economy will keep me quietly at home till another day. My great amusement here this some time past has been going almost nightly to see John Kemble, who certainly is a great artist. It is a pity he shows too much of his machinery. I wish he could be double-capped, as they say of watches;—but the fault of too much study certainly does not belong to many of his tribe. He is, I think, very great in those parts especially where character is tinged by some acquired and systematic habits, like those of the Stoic philosophy in Cato and Brutus, or of misanthropy in Penruddock: but sudden turns and natural bursts of passion are not his forte. I saw him play Sir Giles Overreach (the Richard III. of middling life) last night; but he came not within a hundred miles of Cooke, whose terrible visage, and short, abrupt, and savage utterance, gave a reality almost to that extraordinary scene in which he boasts of his own successful villany to a nobleman of worth and honour, of whose alliance he is ambitious. Cooke contrived somehow to impress upon the audience the idea of such a monster of enormity as had learned to pique himself even upon his own atrocious character. But Kemble was too handsome, too plausible, and too smooth, to admit its being probable that he should be blind to the unfavourable impression which these extraordinary vaunts are likely to make on the person whom he is so anxious to conciliate.

"Abbotsford, 21st March.

"This letter, begun in Edinburgh, is to take wing from Abbotsford. John Winnos (now John Winnos is the suboracle of Abbotsford, the principal being Tom Purdie)—John Winnos pronounces that the pinaster seed ought to

* See *ante*, p. 61.

† It is included in the Border Minstrelsy, Scott's Poetical Works, vol. i. p. 270.

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be raised at first on a hot-bed, and thence transplanted to a nursery: so to a hot-bed they have been carefully consigned, the upper oracle not objecting, in respect his talent lies in catching a salmon, or finding a hare sitting—on which occasions (being a very complete Scrub) he solemnly exchanges his working jacket for an old green one of mine, and takes the air of one of Robin Hood's followers. His more serious employments are ploughing, harrowing, and overseeing all my premises; being a complete jack-of-all-trades, from the carpenter to the shepherd, nothing comes strange to him; and being extremely honest, and somewhat of a humourist, he is quite my right hand. I cannot help singing his praises at this moment, because I have so many odd and out-of-the-way things to do, that I believe the conscience of many of our jog-trot countrymen would revolt at being made my instrument in sacrificing good corn-land to the visions of Mr. Price's theory. Mr. Pinkerton, the historian, has a play coming out at Edinburgh; it is by no means bad poetry, yet I think it will not be popular; the people come and go, and speak very notable things in good blank verse, but there is no very strong interest excited: the plot also is disagreeable, and liable to the objections (though in a less degree) which have been urged against the Mysterious Mother: it is to be acted on Wednesday; I will let you know its fate. P., with whom I am in good habits, showed me the MS., but I referred him, with such praise as I could conscientiously bestow, to the players and the public. I don't know why one should take the task of damning a man's play out of the hands of the proper tribunal. Adieu, my dear friend. I have scarce room for love to Miss, Mrs. and Dr. B

W. Scott."

To this I add a letter to Lady Louisa Stuart, who had sent him a copy of these lines, found by Lady Douglas on the back of a tattered bank note—

"Farewell, my note, and wheresoe'er ye wend,
Shun gaudy scenes, and be the poor man's friend.
You've left a poor one, go to one as poor,
And drive despair and hunger from his door."

It appears that these noble friends had adopted, or feigned to adopt, the belief that the Bridal of Triermain was a production of Mr. R. P. Gillies—who had about this time published an imitation of Lord Byron's *Romaunt*, under the title of "Childe Alaraque."

To the Lady Louisa Stuart, &c. &c. &c. Bothwell Castle.

"Abbotsford, 28th April, 1813.

"Dear Lady Louisa,

"Nothing can give me more pleasure than to hear from you, because it is both a most acceptable favour to me, and also a sign that your own spirits are recovering their tone. Ladies are, I think, very fortunate in having a resource in work at a time when the mind rejects intellectual amusement. Men have no resource but striding up and down the room, like a bird that beats itself to pieces against the bars of its cage; whereas needle-work is a sort of sedative, too mechanical to worry the mind by distracting it from the points on which its musings turn, yet gradually assisting it in regaining steadiness and composure; for so curiously are our bodies and minds linked together, that the regular and constant employment of the former on any process, however dull and uniform, has the effect of tranquillizing, where it cannot disarm, the feelings of the other. I am very much pleased with the lines on the guinea note, and if Lady Douglas does not object, I would willingly mention the circumstance in the Edinburgh Annual Register. I think it will give the author great delight to know that his lines had attracted attention, and *had* sent the paper on which they were recorded, 'heaven-directed, to the poor.' Of course I would mention no names. There was, as your Ladyship may remember, some years since, a most audacious and determined murder committed on a porter belonging to the British Linen Company's Bank at Leith, who was stabbed to the heart in broad daylight, and robbed of a large sum in notes.* If ever this crime comes to light, it will be through the circumstance of an idle young fellow having written part of a playhouse song on one of the notes, which, however, has as yet never appeared in circulation.

"I am very glad you like Rokeby, which is nearly out of fashion and memory with me. It has been wonderfully popular, about ten thousand copies having walked off already, in about three months, and the demand continuing faster than it can be supplied. As to my imitator, the Knight of Triermain, I will endeavour to convey to Mr. Gillies (*jusique Gillies il est*) your Ladyship's very just strictures on the Introduction to the second Canto. But if he takes the opinion of a hacked old author like myself, he will content himself with avoiding such bevues in future, without attempting to mend those which are already made. There is an ominous old proverb which says, *confess and be hunged*; and truly if an author acknowledges his own blunders, I do not know who he can expect to stand by him; whereas, let him confess nothing, and he will always find some injudicious admirers to vindicate even his faults. So that I think after publication the effect of criticism should be prospective, in which point of view I dare say Mr. G. will take your friendly hint, especially as it is confirmed by that of the best judges who have read the poem. Here is beautiful weather for April: an absolute snow-storm mortifying me to the core by retarding the growth of all my young trees and shrubs. Charlotte begs to be most respectfully remembered to your Ladyship and Lady D. We are realizing the nursery tale of the man and his wife who lived in a vinegar bottle, for our only sitting room is just twelve feet square, and my Eve alleges that I am too big for our paradise. To make amends, I have created a tolerable garden, occupying about an English acre, which I begin to be very fond of. When one passes forty, an addition to the quiet occupations of life becomes of real value, for I do not hunt and fish with quite the relish I did ten years ago. Adieu, my dear Lady Louisa, and all good attend you.

Walter Scott."

* This murder, perpetrated in November, 1806, remains a mystery in 1838.

CHAPTER XXV.

AFFAIRS OF JOHN BALLANTYNE AND CO.—CAUSES OF THEIR DERANGEMENT—LETTERS OF SCOTT TO HIS PARTNERS—NEGOTIATION FOR RELIEF WITH MESSRS. CONSTABLE—NEW PURCHASE OF LAND AT ABBOTSFORD—EMBARRASSMENTS CONTINUED—JOHN BALLANTYNE'S EXPRESSES—DÜMLANRIG—PENRITH, ETC.—SCOTT'S MEETING WITH THE MARQUIS OF ABERCORN AT LONGTOWN—HIS APPLICATION TO THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—OFFER OF THE POET-LAUREATESHIP—CONSIDERED—AND DECLINED—ADDRESS OF THE CITY OF EDINBURGH TO THE PRINCE-REGENT—ITS RECEPTION—CIVIC HONOURS CONFERRED ON SCOTT—QUESTION OF TAXATION ON LITERARY INCOME—LETTERS TO MR. MORRITT—MR. SOUTHEY—MR. RICHARDSON—MR. CRABBE—MISS BAILLIE AND LORD BYRON—1813.

About a month after the publication of the Bridal of Triermain, the affairs of the Messrs. Ballantyne, which had never apparently been in good order since the establishment of the bookselling firm, became so embarrassed as to call for Scott's most anxious efforts to disentangle them. Indeed, it is clear that there had existed some very serious perplexity in the course of the preceding autumn; for Scott writes to John Ballantyne, while Rokeby was in progress (August 11, 1812)—"I have a letter from James, very anxious about your health and state of spirits. If you suffer the present inconveniences to depress you too much, you are wrong; and if you conceal any part of them, are very unjust to us all. I am always ready to make any sacrifices to do justice to engagements, and would rather sell any thing, or every thing, than be less than true men to the world."

I have already, perhaps, said enough to account for the general want of success in this publishing adventure; but Mr. James Ballantyne sums up the case so briefly in his death-bed paper, that I may here quote his words. "My brother," he says, "though an active and pushing, was not a cautious bookseller, and the large sums received never formed an addition to stock. In fact, they were all expended by the partners, who, being then young and sanguine men, not unwillingly adopted my brother's hasty results. By May, 1813, in a word, the absolute throwing away of our own most valuable publications, and the rash adoption of some injudicious speculations of Mr. Scott, had introduced such losses and embarrassments, that after a very careful consideration, Mr. Scott determined to dissolve the concern." He adds,—"This became a matter of less difficulty, because time had in a great measure worn away the differences between Mr. Scott and Mr. Constable, and Mr. Hunter was now out

of Constable's concern.* A peace, therefore, was speedily made up, and the old habits of intercourse were restored."

How reluctantly Scott had made up his mind to open such a negotiation with Constable, as involved a complete exposure of the mismanagement of John Ballantyne's business as a publisher, will appear from a letter dated about the Christmas of 1812, in which he says to James, who had proposed asking Constable to take a share both in Rokeby and in the Annual Register, "You must be aware, that in stating the objections which occur to me to taking in Constable, I think they ought to give way either to absolute necessity or to very strong grounds of advantage. But I *am* persuaded nothing ultimately good can be expected from any connexion with that house, unless for those who have a mind to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. We will talk the matter coolly over, and in the mean while, perhaps you could see W. Erskine, and learn what impression this odd union is like to made among your friends. Erskine is sound-headed, and quite to be trusted with *your whole story*. I must own I can hardly think the purchase of the Register is equal to the loss of credit and character which your surrender will be conceived to infer." At the time when he wrote this, Scott no doubt anticipated that Rokeby would have success not less decisive than the Lady of the Lake; but in this expectation—though 10,000 copies in three months would have seemed to any other author a triumphant sale—he had been disappointed. And meanwhile the difficulties of the firm, accumulating from week to week, had reached, by the middle of May, a point which rendered it absolutely necessary for him to conquer all his scruples.

Mr. Cadell, then Constable's partner, says in his *Memoranda*—"Prior to this time the reputation of John Ballantyne and Co. had been decidedly on the decline. It was notorious in the trade that their general speculations had been unsuccessful; they were known to be grievously in want of money. These rumours were realized to the full by an application which Messrs. B. made to Mr. Constable in May, 1813, for pecuniary aid, accompanied by an offer of some of the books they had published since 1809, as a purchase, along with various shares in Mr. Scott's own poems. Their difficulties were admitted, and the negotiation was pressed urgently; so much so, that a pledge was given, that if the terms asked were acceded to, John Ballantyne and Co. would endeavour to wind up their concerns, and cease, as soon as possible, to be publishers." Mr. Cadell adds:—"I need hardly remind you that this was a period of very great general difficulty in the money market. It was the crisis of the war. The public expenditure had reached an enormous height; and even the most prosperous mercantile houses were often pinched to sustain their credit. It may easily, therefore, be supposed that the Messrs. Ballantyne had during many months besieged every banker's door in Edinburgh, and that their agents had done the like in London."

The most important of the requests which the labouring house made to Constable was, that he should forthwith take entirely to himself the stock, copyright, and future management of the Edinburgh Annual Register. Upon examining the state of this book, however, Constable found that the loss on it had never been less than £1000 per annum, and he therefore declined that matter for the present. He promised, however, to consider seriously the means he might have of ultimately relieving them from the pressure of the Register, and, in the mean time, offered to take 300 sets of the stock on hand. The other purchases he finally made on the 18th of May, were considerable portions of Weber's unhappy Beaumont and Fletcher—of an edition of Defoe's novels, in twelve volumes—of a collection entitled Tales of the East, in three large volumes, 8vo, double columned—and of another in one volume, called Popular Tales—about 800 copies of the Vision of Don Roderick—and a fourth of the remaining copyright of Rokeby, price £700. The immediate accommodation thus received amounted to £2000; and Scott, who had personally conducted the latter part of the negotiation, writes thus to his junior partner, who had gone a week or two earlier to London in quest of some similar assistance there:—

To Mr. John Ballantyne, care of Messrs. Longman & Co., London.

"Printing-office, May 18, 1813.

"Dear John,

"After many *offs* and *ons*, and as many *projets* and *contre-projets* as the treaty of Amiens, I have at length concluded a treaty with Constable, in which I am sensible he has gained a great advantage;* but what could I do amidst the disorder and pressure of so many demands? The arrival of your long-dated bills decided my giving in, for what could James or I do with them? I trust this sacrifice has cleared our way, but many rubs remain; nor am I, after these hard skirmishes, so able to meet them by my proper credit. Constable, however, will be a zealous ally; and for the first time these many weeks I shall lay my head on a quiet pillow, for now I do think that, by our joint exertions, we shall get well through the storm, save Beaumont from depreciation, get a partner in our heavy concerns, reef our topsails, and move on securely under an easy sail. And if, on the one hand, I have sold my gold too cheap, I have, on the other, turned my lead to gold. Brewster† and Singers‡ are the only heavy things to which I have not given a blue eye. Had your news of Cadell's sales§ reached us here, I could not have harpooned my grampus so deeply as I have done, as nothing but Rokeby would have barbed the hook.

"Adieu, my dear John. I have the most sincere regard for you, and you may depend on my considering your interest with quite as much attention as my own. If I have ever expressed myself with irritation in speaking of this business, you must impute it to the sudden, extensive, and unexpected embarrassments in which I found myself involved all at once. If to your real goodness of heart and integrity, and to the quickness and acuteness of your talents, you added habits of more universal circumspection, and, above all, the courage to tell disagreeable truths to those whom you hold in regard, I pronounce that the world never held such a man of business. These it must be your study to add to your other good qualities. Mean time, as some one says to Swift, I love you with all your failings. Pray make an effort and love me with all mine. Yours truly,

W. S."

Three days afterwards, Scott resumes the subject as follows:—

To Mr. John Ballantyne, London.

"Edinburgh, 21st May, 1813.

"Dear John,

"Let it never escape your recollection, that shutting your own eyes, or blinding those of your friends, upon the actual state of business, is the high road to ruin. Meanwhile, we have recovered our legs for a week or two. Constable will, I think, come in to the Register. He is most anxious to maintain the printing-office; he sees most truly that the more we print the less we publish; and for the same reason he will, I think, help us off with our heavy quire-stock.

"I was aware of the distinction between the *state* and the *calendar*, as to the latter including the printing-office bills, and I summed and dooked them, (they are marked with red ink,) but there is still a difference of £2000 and upwards on the calendar against the business. I sometimes fear that, between the long dates of your bills, and the tardy settlements of the Edinburgh trade, some difficulties will occur even in June; and July I always regard with deep anxiety. As for loss, if I get out without public exposure, I shall not greatly regard the rest. Radcliffe the physician said, when he lost £2000 on the South-Sea scheme, it was only going up 2000 pair of stairs; I say, it is only writing 2000 couplets, and the account is balanced. More of this hereafter. Yours truly,

W. Scott.

* Mr. Hunter died in March, 1812.

* "These and after purchases of books from the stock of J. Ballantyne and Co. were resold to the trade by Constable's firm at less than one half and one third of the prices at which they were thus obtained."—*Note from Mr. R. Cadell.*

† Dr. Brewster's edition of Ferguson's Astronomy, 2 vols. 8vo. with plates, 4to. Edin. 1811. 36s.

‡ Dr. Singers' General View of the County of Dumfries, 8vo. Edin. 1812. 18s.

§ A trade sale of Messrs. Cadell and Davies in the Strand.

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P. S. James has behaved very well during this whole exercise, and has been most steadily attentive to business. I am convinced that the more he works the better health will be. One or other of you will need to be steadily in the printing-office henceforward—it is the best anchor."

The allusion in this *postscript* to James Ballantyne's health, reminds me that Scott's letters to him are full of hints on that subject, even from a very early period of their connexion; and these hints are all to the same effect. James was a man of sedentary habits, and not a little addicted to the more solid, and perhaps more dangerous, part of the indulgences of the table. One letter (dated Ashestiel, 1810) will be a sufficient specimen :—

To Mr. James Ballantyne.

"My dear James,

"I am very sorry for the state of your health, and should be still more so, were I not certain that I can prescribe for you as well as any physician in Edinburgh. You have naturally an athletic constitution and a hearty stomach, and these agree very ill with a sedentary life, and the habits of indolence which it brings on. Your stomach thus gets weak, and from those complaints of all sorts arise most certainly flatulence, hypochondria, and all the train of unpleasant feelings connected with indigestion. We all know the horrible sensation of the nightmare arises from the same cause which gives those waking nightmares commonly called the blue devils. You must positively put yourself on a regimen as to eating, not for a month or two, but for a year at least, and take regular exercise—and my life for yours. I know this by myself, for if I were to eat and drink in town as I do here, it would soon finish me, and yet I am sensible I live too genially in Edinburgh as it is. Yours, very truly,

W. Scott."

Among Scott's early pets at Abbotsford there was a huge raven, whose powers of speech were remarkable, far beyond any parrot's that he had ever met with; and who died in consequence of an excess of the kind to which James Ballantyne was addicted. Thenceforth, Scott often repeated to his old friend, and occasionally scribbled by way of postscript to his notes on business—

"When you are craving,
Remember the Raven."

Sometimes the formula is varied to—

"When you've dined half,
Think on poor Ralph!"

His preachments of regularity in book-keeping to John, and of abstinence from good cheer to James Ballantyne, were equally vain; but on the other hand it must be allowed that they had some reason for displeasure—(the more felt because they durst not, like him, express their feelings)—when they found that scarcely had these "hard skirmishes" terminated in the bargain of May 18th, before Scott was preparing fresh embarrassments for himself, by commencing a negotiation for a considerable addition to his property at Abbotsford. As early as the 20th of June, he writes to Constable as being already aware of this matter, and alleges his anxiety "to close at once with a very capricious person," as the only reason that could have induced him to make up his mind to sell the whole copyright of an as yet unwritten poem, to be entitled "The Nameless Glen." This copyright he then offered to dispose of to Constable for £5000; adding, "this is considerably less in proportion than I have already made on the share of Rokeby sold to yourself, and surely that is no unfair admeasurement." A long correspondence ensued, in the course of which Scott mentions "the Lord of the Isles," as a title which had suggested itself to him in place of "the Nameless Glen;" but as the negotiation did not succeed, I may pass its details. The new property which Scott was so eager to acquire, was that hilly tract stretching from the old Roman road near Turn-again towards the Cauldshiels Loch: a then desolate and naked mountain-mere, which he likens, in a letter of this summer, (to Lady Louisa Stuart,) to the Lake of the Genie and the Fisherman in the Arabian Tale. To obtain this lake at one extremity of his estate, as a contrast to the Tweed at the other, was a prospect for which hardly any sacrifice would have appeared too much; and he contrived to gratify his wishes in the course of that July, to which he had spoken of himself in May as looking forward "with the deepest anxiety."

Nor was he, I must add, more able to control some of his minor tastes. I find him writing to Mr. Terry, on the 20th of June, about "that splendid lot of ancient armour, advertised by Winstanley," a celebrated auctioneer in London, of which he had the strongest fancy to make his spoil, though he was at a loss to know where it should be placed when it reached Abbotsford; and on the 2d of July, this acquisition also having been settled, he says to the same correspondent—"I have written to Mr. Winstanley. My bargain with Constable was otherwise arranged, but Little John is to find the needful article, and I shall take care of Mr. Winstanley's interest, who has behaved too handsomely in this matter to be trusted to the mercy of our little friend the Picaroon, who is, notwithstanding his many excellent qualities, a little on the score of old Gobbo—doth somewhat smack—somewhat grow to. We shall be at Abbotsford on the 12th, and hope soon to see you there. I am fitting up a small room above *Peter-house*, where an unceremonious bachelor may consent to do penance, though the place is a cock-loft, and the access that which leads many a bold fellow to his last nap—a ladder."* And a few weeks later, he says, in the same sort, to his sister-in-law, Mrs. Thomas Scott, "In despite of these hard times, which affect my patrons the booksellers very much, I am buying old books and old armour as usual, and adding to what your old friend† Burns calls—

'A fouth of auld nick-nackets,
Rusty airn caps and jingling jackets,
Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets
A towmont gude,
And parritch-pats and auld saut-backets,
Afore the flude.'"

Notwithstanding all this, it must have been with a most uneasy mind that he left Edinburgh to establish himself at Abbotsford that July. The assistance of Constable had not been granted, indeed it had not been asked, to an extent at all adequate for the difficulties of the case; and I have now to transcribe, with pain and reluctance, some extracts from Scott's letters, during the ensuing autumn, which speak the language of anxious, and indeed humiliating distress; and give a most lively notion of the incurable recklessness of his younger partner.

To Mr. John Ballantyne.

"Abbotsford, Saturday, 24th July

"Dear John,

"I sent you the order, and have only to hope it arrived safe and in good time. I waked the boy at three o'clock myself, having slept little, less on account of the money than of the time. Surely you should have written, three or four days before, the probable amount of the deficit, and, as on former occasions, I would have furnished you with means of meeting it. These expresses, besides every other inconvenience, excite surprise in my family and in the neighbourhood. I know no justifiable occasion for them but the unexpected return of a bill. I do not consider you as answerable for the success of plans, but I do and must hold you responsible for giving me, in distinct and plain terms, your opinion as to any difficulties which may occur, and that in such time that I may make arrangements to obviate them if possible.

"Of course if any thing has gone wrong you will come out here to-morrow. But if, as I hope and trust, the cash

* The court of offices, built on the *haugh* at Abbotsford in 1812, included a house for the faithful coachman, Peter Mathieson. One of Scott's Cantabrigian friends, Mr. W. S. Rose, gave the whole pile soon afterwards the name, which it retained to the end, of *Peter-House*. The loft at Peter House continued to be occupied by occasional bachelor guests until the existing mansion was completed.

† Mrs. Thomas Scott had met Burns frequently in early life at Dumfries. Her brother, the late Mr. David MacCulloch, was a great favourite with the poet, and the best singer of his songs that I ever heard.

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arrived safe, you will write to me, under cover to the Duke of Buccleuch, Drumlanrig Castle, Dumfries-shire. I shall set out for that place on Monday morning early.

W. S."

To Mr. James Ballantyne

"Abbotsford, 25th July, 1813.

"Dear James,

"I address the following jocation for John to you, that you may see whether I do not well to be angry, and enforce upon him the necessity of constantly writing his fears as well as his hopes. You should rub him often on this point, for his recollection becomes rusty the instant I leave town, and am not in the way to rack him with constant questions. I hope the presses are doing well, and that you are quite stout again. Yours truly,

W. S."

Enclosure.—To Mr. John Ballantyne.

"My good friend John,

"The post brings me no letter from you, which I am much surprised at, as you must suppose me anxious to learn that your express arrived. I think he must have reached you before post-hours, and James or you *might* have found a minute to say so in a single line. I once more request that you will be a business-like correspondent, and state your provisions for every week prospectively. I do not expect you to *warrant them*, which you rather perversely seem to insist is my wish, but I do want to be aware of their nature and extent, that I may provide against the possibility of miscarriage. The calendar, to which you refer me, tells me what sums are due, but cannot tell your shifts to pay them, which are naturally altering with circumstances, and of which alterations I request to have due notice. You say you *could not suppose* Sir W. Forbes would have refused the long dated bills; but that you *had* such an apprehension is clear, both because in the calendar these bills were rated two months lower, and because, three days before, you wrote me an enigmatical expression of your apprehensions, instead of saying plainly there was a chance of your wanting £350, when I would have sent you an order to be used conditionally.

"All I desire is unlimited confidence and frequent correspondence, and that you will give me weekly at least the fullest anticipation of your resources, and the probability of their being effectual. I may be disappointed in my own, of which you shall have equally timeous notice. Omit no exertions to procure the use of money, even for a month or six weeks, for time is most precious. The large balance due in January from the trade, and individuals, which I cannot reckon at less than £4000, will put us finally to rights; and it will be a shame to founder within sight of harbour. The greatest risk we run is from such ill-considered despatches as those of Friday. Suppose that I had gone to Drumlanrig—suppose the poney had set up—suppose a thousand things—and we were ruined for want of your telling your apprehensions in due time. Do not plague yourself to vindicate this sort of management; but if you have escaped the consequences, (as to which you have left me uncertain,) thank God, and act more cautiously another time. It was quite the same to me on what day I sent that draft; indeed it must have been so if I had the money in my cash account, and if I had not, the more time given me to provide it the better.

"Now, do not affect to suppose that my displeasure arises from your not having done your utmost to realize funds, and that utmost having failed. It is one mode, to be sure, of exculpation, to suppose one's self accused of something they are not charged with, and then to make a querulous or indignant defence, and complain of the injustice of the accuser. The head and front of your offending is precisely your not writing explicitly, and I request this may not happen again. It is your fault, and I believe arises either from an ill-judged idea of smoothing matters to me—as if I were not behind the curtain—or a general reluctance to allow that any danger is near, until it is almost unparriable. I shall be very sorry if any thing I have said gives you pain; but the matter is too serious for all of us to be passed over without giving you my explicit sentiments. To-morrow I set out for Drumlanrig, and shall not hear from you till Tuesday or Wednesday. Make yourself master of the post-town—Thornhill, probably, or Sanquhar. As Sir W. F. & Co. have cash to meet my order, nothing, I think, can have gone wrong, unless the boy perished by the way. Therefore, in faith and hope, and—that I may lack none of the Christian virtues—in charity with your dilatory worship, I remain very truly yours,

W. S."

Scott proceeded, accordingly, to join a gay and festive circle, whom the Duke of Buccleuch had assembled about him on first taking possession of the magnificent Castle of Drumlanrig, in Nithsdale, the principal messuage of the dukedom of Queensberry, which had recently lapsed into his family. But *post equitem sedet atra cura*—another of John Ballantyne's unwelcome missives, rendered necessary by a neglect of precisely the same kind as before, reached him in the midst of this scene of rejoicing. On the 31st, he again writes:—

To Mr. John Ballantyne, Bookseller, Edinburgh.

"Drumlanrig, Friday.

"Dear John

"I enclose the order. Unfortunately, the Drumlanrig post only goes thrice-a-week; but the Marquis of Queensberry, who carries this to Dumfries, has promised that the guard of the mail-coach shall deliver it by five to-morrow. I was less anxious, as your note said you could clear this month. It is a cruel thing, that no State you furnish excludes the arising of such unexpected claims as this for the taxes on the printing-office. What unhappy management, to suffer them to run ahead in such a manner!—but it is in vain to complain. Were it not for your strange concealments, I should anticipate no difficulty in winding up these matters. But who can reckon upon a State where claims are kept out of view until they are in the hands of a *writer?* If you have no time to say that *this* comes safe to hand, I suppose James may favour me so far. Yours truly,

W. S.

"Let the guard be rewarded.

"Let me know exactly what you *can* do and *hope* to do for next month; for it signifies nothing raising money for you, unless I see it is to be of real service. Observe, I make you responsible for nothing but a fair statement. The guard is known to the Marquis, who has good-naturedly promised to give him this letter with his own hand; so it must reach you in time, though probably past five on Saturday."

Another similar application reached Scott the day after the guard delivered his packet. He writes thus, in reply:—

To Mr. John Ballantyne,

"Drumlanrig, Sunday.

"Dear John,

"I trust you got my letter yesterday by five, with the draft enclosed. I return your draft accepted. On Wednesday I think of leaving this place, where, but for these damned affairs, I should have been very happy.

W. S."

Scott had been for some time under an engagement to meet the Marquis of Abercorn at Carlisle, in the first week of August, for the transaction of some business connected with his brother Thomas's late administration of that nobleman's Scottish affairs, and he had designed to pass from Drumlanrig to Carlisle for this purpose, without going back to Abbotsford. In consequence of these repeated harassments, however, he so far altered his plans as to cut short his stay at Drumlanrig, and turn homewards for two or three days, where James Ballantyne met him with such a statement as in some measure relieved his mind.

He then proceeded to fulfil his engagement with Lord Abercorn, whom he encountered travelling in a very peculiar style between Carlisle and Longtown. The ladies of the family and the household occupied four or five carriages, all drawn by the Marquis's own horses, while the noble Lord himself brought up the rear, mounted on a small pony, but decorated over his riding dress with the ribbon and star of the Garter. On meeting the cavalcade, Scott turned with them, and he was not a little amused when they reached the village of Longtown, which he had ridden through an hour or two before, with the preparations which he found there made for the dinner of the party. The Marquis's majordomo and cook had arrived there at an early hour in the morning, and every thing was now arranged for his reception in the paltry little public-house, as nearly as possible in the style usual in his own lordly mansions. The ducks and geese that had been dabbling three or four hours ago in the village-pond, were now ready to make their appearance under numberless disguises as *entrées;* a regular bill-of-fare flanked the noble Marquis's allot-

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and cover; every huckaback towel in the place had been pressed to do service as a napkin; and, that nothing might be wanting to the mimicry of splendour, the landlady's poor remnants of crockery and pewter had been furbished up, and mustered in solemn order on a crazy old beaufet, which was to represent a sideboard worthy of Sardanapalus. I think it worth while to preserve this anecdote, which Scott delighted in telling, as perhaps the last relic of a style of manners, now passed away, and never likely to be revived among us.

Having dispatched this dinner and his business, Scott again turned southwards, intending to spend a few days with Mr. Morritt at Rokeby; but on reaching Penrith, the landlord there, who was his old acquaintance, (Mr. Buchanan,) placed a letter in his hands *ecce iterum*—it was once more a cry of distress from John Ballantyne. He thus answered it—

To Mr. John Ballantyne.

"Penrith, Aug. 10, 1813.

"Dear John,

"I enclose you an order for £350. I shall remain at Rokeby until Saturday or Sunday, and be at Abbotsford on Wednesday at latest.

"I hope the printing-office is going on well. I fear from the state of accounts between the companies, restrictions on the management and expense will be unavoidable, which may trench upon James's comforts. I cannot observe hitherto that the printing-office is paying off, but rather adding to its embarrassments; and it cannot be thought that I have either means or inclination to support a losing concern at the rate of £300 a-month. If James could find a monied partner, an active man who understood the commercial part of the business, and would superintend the conduct of the cash, it might be the best for all parties; for I really am not adequate to the fatigue of mind which these affairs occasion me, though I must do the best to struggle through them. Believe me yours, &c. W. S."

At Brough he encountered a messenger who brought him such a painful account of Mrs. Morritt's health, that he abandoned his intention of proceeding to Rokeby; and, indeed, it was much better that he should be at Abbotsford again as soon as possible, for his correspondence shows a continued succession, during the three or four ensuing weeks, of the same annoyances that had pursued him to Drumlanrig and to Penrith. By his desire, the Ballantynes had, it would seem, before the middle of August, laid a statement of their affairs before Constable. Though the statement was not so clear and full as Scott had wished it to be, Constable, on considering it, at once assured them, that to go on raising money in driblets would never effectually relieve them; that, in short, one or both of the companies must stop, unless Mr. Scott could find means to lay his hand, without farther delay, on at least £4000; and I gather that, by way of inducing Constable himself to come forward with part at least of this supply, John Ballantyne again announced his intention of forthwith abandoning the bookselling business altogether, and making an effort to establish himself—on a plan which Constable had shortly before suggested—as an auctioneer in Edinburgh. The following letters need no comment:—

To Mr. John Ballantyne.

"Abbotsford, Aug. 16, 1813.

"Dear John,

"I am quite satisfied it is impossible for J. B. and Co. to continue business longer than is absolutely necessary for the sale of stock and extrication of their affairs. The fatal injury which their credit has sustained, as well as your adopting a profession in which I sincerely hope you will be more fortunate, renders the closing of the bookselling business inevitable. With regard to the printing, it is my intention to retire from that also as soon as I can possibly do so with safety to myself, and with the regard I shall always entertain for James's interest. Whatever loss I may sustain will be preferable to the life I have lately led, when I seem surrounded by a sort of magic circle, which neither permits me to remain at home in peace, nor to tread abroad with pleasure. Your first exertion as an auctioneer may probably be on 'that distinguished, select, and inimitable collection of books, made by an amateur of this city retiring from business.' I do not feel either health or confidence in my own powers sufficient to authorize me to take a long price for a new poem, until these affairs shall have been in some measure digested. This idea has been long running in my head, but the late fatalities which have attended this business have quite decided my resolution. I will write to James to-morrow, being at present annoyed with a severe headach. Yours truly,

W. Scott."

Were I to transcribe all the letters to which these troubles gave rise, I should fill a volume before I had reached the end of another twelvemonth. The two next I shall quote are dated on the same day, (the 24th August,) which may, in consequence of the answer the second of them received, be set down as determining the *crisis* of 1813.

To Mr. James Ballantyne.

"Abbotsford, 24th August, 1813.

"Dear James,

"Mr. Constable's advice is, as I have always found it, sound, sensible, and friendly—and I shall be guided by it. But I have no wealthy friend who would join in security with me to such an extent; and to apply in quarters where I might be refused, would insure disclosure. I conclude John has shown Mr. C. the state of the affairs; if not, I would wish him to do so directly. If the proposed accommodation could be granted to the firm on my personally joining in the security, the whole matter would be quite safe, for I have to receive in the course of the winter some large sums from my father's estate.* Besides which, I shall certainly be able to go to press in November with a new poem; or, if Mr. Constable's additional security would please the bankers better, I could ensure Mr. C. against the possibility of loss, by assigning the copyrights, together with that of the new poem, or even my library, in his relief. In fact, if he looks into the affairs, he will I think see that there is no prospect of any eventual loss to the creditors, though I may be a loser myself. My property here is unincumbered; and so is my house in Castle Street; and I have no debts out of my own family, excepting a part of the price of Abbotsford, which I am to retain for four years. So that, literally, I have no claims upon me unless those arising out of this business; and when it is considered that my income is above £2000 a-year, even if the printing-office pays nothing, I should hope no one can possibly be a loser by me. I am sure I would strip myself to my shirt rather than it should be the case: and my only reason for wishing to stop the concern was to do open justice to all persons. It must have been a bitter pill to me. I can more confidently expect some aid from Mr. Constable, or from Longman's house, because they can look into the concern and satisfy themselves how little chance there is of their being losers, which others cannot do. Perhaps between them they might manage to assist us with the credit necessary, and go on in winding up the concern by occasional acceptances.

Clerkship,	£1300
Sheriffdom,	300
Mrs. Scott,	200
Interest,	100
Somers, (say)	200
	£2100

"An odd thing has happened. I have a letter, by order of the Prince Regent, offering me the laureateship, in the most flattering terms. Were I my own man, as you call it, I would refuse this offer, (with all gratitude;) but as I am situated, £300 or £400 a-year is not to be sneezed at upon a point of poetical honour—and it makes me a better man to that extent. I have not yet written, however. I will say little about Constable's handsome behaviour, but shall not forget it. It is needless to say I shall wish him to be consulted in every step that is taken. If I should lose all I advanced to this business, I should be less vexed than I am at this moment. I am very busy with Swift at present, but shall certainly come to town if it is thought necessary; but I should first wish Mr. Constable to look into the affairs to the bottom. Since I have personally superintended them, they have been winding up very fast, and we are now almost within sight of harbour. I will also own it was partly ill-humour at John's blunder last week that made me think of throwing things up. Yours truly,

W. S."

After writing and despatching this letter, an idea occurred to Scott that there was a quarter, not hitherto alluded to in any of these anxious epistles, from

* He probably alludes to the final settlement of accounts with the Marquis of Abercorn.

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which he might consider himself as entitled to ask assistance, not only with little, if any, chance of a refusal, but (owing to particular circumstances) without incurring any very painful sense of obligation. On the 25th he says to John Ballantyne—

"After some meditation, last night, it occurred to me I had some title to ask the Duke of Buccleuch's guarantee to a cash account for £4000, as Constable proposes. I have written to him accordingly, and have very little doubt he will be my surety. If this cash account be in view, Mr. Constable will certainly *assist us* until the necessary writings are made out—I beg your pardon—I daresay I am very stupid; but very often you don't consider that I can't follow details which would be quite obvious to a man of business—for instance, you tell me daily, "that *if* the sums I count upon *are* forthcoming, the results must be as I suppose.' But—In a week—the scene is changed, and all I can do, and more, is inadequate to bring about these results. I protest I don't know if at this moment £4000 *will* clear us out. After all, you are vexed, and so am I; and it is needless to wrangle who has a right to be angry. Commend me to James. Yours truly,

W. S."

Having explained to the Duke of Buccleuch the position in which he stood—obliged either to procure some guarantee which would enable him to raise £4000, or to sell abruptly all his remaining interest in the copyright of his works; and repeated the statement of his personal property and income, as given in the preceding letter to James Ballantyne—Scott says to his noble friend:—

"I am not asking nor desiring any loan from your Grace, but merely the honour of your sanction to my credit as a good man for £4000; and the motive of your Grace's interference would be sufficiently obvious to the London Shylocks, as your constant kindness and protection is no secret to the world. Will your Grace consider whether you can do what I propose, in conscience and safety, and favour me with your answer?—I have a very flattering offer from the Prince Regent, of his own free motion, to make me poet-laureate; I am very much embarrassed by it. I am, on the one hand, afraid of giving offence where no one would willingly offend, and perhaps losing an opportunity of smoothing the way to my youngsters through life; on the other hand, the office is a ridiculous one, somehow or other—they and I should be well quizzed,—yet that I should not mind. My real feeling of reluctance lies deeper—it is, that favoured as I have been by the public, I should be considered, with some justice, I fear, as engrossing a petty emolument which might do real service to some poorer brother of the Muses. I shall be most anxious to have your Grace's advice on this subject. There seems something churlish, and perhaps conceited, in repelling a favour so handsomely offered on the part of the Sovereign's representative—and on the other hand, I feel much disposed to shake myself free from it. I should make but a bad courtier, and an odemaker is described by Pope as a poet out of his way or out of his senses. I will find some excuse for protracting my reply till I can have the advantage of your Grace's opinion; and remain, in the mean time, very truly,

Your obliged and grateful

WALTER SCOTT.

"P.S.—I trust your Grace will not suppose me capable of making such a request as the enclosed, upon any idle or unnecessary speculation; but, as I stand situated, it is a matter of deep interest to me to prevent these copyrights from being disposed of either hastily or at under prices. I could have half the booksellers in London for my sureties, on a hint of a new poem; but bankers do not like people in trade, and my brains are not ready to spin another web. So your Grace must take me under your princely care, as in the days of lang syne; and I think I can say, upon the sincerity of an honest man, there is not the most distant chance of your having any trouble or expense through my means."

The Duke's answer was in all respects such as might have been looked for from the generous kindness and manly sense of his character.

To Walter Scott, Esq., Abbotsford.

"Drumlanrig Castle, August 28th, 1813.

"My dear Sir,

"I received yesterday your letter of the 24th. I shall with pleasure comply with your request of guaranteeing the £4000. You must, however, furnish me with the form of a letter to this effect, as I am completely ignorant of transactions of this nature.

"I am never willing to *offer* advice, but when my opinion is asked by a friend, I am ready to give it. As to the offer of His Royal Highness to appoint you laureate, I shall frankly say that I should be mortified to see you hold a situation which, by the general concurrence of the world, is stamped ridiculous. There is no good reason why this should be so; but so it is. *Walter Scott, Poet Laureate*, ceases to be the Walter Scott of the Lay, Marmion, &c. Any future poem of yours would not come forward with the same probability of a successful reception. The poet laureate would stick to you and your productions like a piece of *court plaster*. Your muse has hitherto been independent—don't put her into harness. We know how lightly she trots along when left to her natural paces, but do not try driving. I would write frankly and openly to His Royal Highness, but with respectful gratitude, for he *has* paid you a compliment. I would not fear to state that you had hitherto written when in poetic mood, but feared to trammel yourself with a fixed periodical exertion; and I cannot but conceive that His Royal Highness, who has much taste, will at once see the many objections which you must have to his proposal, but which you cannot write. Only think of being chaunted and recitatived by a parcel of hoarse and squeaking choristers on a birthday, for the edification of the bishops, pages, maids of honour, and gentlemen-pensioners! Oh, horrible, thrice horrible! Yours sincerely,

BUCCLEUCH, &c."

The letter which first announced the Price Regent's proposal, was from his Royal Highness's librarian, Dr. James Stanier Clarke; but before Scott answered it he had received a more formal notification from the late Marquis of Hertford, then Lord Chamberlain. I shall transcribe both these documents.

To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.

"Pavilion, Brighton, August 18, 1813.

"My dear Sir,

"Though I have never had the honour of being introduced to you, you have frequently been pleased to convey to me very kind and flattering messages,* and I trust, therefore, you will allow me, without any further ceremony, to say—That I took an early opportunity this morning of seeing the Prince Regent, who arrived here late yesterday; and I then delivered to his Royal Highness my earnest wish and anxious desire that the vacant situation of poet laureate might be conferred on you. The Prince replied, 'that you had already been written to, and that if you wished it, every thing would be settled as I could desire.'

"I hope, therefore, I may be allowed to congratulate you on this event. You are the man to whom it ought first to have been offered, and it gave me sincere pleasure to find that those sentiments of high approbation which my Royal Master had so often expressed towards you in private, were now so openly and honourably displayed in public. Have the goodness, dear sir, to receive this intrusive letter with your accustomed courtesy, and believe me, yours very sincerely,

J. S. CLARKE,

Librarian to H. R. H. the Prince Regent."

To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.

"Ragley, 31st August, 1813.

"Sir,

"I thought it my duty to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, to express to him my humble opinion that I could not make so creditable a choice as in your person for the office, now vacant, of poet laureate. I am now authorized to offer it to you, which I would have taken an earlier opportunity of doing, but that, till this morning, I have had no occasion of seeing his Royal Highness since Mr. Pye's death. I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

INGRAM HERTFORD."

The following letters conclude this matter.

To the Most Noble the Marquis of Hertford, &c. &c. Ragley, Warwickshire.

"Abbotsford, 4th Sept.

"My Lord,

"I am this day honoured with your Lordship's letter of the 31st August, tendering for my acceptance the situation of poet laureate in the Royal Household. I shall always think it the highest honour of my life to have been the object of the good opinion implied in your Lordship's recommendation, and in the gracious acquiescence of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent. I humbly trust I shall not forfeit sentiments so highly valued, although I find myself under the necessity of declining, with every

* The Royal librarian had forwarded to Scott presentation copies of his successive publications—The Progress of Maritime Discovery—Falconer's Shipwreck, with a Life of the Author—Naufragia—A Life of Nelson, in two quarto volumes, &c. &c. &c.

acknowledgment of respect and gratitude, a situation above my deserts, and offered to me in a manner so very flattering. The duties attached to the office of poet laureate are not indeed very formidable, if judged of by the manner in which they have sometimes been discharged. But an individual selected from the literary characters of Britain, upon the honourable principle expressed in your Lordship's letter, ought not, in justice to your Lordship, to his own reputation, but above all to his Royal Highness, to accept of the office, unless he were conscious of the power of filling it respectably, and attaining to excellence in the execution of the tasks which it imposes. This confidence I am so far from possessing, that, on the contrary, with all the advantages which do now, and I trust ever will, present themselves to the poet whose task it may be to commemorate the events of his Royal Highness's administration, I am certain I should feel myself inadequate to the fitting discharge of the regularly recurring duty of periodical composition, and should thus at once disappoint the expectation of the public, and, what would give me still more pain, discredit the nomination of his Royal Highness.

"Will your Lordship permit me to add, that though far from being wealthy, I already hold two official situations in the line of my profession, which afford a respectable income. It becomes me, therefore, to avoid the appearance of engrossing one of the few appointments which seems specially adapted for the provision of those whose lives have been dedicated exclusively to literature, and who too often derive from their labours more credit than emolument.

"Nothing could give me greater pain than being thought ungrateful to his Royal Highness's goodness, or insensible to the honourable distinction his undeserved condescension has been pleased to bestow upon me. I have to trust to your Lordship's kindness for laying at the feet of his Royal Highness, in the way most proper and respectful, my humble, grateful, and dutiful thanks, with these reasons for declining a situation which, though every way superior to my deserts, I should chiefly have valued as a mark of his Royal Highness's approbation.

For your Lordship's unmerited goodness, as well as for the trouble you have had upon this occasion, I can only offer you my respectful thanks, and entreat that you will be pleased to believe me, my Lord Marquis, your Lordship's much obliged and much honoured humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

To His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c., Drumlanrig Castle.

"Abbotsford, Sept. 5, 1813.

"My dear Lord Duke,

"Good advice is easily followed when it jumps with our own sentiments and inclinations. I no sooner found mine fortified by your Grace's opinion, than I wrote to Lord Hertford, declining the laurel in the most civil way I could imagine. I also wrote to the Prince's librarian, who had made himself active on the occasion, dilating at somewhat more length than I thought respectful to the Lord Chamberlain, my reasons for declining the intended honour. My wife has made a copy of the last letter, which I enclose for your Grace's perusal—there is no occasion either to preserve or return it—but I am desirous you should know what I have put my apology upon, for I may reckon on its being misrepresented. I certainly should never have survived the mortative described by your Grace—it is a part of the etiquette I was quite unprepared for, and should have sunk under it. It is curious enough that Drumlanrig should always have been the refuge of bards who decline court promotion. Gay, I think, refused to be a gentleman-usher, or some such post; and I am determined to abide by my post of Grand Ecuyer Tranchant of the Chateau, varied for that of tale-teller of an evening.

"I will send your Grace a copy of the letter of guarantee when I receive it from London. By an arrangement with Longman and Co., the great booksellers in Paternoster-row, I am about to be enabled to place their security, as well as my own, between your Grace and the possibility of hazard. But your kind readiness to forward a transaction which is of such great importance both to my fortune and comfort, can never be forgotten—although it can scarce make me more than I have always been, my dear Lord, your Grace's much obliged and truly faithful

WALTER SCOTT."

Copy—Enclosure.—To the Rev. J. S. Clarke, &c. &c. &c. Pavilion, Brighton.

"Abbotsford, 4th September, 1813.

"Sir,

"On my return to this cottage, after a short excursion, I was at once surprised and deeply interested by the receipt of your letter. I shall always consider it as the proudest incident of my life, that his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, whose taste in literature is so highly distinguished, should have thought of naming me to the situation of poet laureate. I feel, therefore, no small embarrassment lest I should incur the suspicion of churlish ingratitude in declining an appointment in every point of view so far above my deserts, but which I should chiefly have valued as conferred by the unsolicited generosity of his Royal Highness, and as entitling me to the distinction of terming myself an immediate servant of his Majesty. But I have to trust to your goodness in representing to his Royal Highness, with my most grateful, humble, and dutiful acknowledgments, the circumstances which compel me to decline the honour which his undeserved favour has proposed for me. The poetical pieces I have hitherto composed have uniformly been the hasty production of impulses, which I must term fortunate, since they have attracted his Royal Highness's notice and approbation. But I strongly fear, or rather am absolutely certain, that I should feel myself unable to justify, in the eye of the public, the choice of his Royal Highness, by a fitting discharge of the duties of an office which requires stated and periodical exertion. And although I am conscious how much this difficulty is lessened under the government of his Royal Highness, marked by paternal wisdom at home and successes abroad which seem to promise the liberation of Europe, I still feel that the necessity of a regular commemoration would trammel my powers of composition at the very time when it would be equally my pride and duty to tax them to the uttermost. There is another circumstance which weighs deeply in my mind while forming my present resolution. I have already the honour to hold two appointments under Government, not usually conjoined, and which afford an income, far indeed from wealth, but amounting to decent independence. I fear, therefore, that in accepting one of the few situations which our establishment holds forth as the peculiar provision of literary men, I might be justly censured as availing myself of his Royal Highness's partiality to engross more than my share of the public revenue, to the prejudice of competitors equally meritorious at least, and otherwise unprovided for; and as this calculation will be made by thousands who know that I have reaped great advantages by the favour of the public, without being aware of the losses which it has been my misfortune to sustain, I may fairly reckon that it will terminate even more to my prejudice than if they had the means of judging accurately of my real circumstances. I have thus far, sir, frankly exposed to you, for his Royal Highness's favourable consideration, the feelings which induce me to decline an appointment offered in a manner so highly calculated to gratify, I will not say my vanity only, but my sincere feelings of devoted attachment to the crown and constitution of my country, and to the person of his Royal Highness, by whom its government has been so worthily administered. No consideration on earth would give me so much pain as the idea of my real feelings being misconstrued on this occasion, or that I should be supposed stupid enough not to estimate the value of his Royal Highness's favour, or so ungrateful as not to feel it as I ought. And you will relieve me from great anxiety if you will have the goodness to let me know if his Royal Highness is pleased to receive favourably my humble and grateful apology.

"I cannot conclude without expressing my sense of your kindness, and of the trouble you have had upon this account, and I request you will believe me, sir, your obliged humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick.

"Abbotsford, 4th September, 1813.

"My dear Southey,

"On my return here I found, to my no small surprise, a letter tendering me the laurel vacant by the death of the poetical Pye. I have declined the appointment, as being incompetent to the task of annual commemoration; but chiefly as being provided for in my professional department, and unwilling to incur the censure of engrossing the emolument attached to one of the few appointments which seems proper to be filled by a man of literature who has no other views in life. Will you forgive me, my dear friend, if I own I had you in my recollection. I have given Croker the hint, and otherwise endeavoured to throw the office into your option. I am uncertain if you will like it, for the laurel has certainly been tarnished by some of its wearers, and, as at present managed, its duties are inconvenient, and somewhat liable to ridicule. But the latter matter might be amended, as I think the Regent's good sense would lead him to lay aside these regular commemorations; and as to the former point, it has been worn by Dryden of old, and by Warton in modern days. If you quote my own refusal against me, I reply—first, I have been luckier than you in holding two offices

not usually conjoined; secondly, I did not refuse it from any foolish prejudice against the situation, otherwise how durst I mention it to you, my elder brother in the muse?—but from a sort of internal hope that they would give it to you, upon whom it would be so much more worthily conferred. For I am not such an ass as not to know that you are my better in poetry, though I have had, probably but for a time, the tide of popularity in my favour. I have not time to add ten thousand other reasons, but I only wished to tell you how the matter was, and to beg you to think before you reject the offer which I flatter myself will be made to you. If I had not been, like Dogberry, a fellow with two gowns already, I should have jumped at it like a cock at a gooseberry. Ever yours most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

Immediately after Mr. Croker received Scott's letter here alluded to, Mr. Southey was invited to accept the vacant laurel; and, to the honour of the Prince Regent, when he signified that his acceptance must depend on the office being thenceforth so modified as to demand none of the old formal odes, leaving it to the poet-laureate to choose his own time for celebrating any great public event that might occur, his Royal Highness had the good sense and good taste at once to acquiesce in the propriety of this alteration. The office was thus relieved from the burden of ridicule which had, in spite of so many illustrious names, adhered to it; and though its emoluments did not in fact amount to more than £100 a-year, (instead of the £300 or £400 at which Scott rated them when he declined it,) they formed no unacceptable addition to Mr. Southey's income. Scott's answer to his brother poet's affectionate and grateful letter on the conclusion of this affair, is as follows.

To R. Southey, Esq., Keswick.

"Edinburgh, November 13, 1813.

"I do not delay, my dear Southey, to say my gratulor. Long may you live, as Paddy says, to rule over us, and to redeem the crown of Spenser and of Dryden to its pristine dignity. I am only discontented with the extent of your royal revenue, which I thought had been £400, or £300 at the very least. Is there no getting rid of that iniquitous modus, and requiring the *butt* in kind? I would have you think of it: I know no man so well entitled to Xeres sack as yourself, though many bards would make a better figure at drinking it. I should think that in due time a memorial might get some relief in this part of the appointment—it should be at least £100 wet and £100 dry. When you have carried your point of discarding the ode, and my point of getting the sack, you will be exactly in the situation of Davy in the farce, who stipulates for more wages, less work, and the key of the ale-cellar. I was greatly delighted with the circumstances of your investiture. It reminded me of the porters at Calais with Dr. Smollett's baggage, six of them seizing upon one small portmanteau, and bearing it in triumph to his lodgings. You see what it is to laugh at the superstitions of a gentleman-usher, as I think you do somewhere. 'The whirligig of time brings about his revenges.'

"Adieu, my dear Southey; my best wishes attend all that you do, and my best congratulations every good that attends you—yea, even this, the very least of Providence's mercies, as a poor clergyman said when pronouncing grace over a herring. I should like to know how the prince received you; his address is said to be excellent, and his knowledge of literature far from despicable. What a change of fortune even since the short time when we met! The great work of retribution is now rolling onward to consummation, yet am I not fully satisfied—*pereat iste*—there will be no permanent peace in Europe till Buonaparte sleeps with the tyrants of old. My best compliments attend Mrs. Southey and your family. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To avoid returning to the affair of the laureateship, I have placed together such letters concerning it as appeared important. I regret to say that, had I adhered to the chronological order of Scott's correspondence, ten out of every twelve letters between the date of his application to the Duke of Buccleuch, and his removal to Edinburgh on the 12th of November, would have continued to tell the same story of pecuniary difficulty, urgent and almost daily applications for new advances to the Ballantynes, and endeavours, more or less successful, but in no case effectually so, to relieve the pressure on the bookselling firm by sales of its heavy stock to the great publishing houses of Edinburgh and London. Whatever success these endeavours met with, appears to have been due either directly or indirectly to Mr. Constable; who did a great deal more than prudence would have warranted, in taking on himself the results of its unhappy adventures,—and, by his sagacious advice, enabled the distressed partners to procure similar assistance at the hands of others, who did not partake his own feelings of personal kindness and sympathy. "I regret to learn," Scott writes to him on the 16th October, "that there is great danger of your exertions in our favour, which once promised so fairly, proving finally abortive, or at least being too tardy in their operation to work out our relief. If any thing more can be honourably and properly done to avoid a most unpleasant shock, I shall be most willing to do it; if not—God's will be done! There will be enough of property, including my private fortune, to pay every claim; and I have not used prosperity so ill, as greatly to fear adversity. But these things we will talk over at meeting; mean while believe me, with a sincere sense of your kindnes and friendly views, very truly yours, W. S."—I have no wish to quote more largely from the letters which passed during this crisis between Scott and his partners. The pith and substance of his, to John Ballantyne at least, seems to be summed up in one brief *postscript*:—"For God's sake, treat me as a man, and not as a milch-cow!"

The difficulties of the Ballantynes were by this time well known throughout the commercial circles not only of Edinburgh, but of London; and a report of their actual bankruptcy, with the addition that Scott was engaged as their surety to the extent of £20,000, found its way to Mr. Morritt about the beginning of November. This dear friend wrote to him, in the utmost anxiety, and made liberal offers of assistance in case the catastrophe might still be averted; but the term of Martinmas, always a critical one in Scotland, had passed before this letter reached Edinburgh, and Scott's answer will show symptoms of a clearing horizon. I think also there is one expression in it which could hardly have failed to convey to Mr. Morritt that his friend was involved, more deeply than he had ever acknowledged, in the concerns of the Messrs. Ballantyne.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park.

"Edinburgh, 20th November, 1813.

"I did not answer your very kind letter, my dear Morritt, until I could put your friendly heart to rest upon the report you have heard, which I could not do entirely until this term of Martinmas was passed. I have the pleasure to say that there is no truth whatever in the Ballantyne's reported bankruptcy. They have had severe difficulties for the last four months to make their resources balance the demands upon them, and I having the price of Rokeby, and other monies in their hands, have had considerable reason for apprehension, and no slight degree of plague and trouble. They have, however, been so well supported, that I have got out of hot water upon their account. They are winding up their bookselling concern with great regularity, and are to abide hereafter by the printing-office, which, with its stock, &c., will revert to them fairly.

"I have been able to redeem the offspring of my brain, and they are like to pay me like grateful children. This matter has set me a thinking about money more seriously than ever I did in my life, and I have begun by insuring my life for £4000, to secure some ready cash to my family should I slip girths suddenly. I think my other property, library, &c., may be worth about £12,000, and I have not much debt.

"Upon the whole, I see no prospect of any loss whatever. Although in the course of human events I may be disappointed, there certainly *can* be none to vex your kind and affectionate heart on my account. I am young, with a large official income, and if I lose any thing now, have gained a great deal in my day. I cannot tell you, and will not attempt to tell you, how much I was affected by your letter—so much, indeed, that for several days I could not make my mind up to express myself on the subject. Thank God! all real danger was yesterday put over—and I will write, in two or three days, a funny letter, without any of these vile cash matters, of which it may be said there is no living with them nor without them. Ever yours, most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

All these annoyances produced no change what-

ver in Scott's habits of literary industry. During these anxious months of September, October, and November, he kept feeding James Ballantyne's press, from day to day, both with the annotated text of the closing volumes of Swift's works, and with the MS. of his Life of the Dean. He had also proceeded to mature in his own mind the plan of the Lord of the Isles, and executed such a portion of the First Canto as gave him confidence to renew his negotiation with Constable for the sale of the whole, or part of its copyright. It was, moreover, at this period, that, looking into an old cabinet in search of some fishing-tackle, his eye chanced to light once more on the Ashestiel fragment of *Waverley*.—He read over those introductory chapters—thought they had been undervalued—and determined to finish the story.

All this while, too, he had been subjected to those interruptions from idle strangers, which from the first to the last, imposed so heavy a tax on his celebrity; and he no doubt received such guests with all his usual urbanity of attention. Yet I was not surprised to discover, among his hasty notes to the Ballantynes, several of tenour akin to the following specimens:—

"Sept. 2d, 1813.

"My temper is really worn to a hair's-breadth. The intruder of yesterday hung on me till twelve to day. When I had just taken my pen, he was relieved, like a sentry leaving guard, by two other lounging visiters; and their post has now been supplied by some people on real business."

Again—

"Monday Evening.

"Oh James—oh James—Two Irish dames
Oppress me very sore;
I groaning send one sheet I've penned—
For hang them! there's no more."

A scrap of nearly the same date to his brother Thomas may be introduced, as belonging to the same state of feeling—"Dear Tom, I observe what you say as to Mr.* * * *; and as you may often be exposed to similar requests, which it would be difficult to parry, you can sign such letters of introduction as relate to persons whom you do not delight to honour, short, *T. Scott*; by which abridgment of your name I shall understand to limit my civilities."

It is proper to mention, that, in the very agony of these perplexities, the unfortunate Maturin received from him a timely succour of £50, rendered doubly acceptable by the kind and judicious letter of advice in which it was enclosed; and I have before me ample evidence that his benevolence had been extended to other struggling brothers of the trade, even when he must often have had actual difficulty to meet the immediate expenditure of his own family. All this, however, will not surprise the reader.

Nor did his general correspondence suffer much interruption; and, as some relief after so many painful details, I shall close the narrative of this anxious year by a few specimens of his miscellaneous communications.

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Abbotsford, Sept. 12, 1813.

"My dear Miss Baillie,

"I have been a vile lazy correspondent, having been strolling about the country, and indeed a little way into England, for the greater part of July and August; in short, 'aye skipping here and there,' like the Tanner of Tamworth's horse. Since I returned, I have had a gracious offer of the laurel on the part of the Prince Regent. You will not wonder that I have declined it, though with every expression of gratitude which such an unexpected compliment demanded. Indeed, it would be high imprudence in one having literary reputation to maintain, to accept of an offer which obliged him to produce a poetical exercise on a given theme twice a-year; and besides, as my loyalty to the royal family is very sincere, I would not wish to have it thought mercenary. The public has done its part by me very well, and so has Government: and I thought this little literary provision ought to be bestowed on one who has made literature his sole profession. If the Regent means to make it respectable, he will abolish the foolish custom of the annual odes, which is a drudgery no person of talent could ever willingly encounter—or come clear off from, if he was so rash. And so, peace be with the laurel,

'Profaned by Cibber and contemned by Gray.'

"I was for a fortnight at Drumlanrig, a grand old chateau which has descended, by the death of the late Duke of Queensbury, to the Duke of Buccleuch. It is really a most magnificent pile, and when embosomed amid the wide forest scenery, of which I have an infantine recollection, must have been very romantic. But old Q. made wild devastation among the noble trees, although some fine ones are still left, and a quantity of young shoots are, in despite of the want of every kind of attention, rushing up to supply the place of the fathers of the forest, from whose stems they are springing. It will now, I trust, be in better hands, for the reparation of the castle goes hand in hand with the rebuilding of all the cottages, in which an aged race of pensioners of Duke Charles, and his pious wife,—'Kitty, blooming, young, and gay,'—have, during the last reign, been pining into rheumatisms and agues, in neglected poverty.

"All this is beautiful to witness; the indoor work does not please me so well, though I am aware that, to those who are to inhabit an old castle, it becomes often a matter of necessity to make alterations, by which its tone and character are changed for the worse. Thus a noble gallery, which ran the whole length of the front, is converted into bed-rooms—very comfortable, indeed, but not quite so magnificent; and as grim a dungeon as ever knave or honest man was confined in, is in some danger of being humbled into a wine-cellar. It is almost impossible to draw your breath, when you recollect that this, so many feet under ground, and totally bereft of air and light, was built for the imprisonment of human beings, whether guilty, suspected, or merely unfortunate. Certainly, if our frames are not so hardy, our hearts are softer than those of our forefathers, although probably a few years of domestic war, or feudal oppression, would bring us back to the same case-hardening, both in body and sentiment.

"I meant to have gone to Rokeby, but was prevented by Mrs. Morritt being unwell, which I very much regret, as I know few people that deserve better health. I am very glad you have known them, and I pray you to keep up the acquaintance in winter. I am glad to see by this day's paper, that our friend Terry has made a favourable impression on his first appearance at Covent-Garden—he has got a very good engagement there for three years, at twelve guineas a-week, which is a handsome income. This little place comes on as fast as can be reasonably hoped; and the pinasters are all above the ground, but cannot be planted out for twelve months. My kindest compliments—in which Mrs. Scott always joins—attend Miss Agnes, the Doctor, and his family. Ever, my dear friend, yours, most faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.

"Abbotsford, 20th October, 1813.

"Dear Terry,

"You will easily believe that I was greatly pleased to hear from you. I had already learned from The Courier (what I had anticipated too strongly to doubt for one instant) your favourable impression on the London public. I think nothing can be more judicious in the managers than to exercise the various powers you possess, in their various extents. A man of genius is apt to be limited to one single style, and to become per force a mannerist, merely because the public is not so just to its own amusement as to give him an opportunity of throwing himself into different lines; and, doubtless, the exercise of our talents in one unvaried course, by degrees renders them incapable of any other, as the over use of any one limb of our body gradually impoverishes the rest. I shall be anxious to hear that you have played *Malvolio*, which is, I think, one of your *coups-de-maître*, and in which envy itself cannot affect to trace an imitation. That same charge of imitation, by the way, is one of the surest scents upon which dunces are certain to open. Undoubtedly, if the same character is well performed by two individuals, their acting must bear a general resemblance—it could not be well performed by both were it otherwise. But this general resemblance, which arises from both following nature and their author, can as little be termed imitation as the river in Wales can be identified with that of Macedon. Never mind these dunderheads, but go on your own way, and scorn to laugh on the right side of your mouth, to make a difference from some ancient comedian who, in the same part, always laughed on the left. Stick to the public—be uniform in your exertions to study even those characters which have little in them, and to give a grace which you cannot find in the author. Audiences are always grateful for this—or rather—for gratitude is as much out of the question in the theatre, as Bernadotte says to Boney it is amongst sovereigns—or rather, the audience is gratified by receiving pleasure from a part which they had no expectation would afford them

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any. It is in this view that, had I been of your profession, and possessed talents, I think I should have liked often those parts with which my brethren quarrelled, and studied to give them an effect which their intrinsic merit did not entitle them to. I have some thoughts of being in town in spring; (not resolutions, by any means;) and it will be an additional motive to witness your success, and to find you as comfortably established as your friends in Castle Street earnestly hope and trust you will be.

"The summer—an uncommon summer in beauty and serenity—has glided away from us at Abbotsford, amidst our usual petty cares and petty pleasures. The childrens' garden is in apple-pie order, our own completely cropped and stocked, and all the trees flourishing like the green bay of the Psalmist. I have been so busy about our domestic arrangements, that I have not killed six hares this season. Besides, I have got a cargo of old armour, sufficient to excite a suspicion that I intend to mount a squadron of cuirassiers. I only want a place for my armoury; and, thank God, I can wait for that, these being no times for building. And this brings me to the loss of poor Stark, with whom more genius has died than is left behind among the collected universality of Scottish architects. O, Lord!—but what does it signify?—Earth was born to bear, and man to pay, (that is, lords, nabobs, Glasgow traders, and those who have wherewithal)—so, wherefore grumble at great castles and cottages, with which the taste of the latter contrives to load the back of Mother Terra?—I have no hobby-horsical commissions at present, unless if you meet the Voyages of Captain Richard, or Robert Falconer, in one volume—'cowheel, quoth Sancho'—I mark them for my own. Mrs. Scott, Sophia, Anne, and the boys, unite in kind remembrances. Ever yours, truly,

W. Scott."

To the Right Hon. Lord Byron, 4, Bennet Street, St. James's, London.

"Abbotsford, 6th Nov., 1813.

"My dear Lord,

"I was honoured with your Lordship's letter of the 27th September,* and have sincerely to regret that there is such a prospect of your leaving Britain, without my achieving your personal acquaintance. I heartily wish your Lordship had come down to Scotland this season, for I have never seen a finer, and you might have renewed all your old associations with Caledonia, and made such new ones as were likely to suit you. I dare promise you would have liked me well enough—for I have many properties of a Turk—never trouble myself about futurity—am as lazy as the day is long—delight in collecting silver-mounted pistols and ataghans, and go out of my own road for no one—all which I take to be attributes of your good Moslem. Moreover, I am somewhat an admirer of royalty, and in order to maintain this part of my creed, I shall take care never to be connected with a court, but stick to the *ignotum pro mirabili*.

"The author of the Queen's Wake will be delighted with your approbation. He is a wonderful creature for his opportunities, which were far inferior to those of the generality of Scottish peasants. Burns, for instance—(not that their extent of talents is to be compared for an instant)—had an education not much worse than the sons of many gentlemen in Scotland. But poor Hogg literally could neither read nor write till a very late period of his life; and when he first distinguished himself by his poetical talent, could neither spell nor write grammar. When I first knew him, he used to send me his poetry, and was both indignant and horrified when I pointed out to him parallel passages in authors whom he had never read, but whom all the world would have sworn he had copied. An evil fate has hitherto attended him, and baffled every attempt that has been made to place him in a road to independence. But I trust he may be more fortunate in future.

"I have not yet seen Southey in the Gazette as Laureate. He is a real poet, such as we read of in former times, with every atom of his soul, and every moment of his time, dedicated to literary pursuits, in which he differs from almost all those who have divided public attention with him. Your lordship's habits of society, for example, and my own professional and official avocations, must necessarily connect us much more with our respective classes in the usual routine of pleasure or business, than if we had not any other employment than *vacare musis*. But Southey's ideas are all poetical, and his whole soul dedicated to the pursuit of literature. In this respect, as well as in many others, he is a most striking and interesting character.

"I am very much interested in all that concerns your Giaour, which is universally approved of among our mountains. I have heard no objection, except by one or two geniuses, who run over poetry as a cat does over a harpsichord, and they affect to complain of obscurity. On the contrary, I hold every real lover of the art is obliged to you for condensing the narrative, by giving us only those striking scenes which you have shown to be so susceptible of poetic ornament, and leaving to the imagination the says I's and says he's, and all the minutiæ of detail, which might be proper in giving evidence before a court of justice. The truth is, I think poetry is most striking when the mirror can be held up to the reader, and the same kept constantly before his eyes; it requires most uncommon powers to support a direct and downright narration; nor can I remember many instances of its being successfully maintained even by our greatest bards.

"As to those who have done me the honour to take my rhapsodies for their model, I can only say they have exemplified the ancient adage, 'one fool makes many;' nor do I think I have yet had much reason to suppose I have given rise to any thing of distinguished merit. The worst is, it draws on me letters and commendatory verses, to which my sad and sober thanks in humble prose are deemed a most unmeet and ungracious reply. Of this sort of plague your Lordship must ere now have had more than your share, but I think you can hardly have met with so original a request as concluded a letter of a bard I this morning received, who limited his demands to being placed in his due station on Parnassus—*and* invested with a post in the Edinburgh Custom House.

"What an awakening of dry bones seems to be taking place on the Continent! I could as soon have believed in the resurrection of the Romans as in that of the Prussians—yet it seems a real and active renovation of national spirit. It will certainly be strange enough if that tremendous pitcher, which has travelled to so many fountains, should be at length broken on the banks of the Saale; but from the highest to the lowest we are the fools of fortune. Your Lordship will probably recollect where the Oriental tale occurs, of a Sultan who consulted Solomon on the proper inscription for a signet-ring, requiring that the maxim which it conveyed should be at once proper for moderating the presumption of prosperity and tempering the pressure of adversity. The apophthegm supplied by the Jewish sage was, I think, admirably adapted for both purposes, being comprehended in the words, 'And this also shall pass away.'

"When your Lordship sees Rogers, will you remember me kindly to him? I hope to be in London next spring, and renew my acquaintance with my friends there. It will be an additional motive if I could flatter myself that your Lordship's stay in the country will permit me the pleasure of waiting upon you. I am, with much respect and regard, your Lordship's truly honoured and obliged humble servant,

Walter Scott.

"I go to Edinburgh next week, *multum gemens.*"

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Edinburgh, 10th Dec., 1813.

"Many thanks, my dear friend, for your kind token of remembrance, which I yesterday received. I ought to blush, if I had grace enough left, at my long and ungenerous silence: but what shall I say? The habit of procrastination, which had always more or less a dominion over me, does not relax its sway as I grow older and less willing to take up the pen. I have not written to dear Ellis this age,—yet there is not a day I do not think of you and him, and one or two other friends in your southern land. I am very glad the whiskey came safe: do not stint so laudable an admiration for the liquor of Caledonia, for I have plenty of right good and sound Highland Ferintosh, and I can always find an opportunity of sending you up a bottle.

"We are here almost mad with the redemption of Holland, which has an instant and gratifying effect on the trade of Leith, and indeed all along the east coast of Scotland. About £100,000 worth of various commodities, which had been dormant in cellars and warehouses, was sold the first day the news arrived, and Orange ribands and *Orange Boven* was the order of the day among all ranks. It is a most miraculous revivification which it has been our fate to witness. Though of a tolerably sanguine temper, I had fairly adjourned all hopes and expectations of the kind till another generation: the same power, however, that opened the windows of heaven and the fountains of the great deep, has been pleased to close them, and to cause his wind to blow upon the face of the waters, so that we may look out from the ark of our preservation, and behold the reappearance of the mountain crests, and old, beloved, and well-known landmarks, which we had deemed swallowed up for ever in the abyss: the dove with the olive branch would complete the simile, but of that I see little hope. Bounaparte is that desperate gambler, who will not rise while he has a

* The letter in question has not been preserved in Scott's collection of correspondence. This leaves some allusions in the answer obscure.

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stake left; and, indeed, to be King of France would be a poor pettifogging enterprise, after having been almost Emperor of the World. I think he will drive things on till the fickle and impatient people over whom he rules get tired of him and shake him out of the saddle. Some circumstances seem to intimate his having become jealous of the Senate; and indeed any thing like a representative body, however imperfectly constructed, becomes dangerous to a tottering tyranny. The sword displayed on both frontiers may, like that brandished across the road of Balaam, terrify even dumb and irrational subjection into utterance: but enough of politics, though now a more cheerful subject than they have been for many years past.

"I have had a strong temptation to go to the Continent this Christmas; and should certainly have done so, had I been sure of getting from Amsterdam to Frankfort, where, as I know Lord Aberdeen and Lord Cathcart, I might expect a welcome. But notwithstanding my earnest desire to see the allied armies cross the Rhine, which I suppose must be one of the grandest military spectacles in the world, I should like to know that the roads were tolerably secure, and the means of getting forward attainable. In spring, however, if no unfortunate change takes place, I trust to visit the camp of the allies, and see all the pomp and power and circumstance of war, which I have so often imagined, and sometimes attempted to embody in verse. Johnnie Richardson is a good, honourable, kind-hearted little fellow as lives in the world, with a pretty taste for poetry, which he has wisely kept under subjection to the occupation of drawing briefs and revising conveyances. It is a great good fortune to him to be in your neighbourhood, as he is an idolator of genius, and where could he offer up his worship so justly? And I am sure you will like him, for he is really 'officious, innocent, sincere.'* Terry, I hope, will get on well; he is industrious, and zealous for the honour of his art. Ventidius must have been an excellent part for him, hovering between tragedy and comedy, which is precisely what will suit him. We have a woful want of him here, both in public and private, for he was one of the most easy and quiet chimney-corner companions that I have had for these two or three years past.

"I am very glad if any thing I have written to you could give pleasure to Miss Edgeworth, though I am sure it will fall very short of the respect which I have for her brilliant talents. I always write to you *à la volée*, and trust implicitly to your kindness and judgment upon all occasions where you may choose to communicate any part of my letters.† As to the taxing men, I must battle them as I can: they are worse than the great Emathian conqueror, who

> 'bade spare
> The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
> Went to the ground.'

Your pinasters are coming up gallantly in the nursery-bed at Abbotsford. I trust to pay the whole establishment a Christmas visit, which will be, as Robinson Crusoe says of his glass of rum, 'to mine exceeding refreshment.' All Edinburgh have been on tiptoe to see Madame de Staël, but she is now not likely to honour us with a visit, at which I cannot prevail on myself to be very sorry; for as I tired of some of her works, I am afraid I should disgrace my taste by tiring of the authoress too. All my little people are very well, learning, with great pain and diligence, much which they will have forgotten altogether, or nearly so, in the course of twelve years hence; but the habit of learning is something in itself, even when the lessons are forgotten.

"I must not omit to tell you that a friend of mine, with whom that metal is more plenty than with me, has given me some gold mohurs to be converted into a ring for enchasing King Charles' hair; but this is not to be done until I get to London, and get a very handsome pattern. Ever, most truly and sincerely, yours,

W. Scott."

The last sentence of this letter refers to a lock of the hair of Charles I., which, at Dr. Baillie's request, Sir Henry Halford had transmitted to Scott when the royal martyr's remains were discovered at Windsor, in April, 1813. Sir John Malcolm had given him some Indian coins to supply virgin gold for the setting of this relic; and for some years he constantly wore the ring, which is a massive and beautiful one, with the word REMEMBER surrounding it in highly relieved black-letter.

* Scott's old friend, Mr. Joan Richardson, had shortly before this time taken a house in Miss Baillie's neighbourhood, on Hampstead Heath.

† Miss Baillie had apologized to him for having sent an extract of one of his letters to her friend at Edgeworthstown.

The poet's allusion to "taxing men" may require another word of explanation. To add to his troubles during this autumn of 1813, a demand was made on him by the commissioners of the income-tax, to return in one of their schedules an account of the profits of his literary exertions during the last three years. He demurred to this, and took the opinion of high authorities in Scotland, who confirmed him in his impression that the claim was beyond the statute. The grounds of his resistance are thus briefly stated in one of his letters to his legal friend in London.

To John Richardson, Esq. Fluyder Street, Westminster.

"My dear Richardson,

"I have owed you a letter this long time, but perhaps my debt might not yet be discharged, had I not a little matter of business to trouble you with. I wish you to lay before either the King's counsel, or Sir Samuel Romilly, and any other you may approve, the point whether a copyright, being sold for the term during which Queen Anne's act warranted the property to the author, the price is liable in payment of the property tax. I contend it is not so liable, for the following reasons:—1st, It is a patent right, expected to produce an annual, or at least an incidental profit, during the currency of many years; and surely it was never contended that if a man sold a theatrical patent, or a patent for machinery, property tax should be levied in the first place on the full price as paid to the seller, and then on the profits as purchased by the buyer. I am not very expert at figures, but I think it clear that a double taxation takes place. 2d, It should be considered that a book may be the work not of one year, but of a man's whole life; and as it has been found, in a late case of the Duke of Gordon, that a fall of timber was not subject to property tax because it comprehended the produce of thirty years, it seems at least equally fair that mental exertions should not be subjected to a harder principle of measurement. 3d, The demand is, so far as I can learn, totally new and unheard of. 4th, Supposing that I died and left my manuscripts to be sold publicly along with the rest of my library, is there any ground for taxing what might be received for the written book, any more than any rare printed book which a speculative bookseller might purchase with a view to republication? You will know whether any of these things ought to be suggested in the brief. David Hume, and every lawyer here whom I have spoken to, consider the demand as illegal. Believe me truly yours,

Walter Scott."

Mr. Richardson having prepared a case, obtained upon it the opinions of Mr. Alexander, (afterwards Sir William Alexander and Chief Baron of the Exchequer,) and of the late Sir Samuel Romilly. These eminent lawyers agreed in the view of their Scotch brethren; and after a tedious correspondence, the Lords of the Treasury at last decided that the Income-Tax Commissioners should abandon their claim upon the produce of literary labour. I have thought it worth while to preserve some record of this decision, and of the authorities on which it rested, in case such a demand should ever be renewed hereafter.

In the beginning of December, the Town-Council of Edinburgh resolved to send a deputation to congratulate the Prince Regent on the prosperous course of public events, and they invited Scott to draw up their address, which, on its being transmitted for previous inspection to Mr. William Dundas, then member for the city, and through him shown privately to the Regent, was acknowledged to the penman, by his Royal Highness's command, as "the most elegant congratulation a sovereign ever received, or a subject offered."* The Lord Provost of Edinburgh presented it accordingly at the levee of the 10th, and it was received most graciously. On returning to the north, the Magistrates expressed their sense of Scott's services on this occasion by presenting him with the freedom of his native city, and also with a piece of plate,—which the reader will find alluded to, among matters of more consequence, in a letter to be quoted presently.

At this time Scott further expressed his patriotic exultation in the rescue of Europe, by two songs for the anniversary of the death of Pitt; one of

* Letter from the Right Hon. W. Dundas, dated 6th December 1813.

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which has ever since, I believe, been chanted at that celebration ;—

"O dread was the time and more dreadful the omen,
When the brave on Marengo lay slaughter'd in vain,"&c.*

CHAPTER XXVII.

INSANITY OF HENRY WEBER—LETTERS ON THE ABDICATION OF NAPOLEON, ETC.—PUBLICATION OF SCOTT'S LIFE AND EDITION OF SWIFT—ESSAYS FOR THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA—COMPLETION AND PUBLICATION OF WAVERLEY.—1814.

I HAVE to open the year 1814, with a melancholy story. Mention has been made more than once, of Henry Weber, a poor German scholar, who escaping to this country in 1804, from misfortunes in his own, excited Scott's compassion, and was thenceforth furnished, through his means, with literary employment of various sorts. Weber was a man of considerable learning; but Scott, as was his custom, appears to have formed an exaggerated notion of his capacity, and certainly countenanced him, to his own severe cost, in several most unfortunate undertakings. When not engaged on things of a more ambitious character, he had acted for ten years as his protector's amanuensis, and when the family were in Edinburgh, he very often dined with them. There was something very interesting in his appearance and manners; he had a fair, open countenance, in which the honesty and the enthusiasm of his nation were alike visible; his demeanour was gentle and modest; and he had not only a stock of curious antiquarian knowledge, but the reminiscences, which he detailed with amusing simplicity, of an early life checquered with many strange enough adventures. He was, in short, much a favourite with Scott and all the household; and was invited to dine with them so frequently, chiefly because his friend was aware that he had an unhappy propensity to drinking, and was anxious to keep him away from places where he might have been more likely to indulge it. This vice, however, had been growing on him; and of late Scott had found it necessary to make some rather severe remonstrances about habits which were at once injuring his health, and interrupting his literary industry.

They had, however, parted kindly when Scott left Edinburgh at Christmas 1813,—and the day after his return Weber attended him as usual in his library, being employed in transcribing extracts during several hours, while his friend seated over against him, continued working at the life of Swift. The light beginning to fail, Scott threw himself back in his chair, and was about to ring for candles, when he observed the German's eyes fixed upon him with an unusual solemnity of expression. "Weber," said he, "what is the matter with you?" "Mr. Scott," said Weber, rising, "you have long insulted me, and I can bear it no longer. I have brought a pair of pistols with me, and must insist on your taking one of them instantly;" and with that he produced the weapons, which had been deposited under his chair, and laid one of them on Scott's manuscript. "You are mistaken, I think," said Scott, "in your way of setting about this affair—but no matter. It can, however, be no part of your object to annoy Mrs. Scott and the children; therefore, if you please, we will put the pistols into the draw till after dinner, and then arrange to go out together like gentlemen." Weber answered with equal coolness, "I believe that will be better," and laid the second pistol also on the table. Scott locked them both in his desk, and said, "I am glad you have felt the propriety of what I suggested—let me only request further, that nothing may occur while we are at dinner to give my wife any suspicion of what has been passing." Weber again assented, and Scott withdrew to his dressing-room, from which he immediately despatched a message to one of Weber's intimate companions,—and then dinner was served, and Weber joined the family circle as usual. He conducted himself with perfect composure, and every thing seemed to go on in the ordinary way, until whiskey and hot water being produced, Scott, instead of inviting his guest to help himself, mixed two moderate tumblers of toddy, and handed one of them to Weber, who, upon that, started up with a furious countenance, but instantly sat down again, and when Mrs. Scott expressed her fear that he was ill, answered placidly that he was liable to spasms, but that the pain was gone. He then took the glass, eagerly gulped down its contents, and pushed it back to Scott. At this moment the friend who had been sent for made his appearance, and Weber, on seeing him enter the room, rushed past him and out of the house, without stopping to put on his hat. The friend, who pursued instantly, came up with him at the end of the street, and did all he could to soothe his agitation, but in vain. The same evening he was obliged to be put in a straight waistcoat; and though, in a few days, he exhibited such symptoms of recovery that he was allowed to go by himself to pay a visit in the North of England, he there soon relapsed, and continued ever afterwards a hopeless lunatic, being supported to the end of his life in June, 1818, at Scott's expense in an asylum at York.

The reader will now appreciate the gentle delicacy of the following letter :—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby, Greta Bridge.

"Edinburgh, 7th January, 1814.

"Many happy New-Years to you and Mrs. Morritt.

"My dear Morritt,

"I have postponed writing a long while, in hopes to send you the Life of Swift. But I have been delayed by an odd accident. Poor Weber, whom you may have heard me mention as a sort of grinder of mine, who assisted me in various ways, has fallen into a melancholy state. His habits, like those of most German students, were always too convivial—this, of course, I guarded against while he was in my house, which was always once a-week at least; but unfortunately he undertook a long walk through the Highlands of upwards of 2000 miles, and, I suppose, took potations pottle deep to support him through the fatigue. His mind became accordingly quite unsettled, and after some strange behaviour here, he was fortunately prevailed upon to go to * * * * who resides in Yorkshire. It is not unlikely from something that dropped from him, that he may take it in his head to call at Rokeby, in which case you must parry any visit, upon the score of Mrs. Morritt's health. If he were what he used to be, you would be much pleased with him; for besides a very extensive general acquaintance with literature, he was particularly deep in our old dramatic lore, a good modern linguist, a tolerable draughtsman and antiquary, and a most excellent hydrographer. I have not the least doubt that if he submits to the proper regimen of abstinence and moderate exercise, he will be quite well in a few weeks or days—if not, it is miserable to think what may happen. The being suddenly, deprived of his services in this melancholy way, has flung me back at least a month with Swift, and left me no time to write to my friends, for all my memoranda, &c., were in his hands, and had to be new-modelled, &c. &c.

"Our glorious prospects on the Continent called forth the congratulations of the City of Edinburgh among others. The Magistrates asked me to draw their address, which was presented by the Lord Provost in person, who happens to be a gentleman of birth and fortune.* The Prince said some very handsome things respecting the address, with which the magistrates were so much elated, that they have done the genteel thing (as Winifred Jenkins says) by their literary adviser, and presented me with the freedom of the city, and a handsome piece of plate. I got the freedom at the same time with Lord Dalhousie and Sir Thomas Graham, and the Provost gave a very brilliant entertainment. About 150 gentlemen dined at his own house, all as well served as if there had been a dozen. So if one strikes a cuff on the one side from ill-will, there is a pat on the other from kindness, and the shuttlecock is kept flying. To poor Charlotte's great horror, I chose my plate in the form of an old English tankard, an utensil for which I have a particular respect, especially when charged with good ale, cup, or any of those potables. I hope you will soon see mine.†

* See Scott's Poetical Works, vol. xi. p. 309. Edition, 1834.

* The late Sir John Majoribanks of Lees, Bart.

† The inscription for this tankard was penned by the late cele-

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"Your little friends, Sophia and Walter, were at a magnificent party on Twelfth Night at Dalkeith, where the Duke and Duchess entertained all Edinburgh. I think they have dreamed of nothing since but Aladdin's lamp and the palace of Haroun Alraschid. I am uncertain what to do this spring. I would fain go on the Continent for three or four weeks, if it be then safe for non-combatants. If not, we will have a merry meeting in London, and, like Master Silence,

Eat, drink, and make good cheer,
And thank heaven for the merry year.'

I have much to say about Triermain. The fourth edition is at press. The Empress-Dowager of Russia has expressed such an interest in it, that it will be inscribed to her, in some doggrel sonnet or other, by the unknown author. This is funny enough. Love a thousand times to dear Mrs. Morritt, who, I trust, keeps pretty well. Pray write soon—a modest request from

WALTER SCOTT."

The last of Weber's literary productions were the analysis of the old German Poems of the *Helden Buch*, and the *Nibelungen Lied*, which appeared in a massive quarto, entitled Illustrations of Northern Antiquities, published in the summer of 1814, by his and Scott's friend, Mr. Robert Jameson. Scott avowedly contributed to this collection an account of the Eyrbiggia Saga, which has since been included in his Prose Miscellanies (Vol. V., edition 1834;) but any one who examines the share of the work which goes under Weber's name, will see that Scott had a considerable hand in that also. The rhymed versions from the Nibelungen Lied came, I can have no doubt, from his pen; but he never reclaimed these, or any other similar benefactions, of which I have traced not a few; nor, highly curious and even beautiful as many of them are, could they be intelligible, if separated from the prose narrative on which Weber embroidered them, in imitation of the style of Elhi's specimens of Metrical Romance.

The following letters, on the first abdication of Napoleon, are too characteristic to be omitted here. I need not remind the reader how greatly Scott had calmed his opinions, and softened his feelings, respecting the career and fate of the most extraordinary man of our age, before he undertook to write his history.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Portland Place, London.

"Abbotsford, 30th April, 1814.

"'Joy—joy in London now!'—and in Edinburgh, moreover, my dear Morritt; for never did you or I see, and never again shall we see, according to all human prospects, a consummation so truly glorious, as now bids fair to conclude this long and eventful war. It is startling to think that, but for the preternatural presumption and hardness of heart displayed by the arch-enemy of mankind, we should have had a hollow and ominous truce with him, instead of a glorious and stable peace with the country over which he tyrannized, and its lawful ruler. But Providence had its own wise purposes to answer—and such was the deference of France to the ruling power—so devoutly did they worship the Devil for possession of his burning throne, that, it may be, nothing short of his rejection of every fair and advantageous offer of peace could have driven them to those acts of resistance which remembrance of former convulsions had rendered so fearful to them. Thank God! it is done at last: and—although I rather grudge him even the mouthful of air which he may draw in the Isle of Elba—yet I question whether the moral lesson would have been completed either by his perishing in battle, or being torn to pieces, (which I should greatly have preferred,) like the De Witts, by an infuriated crowd of conscripts and their parents. Good God! with what strange feelings must that man retire from the most unbounded authority ever vested in the hands of one man, to the seclusion of privacy and restraint. We have never heard of one good action which he did, at least for which there was not some selfish or political reason; and the train of slaughter, pestilence, and famine and fire, which his ambition has occasioned, would have outweighed five hundredfold the private virtues of a Titus. These are comfortable reflections to carry with one to privacy. If he writes his own history, as he proposes, we may gain something; but he must send it here to be printed. Nothing less than a neck-or-nothing London bookseller, like John Dunton of yore, will venture to commit to the press his strange details uncastrated. I doubt that he has *stamina* to undertake such a labour; and yet, in youth, as I know from the brothers of Lauriston, who were his school-companions, Buonaparte's habits were distinctly and strongly literary. Spain, the Continental System, and the invasion of Russia, he may record as his three leading blunders—an awful lesson to sovereigns that morality is not so indifferent to politics as Machiavellians will assert. *Res nolunt diu male administrari.* Why can we not meet to talk over these matters over a glass of claret; and when shall that be? Not this spring, I fear, for time wears fast away, and I have remained here nailed among my future oaks, which I measure daily with a foot-rule. These which were planted two years ago, begin to look very gaily, and a venerable plantation of four years old looks as *bobbish* as yours at the diary by Greta side. Besides, I am arranging this cottage a little more conveniently, to put off the plague and expense of building another year; and I assure you, I expect to spare Mrs. Morritt and you a chamber in the wall, with a dressing-room, and every thing handsome about you. You will not stipulate, of course, for many square feet. You would be suprised to hear how the Continent is awakening from its iron sleep. The utmost eagerness seems to prevail about English literature. I have had several voluntary epistles from different parts of Germany, from men of letters, who are eager to know what we have been doing, while they were compelled to play at blindman's buff with the *ci-devant Empereur*. The feeling of the French officers, of whom we have many in our vicinity, is very curious, and yet natural.* Many of them, companions of Buonaparte's victories, and who hitherto have marched with him from conquest to conquest, disbelieve the change entirely. This is all very stupid to write to you, who are in the centre of these wonders; but what else can I say, unless I should send you the measure of the future fathers of the forest? Mrs. Scott is with me here—the children in Edinburgh. Our kindest love attends Mrs. Morritt. I hope to hear soon that her health continues to gain ground.

"I have a letter from Southey, in high spirits on the glorious news. What a pity this last battle† was fought. But I am glad the rascals were beaten once more. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick.

"Edinburgh, 17th June, 1814.

"My dear Southey,

"I suspended writing to thank you for the Carmen Triumphale—(a happy omen of what you can do to immortalize our public story)—until the feverish mood of expectation and anxiety should be over. And then, as you truly say, there followed a stunning sort of listless astonishment and complication of feeling, which if it did not lessen enjoyment, confused and confounded one's sense of it. I remember the first time I happened to see a launch, I was neither so much struck with the descent of the vessel, nor with its majestic sweep to its moorings, as with the blank which was suddenly made from the withdrawing so large an object, and the prospect which was at once opened to the opposite side of the dock crowded with spectators. Buonaparte's fall strikes me something in the same way; the huge bulk of his power, against which a thousand arms were hammering, was obviously to sink when its main props were struck away—and yet now—when it has disappeared—the vacancy which it leaves in our mind and attention, marks its huge and preponderating importance more strongly than even its presence. Yet I so devoutly expected the termination, that in discussing the matter with Major Phillips, who seemed to partake of the doubts which prevailed during the feverish period preceding the capture of Paris, when he was expressing his apprehension that the capital of France would be defended to the last, I hazarded a prophecy that a battle would be fought on the heights of Mont Martre—(no great sagacity, since it was the point where Marlborough proposed to attack, and for which Saxe projected a scheme of defence)—and that if the allies were successful, which I little doubted, the city would surrender, and the Senate proclaim the dethronement of Buonaparte. But I never thought nor imagined that he

* A good many French officers, prisoners of war, had been living on *parole* in Melrose, and the adjoining villages; and Mr. and Mrs. Scott had been particularly kind and hospitable to them.

† The battle of Thoulouse.

lated Dr. James Gregory, Professor of the Practice of Physic, in the University of Edinburgh; and I therefore transcribe it.

QUALTERUM SCOTT
DE ABBOTSFORD
VIRUM SUMMI INGENII
SCRIPTOREM ELEGANTEM
POSTARUM SUI SECULI FACILE PRINCIPEM
PATRIÆ DECUS
OB VARIA ERGA IPSAM MERITA
IN CIVIUM SUORUM NUMERUM
GRATA ADSCRIPSIT CIVITAS EDINBURGENSIS
ET HOC CANTHARO DONAVIT
A. D. M.DCCC.XIII.

R*

would have *given in* as he has done. I always considered him as possessing the genius and talents of an Eastern conqueror; and although I never supposed that he possessed, allowing for some difference of education, the liberality of conduct and political views which were sometimes exhibited by old Hyder Ally, yet I did think he might have shown the same resolved and dogged spirit of resolution which induced Tippoo Saib to die manfully upon the breach of his capital city with his sabre clenched in his hand. But this is a poor devil, and cannot play the tyrant so rarely as Bottom the Weaver proposed to do. I think it is Strap in Roderick Random, who seeing a highwayman that had lately robbed him, disarmed and bound, fairly offers to box him for a shilling. One has really the same feeling with respect to Buonaparte, though if he go out of life after all in the usual manner, it will be the strongest proof of his own insignificance, and the liberality of the age we live in. Were I a son of Palm or Hoffer, I should be tempted to take a long shot at him in his retreat to Elba. As for coaxing the French by restoring all our conquests, it would be driving generosity into extravagance; most of them have been colonized with British subjects, and improved by British capital, and surely we owe no more to the French nation than any well-meaning individual might owe to a madman, whom—at the expense of a hard struggle, black eyes, and bruises—he has at length overpowered, knocked down, and by the wholesome discipline of a bull's pizzle and straight-jacket, brought to the handsome enjoyment of his senses. I think with you, what we return to them should be well paid for; and they should have no Pondicherry to be a nest of smugglers, nor Mauritius to nurse a hornet-swarm of privateers. In short, draw teeth, and pare claws, and leave them to fatten themselves in peace and quiet, when they are deprived of the means of indulging their restless spirit of enterprise.

"———The above was written at Abbotsford last month, but left in my portfolio there till my return some days ago; and now, when I look over what I have written, I am confirmed in my opinion that we have given the rascals too good an opportunity to boast that they have got well off. An intimate friend of mine,* just returned from a long captivity in France, witnessed the entry of the King, guarded by the Imperial Guards, whose countenances betokened the most sullen and ferocious discontent. The mob, and especially the women, poked them for refusing to cry 'Vive le Roi.' If Louis is well advised, he will get rid of these fellows gradually, but as soon as possible. 'Joy, joy in London now!' What a scene has been going on there; I think you may see the Czar appear on the top of one of your stages one morning. He is a fine fellow, and has fought the good fight. Yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

On the 1st of July, 1814, Scott's Life and Edition of Swift, in nineteen volumes 8vo, at length issued from the press. This adventure, undertaken by Constable in 1808, had been proceeded in during all the variety of their personal relations, and now came forth when author and publisher felt more warmly towards each other than perhaps they had ever before done. The impression was of 1250 copies; and a reprint of similar extent was called for in 1824. The Life of Swift has subsequently been included in the author's Miscellanies, and has obtained a very wide circulation.

By his industrious inquiries, in which, as the preface gratefully acknowledges, he found many zealous assistants, especially among the Irish literati,† Scott added to this edition many admirable pieces, both in prose and verse, which had never before been printed, and still more which had escaped notice amidst old bundles of pamphlets and broadsides. To the illustration of these, and of all the better known writings of the Dean, he brought the same qualifications which had, by general consent, distinguished his Dryden, "uniting," as the Edinburgh Review expresses it, "to the minute knowledge and patient research of the Malones and Chalmerses, a vigour of judgment, and a vivacity of style, to which they had no pretensions." His biographical narrative, introductory essays, and notes on Swift, show, indeed, an intimacy of acquaintance with the obscurest details of the political, social, and literary history of the period of Queen Anne, which it is impossible to consider without feeling a lively regret that he never accomplished a long cherished purpose of preparing a Life and Edition of Pope on a similar scale. It has been specially unfortunate for that "true deacon of the craft," as Scott often called Pope, that first Goldsmith, and then Scott, should have taken up, only to abandon it, the project of writing his life and editing his works.

The Edinburgh Reviewer thus characterises Scott's Memoir of the Dean of St. Patrick's:—

"It is not every where extremely well written, in a literary point of view, but it is drawn up in substance with great intelligence, liberality, and good feeling. It is quite fair and moderate in politics; and perhaps rather too indulgent and tender towards individuals of all descriptions—more full, at least, of kindness and veneration for genius and social virtue, than of indignation at baseness and profligacy. Altogether, it is not much like the production of a mere man of letters, or a fastidious speculator in sentiment and morality; but exhibits throughout, and in a very pleasing form, the good sense and large toleration of a man of the world, with much of that generous allowance for the

'Fears of the brave and follies of the wise,'

which genius too often requires, and should therefore always be most forward to show. It is impossible, however, to avoid noticing that Mr. Scott is by far too favourable to the personal character of his author, whom we think it would really be injurious to the cause of morality to allow to pass either as a very dignified, or a very amiable person. The truth is, we think, that he was extremely ambitious, arrogant, and selfish; of a morose, vindictive, and haughty temper; and though capable of a sort of patronising generosity toward his dependents, and of some attachment towards those who had long known and flattered him, his general demeanour, both in public and private life, appears to have been far from exemplary; destitute of temper and magnanimity, and we will add of principle, in the former; and in the latter, of tenderness, fidelity, or compassion."—*Edinburgh Review*, vol. xvii., p. 9.

I have no desire to break a lance in this place in defence of the personal character of Swift. It does not appear to me that he stands at all distinguished among politicians (least of all among the politicians of his time) for laxity of principle; nor can I consent to charge his private demeanour with the absence either of tenderness, or fidelity, or compassion. But who ever dreamed—most assuredly not Scott—of holding up the Dean of St. Patrick's as on the whole an "exemplary character?" The biographer felt, whatever his critic may have thought on the subject, that a vein of morbid humour ran through Swift's whole existence, both mental and physical, from the beginning. "He early adopted," says Scott, "the custom of observing his birth-day, as a term not of joy but of sorrow, and of reading, when it annually recurred, the striking passage of Scripture, in which Job laments and execrates the day upon which it was said in his father's house *that a man-child was born*;" and I should have expected that any man who had considered the black close of the career thus early clouded, and read the entry of Swift's diary on the funeral of Stella, his epitaph on himself, and the testament by which he disposed of his fortune, would have been willing, like Scott, to dwell on the splendour of his immortal genius, and the many traits of manly generosity "which he unquestionably exhibited," rather than on the faults and foibles of nameless and inscrutable disease, which tormented and embittered the far greater part of his earthly being. What the critic says of the practical and business-like style of Scott's biography, appears very just—and I think the circumstance eminently characteristic—nor, on the whole, could his edition, as an edition, have been better dealt with than in the Essay which I have quoted. It was, by the way, written by Mr. Jeffrey, at Constable's particular request. "It was, I think, the first time I ever asked such a thing of him," the bookseller said to me; "and I assure you the result was no encouragement to repeat such petitions." Mr. Jeffrey attacked Swift's whole character at great length, and with consummate dexterity; and, in Constable's opinion, his article

* Sir Adam Ferguson, who had been taken prisoner in the course of the Duke of Wellington's retreat from Burgos.

† The names which he particularly mentions, are those of the late Matthew Weld Hartstonge, Esq., of Dublin, Theophilus Swift, Esq., Major Tickell, Thomas Steele, Esq., Leonard Macnally, Esq., and the Rev. M. Berwick.

threw such a cloud on the Dean, as materially checked, for a time, the popularity of his writings. Admirable as the paper is, in point of ability, I think Mr. Constable may have considerably exaggerated its effects; but in those days it must have been difficult for him to form an impartial opinion upon such a question; for, as Johnson said of Cave, that "he could not spit over his window without thinking of the Gentleman's Magazine," I believe Constable allowed nothing to interrupt his paternal pride in the concerns of his Review, until the Waverley Novels supplied him with another periodical publication still more important to his fortunes.

And this consummation was not long delayed; a considerable addition having by that time been made to the original fragment, there appeared in The Scot's Magazine, for February 1st, 1814, an announcement, that "Waverley; or, 'tis Sixty Years Since, a novel, in 3 vols. 12mo," would be published in March. And before Scott came into Edinburgh, at the close of the Christmas vacation on the 12th of January, Mr. Erskine had perused the greater part of the first volume, and expressed his decided opinion that Waverley would prove the most popular of all his friend's writings. The MS. was forthwith copied by John Ballantyne, and sent to press. As soon as a volume was printed, Ballantyne conveyed it to Constable, who did not for a moment doubt from what pen it proceeded, but took a few days to consider of the matter, and then offered £700 for the copyright. When we recollect what the state of novel literature in those days was, and that the only exceptions to its mediocrity, the Irish Tales of Miss Edgeworth, however appreciated in refined circles, had a circulation so limited that she had never realized a tithe of £700 by the best of them—it must be allowed that Constable's offer was a liberal one. Scott's answer, however, transmitted through the same channel, was, that £700 was too much, in case the novel should not be successful, and too little in case it should. He added, "If our fat friend had said £1000, I should have been staggered." John did not fail to hint this last circumstance to Constable, but the latter did not choose to act upon it; and he ultimately published the work, on the footing of an equal division of profits between himself and the author. There was a considerable pause between the finishing of the first volume and the beginning of the second. Constable had, in 1812, acquired the copyright of the Encyclopædia Britannica, and was now preparing to publish the valuable *Supplement* to that work, which has since, with modifications, been incorporated into its text. He earnestly requested Scott to undertake a few articles for the Supplement; he agreed—and, anxious to gratify the generous bookseller, at once laid aside his tale until he had finished two essays—those on Chivalry and the Drama. They appear to have been completed in the course of April and May, and he received for each of them—(as he did subsequently for that on Romance)—£100.

The two next letters will give us, in more exact detail than the author's own recollection could supply in 1830, the history of the completion of Waverley. It was published on the 7th of July; and two days afterwards he thus writes:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M. P., London.

"Edinburgh, 9th July, 1814.

"My dear Morritt,

"I owe you many apologies for not sooner answering your very entertaining letter upon your Parisian journey. I heartily wish I had been of your party, for you have seen what I trust will not be seen again in a hurry; since, to enjoy the delight of a restoration, there is a necessity for a previous *bouleversement* of every thing that is valuable in morals and policy, which seems to have been the case in France since 1790.* The Duke of Buccleuch told me yesterday of a very good reply of Louis to some of his attendants, who proposed shutting the doors of his apartments to keep out the throng of people. 'Open the door,' he said, 'to John Bull; he has suffered a great deal in keeping the door open for me.'

"Now, to go from one important subject to another, I must account for my own laziness, which I do by referring you to a small anonymous sort of a novel, in three volumes, Waverley, which you will receive by the mail of this day. It is a very old attempt of mine to embody some traits of those characters and manners peculiar to Scotland, the last remnants of which vanished during my own youth, so that few or no traces now remain. I had written great part of the first volume, and sketched other passages, when I mislaid the MS., and only found it by the merest accident as I was rummaging the draws of an old cabinet; and I took the fancy of finishing it, which I did so fast, that the last two volumes were written in three weeks. I had a great deal of fun in the accomplishment of this task, though I do not expect that it will be popular in the South, as much of the humour, if there be any, is local, and some of it even professional. You, however, who are an adopted Scotchman, will find some amusement in it. It has made a very strong impression here, and the good people of Edinburgh are busied in tracing the author, and in finding out originals for the portraits it contains. In the first case, they will probably find it difficult to convict the guilty author, although he is far from escaping suspicion. Jeffrey has offered to make oath that it is mine, and another great critic has tendered his affidavit *ex contrari*; so that these authorities have divided the Gude Town. However, the thing has succeeded very well, and is thought highly of. I don't know if it has got to London yet. I intend to maintain my *incognito*. Let me know your opinion about it. I should be most happy if I could think it would amuse a painful thought at this anxious moment. I was in hopes Mrs. Morritt was getting so much better, that this relapse affects me very much. Ever yours truly,

W. Scott."

"P. S.—As your conscience has very few things to answer for, you must still burthen it with the secret of the Bridal. It is spreading very rapidly, and I have one or two little fairy romances, which will make a second volume, and which I would wish published, but not with my name. The truth is, that this sort of muddling work amuses me, and I am something in the condition of Joseph Surface, who was embarrassed by getting himself too good a reputation; for many things may please people well enough anonymously, which, if they have me in the title-page, would just give me that sort of ill name which precedes hanging—and that would be in many respects inconvenient, if I thought of again trying a *grande opus*."

This statement of the foregoing letter, (repeated still more precisely in a following one,) as to the time occupied in the composition of the second and third volumes of Waverley, recalls to my memory a trifling anecdote, which, as connected with a dear friend of my youth, whom I have not seen for many years, and may very probably never see again in this world, I shall here set down, in the hope of affording him a momentary, though not an unmixed pleasure, when he may chance to read this compilation on a distant shore—and also in the hope that my humble record may impart to some active mind in the rising generation a shadow of the influence which the reality certainly exerted upon his. Happening to pass through Edinburgh in June, 1814, I dined one day with the gentleman in question, (now the Honourable William Menzies, one of the Supreme Judges at the Cape of Good Hope,) whose residence was then in George Street, situated very near to, and at right angles with, North Castle Street. It was a party of very young persons, most of them, like Menzies and myself, destined for the bar of Scotland, all gay and thoughtless, enjoying the first flush of manhood, with little remembrance of the yesterday or care of the morrow. When my companion's worthy father and uncle, after seeing two or three bottles go round, left the juveniles to themselves, the weather being hot, we adjourned to a library, which had one large window looking northwards. After carousing here for an hour or more, I observed that a shade had come over the aspect of my friend, who happened to be placed immediately opposite to myself, and said something that intimated a fear of his being unwell. "No," said he, "I shall be well enough presently, if you will only let me sit where you are, and take my chair; for there is a confounded hand in sight of me here, which has often bothered me before, and now it won't let me fill my glass with a good will." I rose

* Mr. Morritt had, in the spring of this year, been present at the first levee held at the Tuileries by Monsieur, (afterwards Charles X.,) as the representative of his brother Louis XVIII. Mr. M. had not been in Paris till that time since 1789.

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to change places with him accordingly, and he pointed out to me this hand, which, like the writing on Belshazzar's wall, disturbed his hour of hilarity. "Since we sat down," he said, "I have been watching it—it fascinates my eye—it never stops—page after page is finished and thrown on that heap of MS., and still it goes on unwearied—and so it will be till candles are brought in, and God knows how long after that. It is the same every night—I can't stand the sight of it when I am not at my books."—"Some stupid, dogged, engrossing clerk, probably," exclaimed myself, or some other giddy youth in our society. "No, boys," said our host, "I well know what hand it is—'tis Walter Scott's." This was the hand that, in the evenings of three summer weeks, wrote the two last volumes of Waverley. Would that all who that night watched it, had profited by its example of diligence as largely as William Menzies!

In the next of these letters, Scott enclosed to Mr. Morritt the Prospectus of a new edition of the old poems of the Bruce and the Wallace, undertaken by the learned lexicographer, Dr. John Jamieson; and he announces his departure on a sailing excursion round the north of Scotland. It will be observed, that when Scott began his letter, he had only had Mr. Morritt's opinion of the first volume of Waverley, and that before he closed it, he had received his friend's honest criticism on the work as a whole, with the expression of an earnest hope that he would drop his *incognito* on the title-page of a second edition.

J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M. P, Portland Place, London.

"Abbotsford, July 24, 1824.

"My dear Morrit,

"I am going to say my *vales* to you for some weeks, having accepted an invitation from a committee of the Commissioners for the Northern Lights, (I don't mean the Edinburgh Reviewers, but the *bonâ fide* commissioners for the beacons,) to accompany them upon a nautical tour round Scotland, visiting all that is curious on continent and isle. The party are three gentlemen with whom I am very well acquainted, William Erskine being one. We have a stout cutter, well fitted up and manned for the service by Government; and to make assurance double sure, the admiral has sent a sloop of war to cruise in the dangerous points of our tour, and sweep the sea of the Yankee privateers, which sometimes annoy our northern latitudes. I shall visit the Clephanes in their solitude—and let you know all that I see that is rare and entertaining, which, as we are masters of our time and vessel, should add much to my stock of knowledge.

"As to Waverley, I will play Sir Fretful for once, and assure you that I left the story to flag in the first volume on purpose; the second and third have rather more bustle and interest. I wished (with what success, heaven knows) to avoid the ordinary error of novel-writers, whose first volume is usually their best. But since it has served to amuse Mrs. Morritt and you *usque ab initio*, I have no doubt you will tolerate it even unto the end. It may really boast to be a tolerably faithful portrait of Scottish manners, and has been recognized as such in Edinburgh. The first edition of a thousand instantly disappeared, and the bookseller informs me that the second, of double the quantity, will not supply the market for long. As I shall be very anxious to know how Mrs. Morritt is, I hope to have a few lines from you on my return, which will be about the end of August, or beginning of September. I should have mentioned, that we have the celebrated engineer, Stevenson, along with us. I delight in these professional men of talent; they always give you some new lights by the peculiarity of their habits and studies, so different from the people who are rounded, and smoothed, and ground down, for conversation, and who can say all that every other person says, and—nothing more.

"What a miserable thing it is, that our royal family cannot be quiet and decent at least, if not correct and moral in their deportment. Old farmer George's manly simplicity, modesty of expense, and domestic virtue, saved this country at its most perilous crisis; for it is inconceivable the number of persons whom these qualities united in his behalf, who would have felt but feebly the abstract duty of supporting a crown less worthily worn.

"—I had just proceeded thus far, when your kind favour of the 21st reached Abbotsford. I am heartily glad you continued to like Waverley to the end. The hero is a sneaking piece of imbecility; and if he had married Flora, she would have set him up upon the chimney-piece, as Count Borowlaski's wife used to do with him.* I am a bad hand at depicting a hero, properly so called, and have an unfortunate propensity for the dubious characters of borderers, buccaneers, Highland robbers, and all others of a Robin Hood description. I do not know why it should be, as I am myself, like Hamlet, indifferent honest; but I suppose the blood of the old cattle-drivers of Teviotdale continues to stir in my veins.

"I shall *not* own Waverley; my chief reason is, that it would prevent me of the pleasure of writing again. David Hume, nephew of the historian, says the author must be of a jacobite family and predilections, a yeoman-cavalry man, and a Scottish lawyer, and desires me to guess in whom these happy attributes are united. I shall not plead guilty, however; and, as such seems to be the fashion of the day, I hope charitable people will believe my *affidavit* in contradiction to all other evidence. The Edinburgh faith now is, that Waverley is written by Jeffrey, having been composed to lighten the tedium of his late Transatlantic voyage. So you see the unknown infant is like to come to preferment. In truth, I am not sure it would be considered quite decorous for me, as a Clerk of Session, to write novels. Judges being monks, Clerks are a sort of lay brethren, from whom some solemnity of walk and conduct may be expected. So, whatever I may do of this kind, I shall whistle it down the wind to prey on fortune. I will take care, in the next edition, to make the corrections you recommend. The second is, I believe, nearly through the press. It will hardly be printed faster than it was written; for though the first volume was begun long ago, and actually lost for a time, yet the other two was begun and finished between the 4th June and the 1st July, during all which I attended my duty in Court, and proceeded without loss of time or hindrance of business.

"I wish, for poor auld Scotland's sake, and for the Manes of Bruce and Wallace, and for the living comfort of a very worthy and ingenious dissenting clergyman, who has collected a library and medals of some value, and brought up, I believe, sixteen or seventeen children (his wife's ambition extended to twenty) upon about £150 a-year—I say, I wish, for all these reasons, you could get me among your wealthy friends a name or two for the enclosed proposals. The price is, I think, too high; but the booksellers fixed it two guineas above what I proposed. I trust it will be yet lowered to five guineas, which is a more comeatable sum than six. The poems themselves are great curiosities, both to the philologist and antiquary; and that of Bruce is invaluable, even to the historian. They have been hitherto wretchedly edited.

"I am glad you are not to pay for this scrawl. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

"P.S.—I do not see how my silence can be considered as imposing on the public. If I give my name to a book without writing it, unquestionably that would be a trick. But, unless in the case of his averring facts which he may be called upon to defend or justify, I think an author may use his own discretion in giving or withholding his name. Harry Mackenzie never put his name in a title-page till the last edition of his works; and Swift only owned one out of his thousand and one publications. In point of emolument, every body knows that I sacrifice much money by withholding my name; and what should I gain by it, that any human being has a right to consider as an unfair advantage? In fact, only the freedom of writing trifles with less personal responsibility, and perhaps more frequently than I otherwise might do.

W. S."

I am not able to give the exact date of the following reply to one of John Ballantyne's expostulations on the subject of *the secret*:—

"No, John, I will not own the book—
I won't, you Picaroon.
When next I try St. Grubby's brook,
The A. of Wa— shall bait the hook—
And flat-fish bite as soon,
As if before them they had got
The worn-out wriggler

WALTER SCOTT."

* *Count Borowlaski* was a Polish dwarf, who, after realizing some money as an itinerant object of exhibition, settled, married, and died at Durham. He was a well-bred creature, and much noticed by the clergy and other gentry of that city. Indeed, even when travelling the country as a show, he had always maintained a sort of dignity. I remember him as going from house to house, when I was a child, in a sedan chair, with a servant in livery following him, who took the fee—*M. le Compte* himself (dressed in a scarlet coat and bag wig) being ushered into the room like any ordinary visiter.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

VOYAGE TO THE SHETLAND ISLES, ETC.—SCOTT'S DIARY KEPT ON BOARD THE LIGHT-HOUSE YACHT—JULY AND AUGUST, 1814.

THE gallant composure with which Scott, when he had dismissed a work from his desk, awaited the decision of the public—and the healthy elasticity of spirit with which he could meanwhile turn his whole zeal upon new or different objects—are among the features in his character which will always, I believe, strike the student of literary history as most remarkable. We have now seen him before the fate of Waverley had been determined—before he had heard a word about its reception in England, except from one partial confidant, preparing to start on a voyage to the northern isles, which was likely to occupy the best part of two months, and in the course of which he could hardly expect to receive any intelligence from his friends in Edinburgh. The diary which he kept during this expedition, is—thanks to the leisure of a landsman on board—a very full one; and written without the least notion probably that it would ever be perused except in his own family circle, it affords such a complete and artless portraiture of the man, as he was in himself, and as he mingled with his friends and companions, at one of the most interesting periods of his life, that I am persuaded every reader will be pleased to see it printed in its original state. A few extracts from it were published by himself, in one of the Edinburgh Annual Registers—he also drew from it some of the notes to his Lord of the Isles, and the substance of several others for his romance of the Pirate. But the recurrence of these detached passages will not be complained of—expounded and illustrated as the reader will find them by the personal details of the context.

I have been often told by one of the companions of this voyage, that heartily as Scott entered throughout into their social enjoyments, they all perceived him, when inspecting for the first time scenes of remarkable grandeur, to be in such an abstracted and excited mood, that they felt it would be the kindest and discreetest plan to leave him to himself. "I often," said Lord Kinnedder, "on coming up from the cabin at night, found him pacing the deck rapidly, muttering to himself; and went to the forecastle, lest my presence should disturb him. I remember that at Loch Corriskin, in particular, he seemed quite overwhelmed with his feelings; and we all saw it, and retiring unnoticed, left him to roam and gaze about by himself, until it was time to muster the party and be gone." Scott used to mention the surprise with which he himself witnessed Erskine's emotion on first entering the cave of Staffa—"Would you believe it?" he said—"my poor Willie sat down and wept like a woman!" Yet his own sensibilities, though betrayed in a more masculine and sterner guise, were perhaps as keen as well as deeper than his amiable friend's.

The Poet's Diary, contained in five little paper books, is as follows:—

"VACATION 1814.

VOYAGE IN THE LIGHT-HOUSE YACHT TO NOVA ZEMBLA, AND THE LORD KNOWS WHERE.

"JULY 29th, 1814.—Sailed from Leith about one o'clock on board the Lighthouse Yacht, conveying six guns, and ten men, commanded by Mr. Wilson. The company—Commissioners of the Northern Lights: Robert Hamilton, Sheriff of Lanarkshire; William Erskine, Sheriff of Orkney and Zetland; Adam Duff, Sheriff of Forfarshire. Non-commissioners—Ipse Ego; Mr. David Marjoribanks, son to John Marjoribanks, Provost of Edinburgh, a young gentleman; Rev. Mr. Turnbull, Minister of Tingwall, in the presbytery of Shetland. But the official chief of the expedition is Mr. Stevenson, the Surveyor-Viceroy over the commissioners—a most gentlemanlike and modest man, and well known by his scientific skill.

"Reached the Isle of May in the evening; went ashore, and saw the light—an old tower, and much in the form of a border-keep, with a beacon-grate on the top. It is to be abolished for an oil revolving light, the grate-fire only being ignited upon the leeward side when the wind is very high. *Quere*—Might not the grate revolve? The isle had once a cell or two upon it. The vestiges of the chapel are still visible. Mr. Stevenson proposed demolishing the old tower, and I recommended *ruining* it *à la picturesque*—*i. e.* demolishing it partially. The island might be made a delightful residence for sea-bathers.

"On board again in the evening: watched the progress of the ship round Fifeness, and the revolving motion of the now distant Bell-Rock light, until the wind grew rough, and the landsmen sick. To bed at eleven, and slept sound."

"30*th July*.—Waked at six by the steward: summoned to visit the Bell Rock, where the beacon is well worthy attention. Its dimensions are well known; but no description can give the idea of this slight, solitary, round tower, trembling amid the billows, and fifteen miles from Arbroath, the nearest shore. The fitting up within is not only handsome, but elegant. All work of wood (almost) is wainscot; all hammer-work brass; in short, exquisitely fitted up. You enter by a ladder of rope, with wooden steps, about thirty feet from the bottom where the mason-work ceases to be solid, and admits of round apartments. The lowest is a storehouse for the people's provisions, water, &c.; above that a storehouse for the lights, of oil, &c.; then the kitchen of the people, three in number; then their sleeping-chamber; then the saloon or parlour, a neat little room; above all, the lighthouse; all communicating by oaken ladders, with brass rails, most handsomely and conveniently executed. Breakfasted in the parlour.* On board again at nine, and run down, through a rough sea, to Aberbrothock, vulgarly called Arbroath. All sick, even Mr. Stevenson. God grant this occur seldom. Landed and dined at Arbroath, where we were to take up Adam Duff. We visited the appointments of the lighthouse establishment—a handsome tower, with two wings. These contain the lodgings of the keepers of the light—very handsome indeed, and very clean. They might be thought too handsome, were it not of consequence to give those men, intrusted with a duty so laborious and slavish, a consequence in the eyes of the public and in their own. The central part of the building forms a single tower, corresponding with the lighthouse. As the keepers' families live here, they are apprised each morning by a signal that *all is well*. If this signal be not made, a tender sails for the rock directly. I visited the abbey church for the third time, the first being—*cheu!*†—the second with T. Thomson. Dined at Arbroath, and came on board at night, where I made up this foolish journal, and now beg for wine and water. So the vessel is once more in motion.

"31*st July*.—Waked at seven; vessel off Fowlsheugh and Dunnottar. Fair wind, and delightful day; glide enchantingly along the coast of Kincardineshire, and open the bay of Nigg about ten. At eleven, off Aberdeen; the gentlemen go ashore to Girdle-Ness, a projecting point of rock to the east of the harbour of Fort-Dee. There the magistrates of Aberdeen wish to have a fort and beacon-light. The Oscar, whaler, was lost here last year, with all her hands, excepting two; about forty perished. Dreadful, to be wrecked so near a large and populous town! The view of Old and New Aberdeen from the sea is quite beautiful. About noon, proceed along the coast of Aberdeenshire, which, to the northwards, changes from a bold and rocky to a low and sandy character. Along the bay of Belhelvie, a whole parish was swallowed up by the shifting sands, and is still a desolate waste. It belonged to the Earls of Errol, and was rented at £500 a year at

* On being requested while at breakfast to inscribe his name in the album of the tower, Scott penned immediately the lines, "Pharos Loquitur," which may be seen in the last edition of his Poetical Works, vol. x. p. 355.

† This is, without doubt, an allusion to some happy day's excursion when his *first love* was of the party.

the time. When these sands are past, the land is all arable. Not a tree to be seen; nor a grazing cow, or sheep, or even a labour-horse at grass, though this be Sunday. The next remarkable object was a fragment of the old castle of Slains, on a precipitous bank, overlooking the sea. The fortress was destroyed when James VI. marched north [A. D. 1594] after the battle of Glenlivat, to reduce Huntly and Errol to obedience. The family then removed to their present mean habitation, for such it seems a collection of low houses forming a quadrangle, one side of which is built on the very verge of the precipice that overhangs the ocean. What seems odd, there are no stairs down to the beach. Imprudence, or ill fortune as fatal as the sands of Belhelvie, has swallowed up the estate of Errol, excepting this dreary mansion-house, and a farm or two adjoining. We took to the boat, and running along the coast, had some delightful sea-views, to the northward of the castle. The coast is here very rocky, but the rocks being rather soft, are wasted and corroded by the constant action of the waves,—and the fragments which remain, where the softer parts have been washed away, assume the appearance of old Gothic ruins. There are open arches, towers, steeples, and so forth. One part of this scaur is called *Dun Buy*, being coloured yellow by the dung of the sea-fowls who build there in the most surprising numbers. We caught three young gulls. But the most curious object was the celebrated Buller of Buchan, a huge rocky cauldron, into which the sea rushes through a natural arch of rock. I walked round the top; in one place the path is only about two feet wide, and a monstrous precipice on either side. We then rowed into the cauldron or buller from beneath, and saw nothing around us but a regular wall of black rock, and nothing above but the blue sky. A fishing hamlet had sent out its inhabitants, who, gazing from the brink, looked like sylphs looking down upon gnomes. In the side of the cauldron opens a deep black cavern. Johnson says it might be a retreat from storms, which is nonsense. In a high gale the waves rush in with incredible violence. An old fisher said he had seen them flying over the natural wall of the buller, which cannot be less than 200 feet high. Same old man says Slains is now inhabited by a Mr. Bowles, who comes so far from the southward that naebody kens whare he comes frae. 'Was he frae the Indies?'—'Na; he did not think he came that road. He was far frae the southland. Naebody ever heard the name of the place; but he had brought more guid out o' Peterhead than a' the Lords he had seen in Slains, and he had seen three.' About half-past five we left this interesting spot, and after a hard pull, reached the yacht. Weather falls hazy, and rather calm; but at sea we observe vessels enjoying more wind. Pass Peterhead, dimly distinguishing two steeples, and a good many masts. Mormounthill said to resemble a coffin—a likeness of which we could not judge, Mormount being for the present invisible. Pass Rattray-Head: near this cape are dangerous shelves, called the Bridge of Rattray. Here the wreck of the Doris merchant vessel came on shore, lost last year with a number of passengers for Shetland. We lie off all night.

"1*st August*.—Off Frasersburg—a neat little town. Mr. Stevenson and the commissioners go on shore to look at a light maintained there upon an old castle, on a cape called Kinnaird's Head. The morning being rainy, and no object of curiosity ashore, I remain on board, to make up my journal, and write home.

"The old castle, now bearing the light, is a picturesque object from the sea. It was the baronial mansion of the Frasers, now Lords Saltoun—an old square tower with a minor fortification towards the landing-place on the sea-side. About eleven, the Commissioners came off, and we leave this town, the extreme point of the Moray Firth, to stretch for Shetland—saluted the Castle with three guns, and stretch out with a merry gale. See Mormount, a long flattish topped hill near to the West Troup-head, and another bold cliff promontory projecting into the frith. Our gale soon failed, and we are now all but becalmed; songs, ballads, recitations, backgammon, and picquet, for the rest of the day. Noble sunset and moon rising, we are now out of sight of land.

"2*d August*.—At sea in the mouth of the Moray Frith. This day almost a blank—light baffling airs, which do us very little good, most of the landsmen sick, more or less; picquet, backgammon, and chess, the only resources.—P. M. A breeze, and we begin to think we have passed the Fair Isle, lying between Shetland and Orkney, at which it was our intention to have touched. In short, like one of Sindbad's adventures, we have run on till neither captain nor pilot know exactly where we are. The breeze increases—weather may be called rough; worse and worse after we are in our berths, nothing but booming, trampling, and whizzing of waves about our ears, and ever and anon, as we fall asleep, our ribs come in contact with those of the vessel; hail Duff and the Udaller * in the after-cabin, but they are too sick to answer. Towards morning, calm, (comparative,) and a nap.

"3*d August*.—At sea as before; no appearance of land; proposed that the Sheriff of Zetland do issue a *meditatione fugæ* warrant against his territories, which seem to fly from us. Pass two whalers; speak the nearest, who had come out of Lerwick, which is about twenty miles distant; stand on with a fine breeze. About nine at night, with moonlight and strong twilight, we weather the point of Bard-head, and enter a channel about three quarters of a mile broad, which forms the southern entrance to the harbour of Lerwick, where we cast anchor about half-past ten, and put Mr. Turnbull on shore.

"4*th August*.—Harbour of Lerwick. Admire the excellence of this harbour of the metropolis of Shetland. It is a beautiful place, screened on all sides from the wind by hills of a gentle elevation. The town, a fishing village, built irregularly upon a hill ascending from the shore, has a picturesque appearance. On the left is Fort Charlotte, garrisoned of late by two companies of veterans. The Greenlandmen, of which nine fine vessels are lying in the harbour, add much to the liveliness of the scene. Mr. Duncan, sheriff-substitute, came off to pay his respects to his principal; he is married to a daughter of my early acquaintance, Walter Scott of Scotshall. We go ashore. Lerwick, a poor-looking place, the streets flagged instead of being causewayed, for there are no wheel-carriages. The streets full of drunken riotous sailors, from the whale-vessels. It seems these ships take about 1000 sailors from Zetland every year, and return them as they come back from the fishery. Each sailor may gain from £20 to £30, which is paid by the merchants of Lerwick, who have agencies from the owners of the whalers in England. The whole return may be between £25,000 and £30,000. These Zetlanders, as they get a part of this pay on landing, make a point of treating their English messmates, who get drunk of course, and are very riotous. The Zetlanders themselves do *not* get drunk, but go straight home to their houses, and reserve their hilarity for the winter season, when they spend their wages in dancing and drinking. Erskine finds employment as Sheriff, for the neighbourhood of the fort enables him to make *main forte*, and secure a number of the rioters. We visit F. Charlotte, which is a neat little fort mounting ten heavy guns to the sea, but only one to the land. Major F. the Governor, showed us the fort; it commands both entrances of the harbour: the north entrance is not very good, but the south, capital. The water in the harbour is very deep, as frigates of the smaller class lie almost close to the shore. Take a walk with Captain M'Diarmid, a gentlemanlike and intelligent officer of the garrison; we visit a small fresh-water loch called *Cleik-him-in*; it borders on the sea, from which it is only divided by a sort of beach, apparently artificial; though the sea lashes the outsides of this beach, the water of the lake is not brackish. In this lake are the remains of a Picts' Castle, but ruinous. The people think the Castle has

* Erskine—sheriff of Shetland and Orkney.

not been built on a natural island, but on an artificial one formed by a heap of stones. These Duns or Picts' Castles, are so small, it is impossible to conceive what effectual purpose they could serve, excepting a temporary refuge for the chief.—Leave *Cleik-him-in*, and proceed along the coast. The ground is dreadfully encumbered with stones; the patches, which have been sown with oats and barley, bear very good crops, but they are mere *patches*, the cattle and ponies feeding among them and secured by tethers. The houses most wretched, worse than the worst herd's house I ever saw. It would be easy to form a good farm by enclosing the ground with Galloway dykes, which would answer the purpose of clearing it at the same time of stones; as there is plenty of limeshell, marle, and alga-marina, manure could not be wanting. But there are several obstacles to improvement, chiefly the undivided state of the properties, which lie *run-rig*; then the claims of Lord Dundas, the lord of the country; and above all, perhaps, the state of the common people, who, dividing their attention between the fishery and the cultivation, are not much interested in the latter, and are often absent at the proper time of labour. Their ground is chiefly dug with the spade, and their ploughs are beyond description awkward. An odd custom prevails —any person, without exception, (if I understand rightly,) who wishes to raise a few kail, fixes upon any spot he pleases, encloses it with a dry stone-wall, uses it as a kail-yard till he works out the soil, then deserts it and makes another. Some dozen of these little enclosures, about twenty or thirty feet square, are in sight at once. They are called *planty-cruives*; and the Zetlanders are so far from reckoning this an invasion, or a favour on the part of the proprietor, that their most exaggerated description of an avaricious person is one who would refuse liberty for a *planty-cruive*; or to infer the greatest contempt of another, they will say, they would not hold a *planty-cruive* of him. It is needless to notice how much this license must interfere with cultivation.

"Leaving the *cultivated* land, we turn more inland, and pass two or three small lakes. The muirs are mossy and sterile in the highest degree; the hills are clad with stunted heather, intermixed with huge great stones; much of an astringent root with a yellow flower, called *Tormentil*, used by the islanders in dressing leather in lieu of the oak bark. We climbed a hill about three miles from Lerwick to a cairn, which presents a fine view of the indented coast of the island, and the distant isles of Mousa and others. Unfortunately the day is rather hazy—return by a circuitous route, through the same sterile country. These muirs are used as a commonty by the proprietors of the parishes in which they lie, and each, without any regard to the extent of his peculiar property, puts as much stock upon them as he chooses. The sheep are miserable-looking, hairy-legged creatures, of all colours, even to sky-blue. I often wondered where Jacob got speckled lambs; I think now they must have been of the Shetland stock. In our return, pass the upper end of the little lake of *Cleik-him-in*, which is divided by a rude causeway from another small loch, communicating with it, however, by a sluice, for the purpose of driving a mill. But such a mill! The wheel is horizontal, with the cogs turned diagonally to the water; the beam stands upright, and is inserted in a stone-quern of the old-fashioned construction. This simple machine is enclosed in a hovel about the size of a pig-stye, and there is the mill!* There are about 500 such mills in Shetland, each incapable of grinding more than a sack at a time.

"I cannot get a distinct account of the nature of the land rights. The Udal proprietors have ceased to exist, yet proper feudal tenures seem ill understood. Districts of ground are in many instances understood to belong to Townships or Communities, possessing what may be arable by patches, and what is muir as a commonty, *pro indiviso*. But then individuals of such a Township often take it upon them to grant feus of particular parts of the property thus possessed *pro indiviso*. The town of Lerwick is built upon a part of the commonty of Sound, the proprietors of the houses having feu rights from different heritors of that Township, but why from one rather than another, or how even the whole Township combining (which has not yet been attempted) could grant such a right upon principle, seems altogether uncertain. In the mean time the chief stress is laid upon occupance. I should have supposed upon principle, that Lord Dundas, as superior, possessed the *dominium eminens*, and ought to be resorted to as the source of land rights. But it is not so. It has been found that the heritors of each Township hold directly of the Crown, only paying the *Scat*, or Norwegian land-tax, and other duties to his lordship, used and wont. Besides, he has what are called property lands in every Township, or in most, which he lets to his tenants. Lord Dundas is now trying to introduce the system of leases and a better kind of agriculture. Return home and dine at Sinclair's, a decent inn—Captain M'Diarmid and other gentlemen dine with us.—Sleep at the inn on a straw couch.

"*5th August*, 1814.—Hazy disagreeable morning—Erskine trying the rioters—notwithstanding which a great deal of rioting still in the town. The Greenlanders, however, only quarrelled among themselves, and the Zetland sailors seemed to exert themselves in keeping peace. They are, like all the other Zetlanders I have seen, a strong, clear-complexioned, handsome race, and the women are very pretty. The females are rather slavishly employed, however, and I saw more than one carrying home the heavy sea-chests of their husbands, brothers, or lovers, discharged from on board the Greenlanders. The Zetlanders are, however, so far provident, that when they enter the navy they make liberal allowance of their pay for their wives and families. Not less than £15,000 a-year has been lately paid by the Admiralty on this account; yet this influx of money, with that from the Greenland fishery, seems rather to give the means of procuring useless indulgences than of augmenting the stock of productive labour. Mr. Collector Ross tells me that from the King's books it appears that the quantity of spirits, tea, coffee, tobacco, snuff, and sugar, imported annually into Lerwick for the consumption of Zetland, averages at sale price, £20,000 yearly, at the least. Now the inhabitants of Zetland, men, women, and children, do not exceed 23,000 in all, and the proportion of foreigh luxuries seems monstrous, unless we allow for the habits contracted by the seamen in their foreign trips. Tea, in particular, is used by all ranks, and porridge quite exploded.

"We parade Lerwick. The most remarkable thing is that, the main street being flagged, and all the others very narrow lanes descending the hill by steps, any thing like a cart of the most ordinary and rude construction, seems not only out of question when the town was built, but in its present state quite excluded. A road of five miles in length, on the line between Lerwick and Scalloway, has been already made—upon a very awkward and expensive plan, and ill-lined, as may be supposed. But it is proposed to extend this road by degrees: carts will then be introduced, and by crossing the breed of their ponies judiciously, they will have Galloways to draw them. The streets of Lerwick (as one blunder perpetrates another) will then be a bar to improvement, for till the present houses are greatly altered, no cart can approach the quay. In the garden of Captain Nicolson, R.N., which is rather in a flourishing state, he has tried various trees, almost all of which have died except the willow. But the plants seem to me to be injured in their passage; seeds would perhaps do better. We are visited by several of the notables of the island, particularly Mr. Mowat, a considerable proprietor, who claims acquaintance with me as the friend of my father, and remembers me as a boy. The day clearing up, Duff and I walk with this good old gentleman to *Cleik-him-in*, and with some trouble drag a boat off the beach into the fresh-water loch, and go to visit the Picts' castle. It is of considerable size, and consists of three circular walls, of huge natural stones admirably combined without

* Here occurs a rude scratch of drawing

cement. The outer circuit seems to have been simply a bounding wall or bulwark. The second or interior defence contains lodgements such as I shall describe. This inner circuit is surrounded by a wall of about sixteen or eighteen feet thick, composed, as I said, of huge massive stones placed in layers with great art, but without mortar or cement. The wall is not perpendicular, but the circle lessens gradually towards the top, as an old-fashioned pigeon-house. Up the interior of this wall, there proceeds a circular winding gallery, ascending in the form of an inclined plane, so as to gain the top by circling round like a cork-screw within the walls. This is enlightened by little apertures (about two feet by three) into the inside, and also, it is said, by small slits—of which I saw none. It is said there are marks of galleries within the circuit, running parallel to the horizon; these I saw no remains of; and the interior gallery, with its apertures, is so extremely low and narrow, being only about three feet square, that it is difficult to conceive how it could serve the purpose of communication. At any rate, the size fully justifies the tradition prevalent here, as well as in the south of Scotland, that the Picts were a diminutive race. More of this when we see the more perfect specimen of a Pict castle in Mousa, which we resolve to examine, if it be possible. Certainly I am deeply curious to see what must be one of the most ancient houses in the world, built by a people who, while they seem to have bestowed much pains on their habitations, knew neither the art of cement, of arches, or of stairs. The situation is wild, dreary, and impressive. On the land side are huge sheets and fragments of rocks, interspersed with a stinted vegetation of grass and heath, which bears no proportion to the rocks and stones. From the top of his tower the Pictish Monarch might look out upon a stormy sea, washing a succession of rocky capes, reaches, and headlands, and immediately around him was the deep fresh-water loch on which his fortress was constructed. It communicates with the land by a sort of causeway, formed, like the artificial islet itself, by heaping together stones till the pile reached the surface of the water. This is usually passable, but at present overflooded.—Return and dine with Mr. Duncan, Sheriff-substitute—are introduced to Dr. Edmonstone, author of a History of Shetland, who proposes to accompany us to-morrow to see the Cradle of Noss. I should have mentioned that Mr. Stevenson sailed this morning with the yacht to survey some isles to the northward; he returns on Saturday, it is hoped.

"*6th August.*—Hire a six-oared boat, whaler-built, with a taper point at each end, so that the rudder can be hooked on either at pleasure. These vessels look very frail, but are admirably adapted to the stormy seas, where they live when a ship's boat stiffly and compactly built must necessarily perish. They owe this to their elasticity and lightness. Some of the rowers wear a sort of coats of dressed sheep leather, sewed together with thongs. We sailed out at the southern inlet of the harbour, rounding successively the capes of the Hammer, Kirkubus, the Ving, and others, consisting of bold cliffs, hollowed into caverns, or divided into pillars and arches of fantastic appearance, by the constant action of the waves. As we passed the most northerly of these capes, called, I think, the Ord, and turned into the open sea, the scenes became yet more tremendously sublime. Rocks upwards of three or four hundred feet in height, presented themselves in gigantic succession, sinking perpendicularly into the main, which is very deep even within a few fathoms of their base. One of these capes is called the Card-head; a huge projecting arch is named the Giant's Leg.

'Here the lone sea-bird wakes his wildest cry.'

Not lone, however, in one sense, for their numbers, and the variety of their tribes, are immense, though I think they do not equal those of Dunbuy, on the coast of Buchan. Standing across a little bay, we reached the Isle of Noss, having hitherto coasted the shore of Bressay. Here we see a detached and precipitous rock, or island, being a portion rent by a narrow sound from the rest of the cliff, and called the Holm. This detached rock is wholly inaccessible, unless by a pass of peril, entitled the Cradle of Noss, which is a sort of wooden chair, travelling from precipice to precipice on rings, which run upon two cables stretched across over the gulf. We viewed this extraordinary contrivance from beneath, at the distance of perhaps one hundred fathoms at least. The boatmen made light of the risk of crossing it, but it must be tremendous to a brain disposed to be giddy. Seen from beneath, a man in the basket would resemble a large crow or raven floating between rock and rock. The purpose of this strange contrivance is to give the tenant the benefit of putting a few sheep upon the Holm, the top of which is level, and affords good pasture. The animals are transported in the cradle by one at a time, a shepherd holding them upon his knees. The channel between the Holm and the isle is passable by boats in calm weather, but not at the time when we saw it. Rowing on through a heavy tide, and nearer the breakers than any but Zetlanders would have ventured, we rounded another immensely high cape, called by the islanders the Noup of Noss, but by sailors Hang-Cliff, from its having a projecting appearance. This was the highest rock we had yet seen, though not quite perpendicular. Its height has never been measured: I should judge it exceeds 600 feet; it has been conjectured to measure 800 and upwards. Our steersman had often descended this precipitous rock, having only the occasional assistance of a rope, one end of which he secured from time to time round some projecting cliff. The collecting sea-fowl for their feathers was the object, and he might gain five or six dozen, worth eight or ten shillings, by such an adventure. These huge precipices abound with caverns, many of which run much farther into the rock than any one has ventured to explore. We entered (with much hazard to our boat) one called the Orkneyman's Harbour, because an Orkney vessel run in there some years since to escape a French privateer. The entrance was lofty enough to admit us without striking the mast, but a sudden turn in the direction of the cave would have consigned us to utter darkness if we had gone in farther. The dropping of the sea-fowl cormorants into the water from the sides of the cavern, when disturbed by our approach, had something in it wild and terrible.

"After passing the Noup, the precipices become lower, and sink into a rocky shore with deep indentations, called by the natives, *Gios*. Here we would fain have landed to visit the Cradle from the top of the cliff, but the surf rendered it impossible. We therefore rowed on like Thalaba in 'Allah's name,' around the Isle of Noss, and landed upon the opposite side of the small sound which divides it from Bressay. Noss exactly resembles in shape Salisbury crags, supposing the sea to flow down the valley called Hunter's bog, and round the foot of the precipice. The eastern part of the isle is fine smooth pasture, the best I have seen in these isles, sloping upwards to the verge of the tremendous rocks which form its western front.

"As we are to dine at Gardie-House (the seat of young Mr. Mowat), on the Isle of Bressay, Duff and I—who went together on this occasion—resolve to walk across the island, about three miles, being by this time thoroughly wet. Bressay is a black and heathy isle, full of little lochs and bogs. Through storm and shade, and dense and dry, we find our way to Gardie, and have then to encounter the sublunary difficulties of wanting the keys of our portmanteaus, &c., the servants having absconded to see the Cradle. These being overcome, we are hospitably treated at Gardie. Young Mr. Mowat, son of my old friend, is an improver, and a *moderate* one. He has got a ploughman from Scotland, who acts as *grieve*, but as yet with the prejudices and inconveniences which usually attach themselves to the most salutary experiments. The ploughman complains that the Zetlanders work as if a spade or hoe burned their fingers, and that though they only got a shilling a-day, yet the labour of three of them does not exceed what one good hand in Berwickshire would do for 2s. 6d.

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The islanders retort, that a man can do no more than he can; that they are not used to be taxed to their work so severely; that they will work as their fathers did, and not otherwise; and at first the landlord found difficulty in getting hands to work under his Caledonian taskmaster. Besides, they find fault with his *he*, and *gee*, and *wo*, when ploughing. 'He speaks to the horse,' they say, 'and they gang—and there's something no canny about the man.' In short, between the prejudices of laziness and superstition, the ploughman leads a sorry life of it; yet these prejudices are daily abating, under the steady and indulgent management of the proprietor. Indeed, nowhere is improvement in agriculture more necessary. An old-fashioned Zetland plough is a real curiosity. It had but one handle, or stilt, and a coulter, but no sock: it ripped the furrow, therefore, but did not throw it aside. When this precious machine was in motion, it was dragged by four little bullocks yoked a-breast, and as many ponies harnessed, or rather strung, to the plough by ropes and thongs of raw hide. One man went before, walking backward, with his face to the bullocks, and pulling them forward by main strength. Another held down the plough by its single handle, and made a sort of slit in the earth, which two women, who closed the procession, converted into a furrow, by throwing the earth aside with shovels. An antiquary might be of opinion that this was the very model of the original plough invented by Triptolemus; and it is but justice to Zetland to say, that these relics of ancient agricultural art will soon have all the interest attached to rarity. We could only hear of one of these ploughs within three miles of Lerwick.

"This and many other barbarous habits to which the Zetlanders were formerly wedded, seem only to have subsisted because their amphibious character of fishers and farmers induced them to neglect agricultural arts. A Zetland farmer looks to the sea to pay his rent; if the land finds him a little meal and kail, and (if he be a very clever fellow) a few potatoes, it is very well. The more intelligent part of the landholders are sensible of all this but argue like men of good sense and humanity on the subject. To have good farming, you must have a considerable farm, upon which capital may be laid out to advantage. But to introduce this change suddenly would turn adrift perhaps twenty families, who now occupy small farms *pro indiviso*, cultivating by patches *rundale* and *runrig*, what part of the property is arable, and stocking the pasture as a common upon which each family turns out such stock as they can rear, without observing a proportion as to the number which it can support. In this way many townships, as they are called, subsist indeed, but in a precarious and indigent manner. Fishing villages seem the natural resource for this excess of population; but, besides the expense of erecting them, the habits of the people are to be considered, who, with 'one foot on land and one on sea,' would be with equal reluctance confined to either element. The remedy seems to be, that the larger proprietors should gradually set the example of better cultivation, and introduce better implements. They will, by degrees, be imitated by the inferior proprietors, and by their tenants; and, as turnips and hay crops become more general, a better and heavier class of stock will naturally be introduced.

"The sheep in particular might be improved into a valuable stock, and would no doubt thrive, since the winters are very temperate. But I should be sorry that extensive pasture farms were introduced, as it would tend to diminish a population invaluable for the supply of our navy. The improvement of the arable land, on the contrary, would set them beyond the terrors of famine with which the islanders are at present occasionally visited; and, combined with fisheries, carried on not by farmers, but by real fishers, would amply supply the inhabitants, without diminishing the export of a dried fish. This separation of trades will in time take place, and then the prosperous days of Zetland will begin. The proprietors are already upon the alert, studying the means of gradual improvement, and no humane person would wish them to drive it on too rapidly, to the distress and perhaps destruction of the numerous tenants who have been bred under a different system.

"I have gleaned something of the peculiar superstitions of the Zetlanders, which are numerous and potent. Witches, fairies &c., are as numerous as ever they were in Teviotdale. The latter are called *Trows*, probably from the Norwegian *Dwarg* (or *dwarf*) the *D* being readily converted into T. The dwarfs are the prime agents in the machinery of Norwegian superstition. The *trows* do not differ from the fairies of the Lowlands, or *Sighean* of the Highlanders. They steal children, dwell within the interior of green hills, and often carry mortals into their recesses. Some, yet alive, pretend to have been carried off in this way, and obtain credit for the marvels they tell of the subterranean habitations of the trows. Sometimes, when a person becomes melancholy and low-spirited, the trows are supposed to have stolen the real being, and left a moving phantom to represent him. Sometimes they are said to steal only the heart—like Lancashire witches. There are cures in each case. The party's friends resort to a cunning man or woman, who hangs about the neck a triangular stone in the shape of a heart, or conjures back the lost individual, by retiring to the hills and employing the necessary spells. A common receipt, when a child appears consumptive and puny, is, that the conjurer places a bowl of water on the patient's head, and pours melted lead into it through the wards of a key. The metal assumes of course a variety of shapes, from which he selects a portion, after due consideration, which is sewn into the shirt of the patient. Sometimes no part of the lead suits the seer's fancy. Then the operation is recommenced, until he obtains a fragment of such a configuration as suits his mystical purpose. Mr. Duncan told us he had been treated in this way when a boy.

"A worse and most hôrrid opinion prevails, or did prevail, among the fishers—namely, that he who saves a drowning man will receive at his hands some deep wrong or injury. Several instances were quoted to-day in company, in which the utmost violence had been found necessary to compel the fishers to violate this inhuman prejudice. It is conjectured to have arisen as an apology for rendering no assistance to the mariners as they escaped from a shipwrecked vessel, for these isles are infamous for plundering wrecks. A story is told of the crew of a stranded vessel who were warping themselves ashore by means of a hawser which they had fixed to the land. The islanders (of Unst, as I believe, watches their motions in silence, till an old man reminded them that if they suffered these sailors to come ashore, they would consume all their winter stock of provisions. A Zetlander cut the hawser, and the poor wretches, twenty in number, were all swept away. This is a tale of former times—the cruelty would not now be *active;* but I fear that even yet the drowning mariner would in some places receive no assistance in his exertions, and certainly he would in most be plundered to the skin upon his landing. The gentlemen do their utmost to prevent this infamous practice. It may seem strange that the natives should be so little affected by a distress to which they are themselves so constantly exposed. But habitual exposure to danger hardens the heart against its consequences, whether to ourselves or others. There is yet living a man—if he can be called so—to whom the following story belongs:—He was engaged in catching sea-fowl upon one of the cliffs, with his father and brother. All three were suspended by a cord, according to custom, and overhanging the ocean, at the height of some hundred feet. This man being uppermost on the cord, observed that it was giving way, as unable to support their united weight. He called out to his brother who was next to him—'Cut away a nail below, Wille,' meaning he should cut the rope beneath and let his father drop. Willie refused, and bid him cut himself, if he pleased. He did so, and his brother and father were precipitated into the sea. He never

thought of concealing or denying the adventure in all its parts. We left Gardie-House late; being on the side of the Isle of Bressay, opposite to Lerwick, we were soon rowed across the bay. A laugh with Hamilton,* whose gout keeps him stationary at Lerwick, but whose good-humour defies gout and every other provocation, concludes the evening.

"*7th August*, 1814. Being Sunday, Duff, Erskine, and I, rode to Tingwall upon Zetland ponies, to breakfast with our friend Parson Turnbull, who had come over in our yacht. An ill-conducted and worse-made road served us four miles on our journey. This *Via Flaminia* of Thule terminates, like its prototype, in a bog. It is, however, the only road in these isles, except about half a mile made by Mr. Turnbull. The land in the interior much resembles the Peel-heights, near Ashestiel; but, as you approach the other side of the island, becomes better. Tingwall is rather a fertile valley, up which winds a loch of about two miles in length. The kirk and manse stand at the head of the loch, and command a view down the valley to another lake beyond the first, and thence over another reach of land, to the ocean, indented by capes and studded with isles; among which, that of St. Ninian's, abruptly divided from the mainland by a deep chasm, is the most conspicuous. Mr. Turnbull is a Jedburgh man by birth, but a Zetlander by settlement and inclination. I have reason to be proud of my countryman;—he is doing his best, with great patience and judgment, to set a good example both in temporals and spirituals, and is generally beloved and respected among all classes. His glebe is in far the best order of any ground I have seen in Zetland. It is enclosed chiefly with dry-stone, instead of the useless turf-dikes; and he has sown grass, and has a hay-stack, and a second crop of clover, and may claim well-dressed fields of potatoes, barley, and oats. The people around him are obviously affected by his example. He gave us an excellent discourse and remarkably good prayers, which are seldom the excellence of the Presbyterian worship. The congregation were numerous, decent, clean, and well-dressed. The men have all the air of seamen, and are a good-looking hardy race. Some of the old fellows had got faces much resembling Tritons; if they had had conchs to blow, it would have completed them. After church, ride down the loch to Scalloway—the country wild but pleasant, with sloping hills of good pasturage, and patches of cultivation on the lower ground. Pass a huge standing stone, or pillar. Here, it is said, the son of an old Earl of the Orkneys met his fate. He had rebelled against his father, and fortified himself in Zetland. The Earl sent a party to dislodge him, who, not caring to proceed to violence against his person, failed in the attempt. The Earl then sent a stronger force, with orders to take him dead or alive. The young Absalom's castle was stormed—he himself fled across the loch and was overtaken, and slain at this pillar. The Earl afterwards executed the perpetrators of the slaughter, though they had only fulfilled his own mandate.

"We reach Scalloway, and visit the ruins of an old castle, composed of a double tower, or keep, with turrets at the corners. It is the principal, if not the only ruin of Gothic times in Zetland, and is of very recent date, being built in 1600. It was built by Patrick Stewart, Earl of Orkney, afterwards deservedly executed at Edinburgh for many acts of tyranny and oppression. It was this rapacious Lord who imposed many of those heavy duties still levied from the Zetlanders by Lord Dundas. The exactions by which he accomplished this erection were represented as grievous. He was so dreaded, that upon his trial one Zetland witness refused to say a word till he was assured that there was no chance of the Earl returning to Scalloway. Over the entrance of the castle are his arms, much defaced, with the unicorns of Scotland for supporters, the assumption of which was one of the articles of indictment. There is a Scriptural inscription also above the door, in Latin, now much defaced:—

'PATRICIUS ORCHADIÆ ET ZETLANDIÆ COMES. A. D. 1600. CUJUS FUNDAMEN SAXUM EST, DOMUS ILLA MANEBIT STABILIS: E CONTRA, SI SIT ARENA, PERIT.'

"This is said to have been furnished to Earl Patrick by a Presbyterian divine, who slily couched under it an allusion to the evil practices by which the Earl had established his power. He perhaps trusted that the language might disguise the import from the Earl.* If so, the Scottish nobility are improved in literature, for the Duke of Gordon pointed out an error in the Latinity.

"Scalloway has a beautiful and very safe harbour, but as it is somewhat difficult of access, from a complication of small islands, it is inferior to Lerwick. Hence, though still nominally the capital of Zetland, for all edictal citations are made at Scalloway, it has sunk into a small fishing hamlet. The Norwegians made their original settlement in this parish of Tingwall. At the head of this loch, and just below the manse, is a small round islet accessible by stepping-stones, where they held their courts; hence the islet is called Law-ting—Ting, or Thing, answering to our word business, exactly like the Latin *negotium*. It seems odd that in Dumfries-shire, and even in the Isle of Man, where the race and laws were surely Celtic, we have this Gothic word Ting and Ting-wald applied in the same way. We dined with Mr. Scott of Scalloway, who, like several families of this name in Shetland, is derived from the house of Scotstarvet. They are very clannish, marry much among themselves, and are proud of their descent. Two young ladies, daughters of Mr. Scott's, dined with us—they were both Mrs. Scotts, having married brothers—the husband of one was lost in the unfortunate Doris. They were pleasant, intelligent women, and exceedingly obliging. Old Mr. Scott seems a good country gentleman. He is negotiating an exchange with Lord Dundas, which will give him the Castle of Scalloway and two or three neighbouring islands: the rest of the archipelago (seven I think in number) are already his own. He will thus have command of the whole fishing and harbour, for which he parts with an estate of more immediate value, lying on the other side of the mainland. I found my name made me very popular in this family, and there were many inquiries after the state of the Buccleuch family, in which they seemed to take much interest. I found them possessed of the remarkable circumstances attending the late projected sale of Ancrum, and the death of Sir John Scott, and thought it strange that, settled for three generations in a country so distant, they should still take an interest in those matters. I was loaded with shells and little curiosities for my young people.

"There was a report (January was two years) of a kraken or some monstrous fish being seen off Scalloway. The object was visible for a fortnight, but nobody dared approach it, although I should have thought the Zetlanders would not have feared

* Robert Hamilton, Sheriff of Lanarkshire, and afterwards one of the Clerks of Session, was a particular favourite with Scott—first, among many other good reasons, he had been a soldier in his youth, had fought gallantly and been wounded severely in the American war, and was a very Uncle Toby in military enthusiasm; 2dly, because he was a brother antiquary of the genuine Monkbarns breed; 3dly, (last not least,) because he was, in spite of the example of the head of his name and race, a steady Tory. Mr. Hamilton sent for Scott when upon his death-bed in 1831, and desired him to choose, and carry off as a parting memorial, any article he liked in his collection of arms. Sir Walter (by that time sorely shattered in his own health) selected the sword with which his good friend had been begirt at Bunker's Hill.

* In his reviewal of Pitcairn's Trials, (1833,) Scott says—"In erecting this Earl's Castle of Scalloway, and other expensive edifices, the King's tenants were forced to work in quarries, transport stone, dig, delve, climb, and build, and submit to all possible sorts of servile and painful labour, without either meat, drink, hire, or recompense of any kind. 'My father,' said Earl Patrick, 'built his house at Sumburgh on the sand, and it has given way already; this of mine on the rock shall abide and endure.' He did not or would not understand that the oppression, rapacity, and cruelty by means of which the house arose, were what the clergyman really pointed to in his recommendation of a motto. Accordingly, the huge tower remains wild and desolate—its chambers filled with sand, and its rifted walls and dismantled battlements giving unrestrained access to the roaring sea blast."—For more of Earl Patrick, see Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xxi. pp. 220, 233; vol. xxiii. pp. 927, 929.

the devil if he came by water. They pretended that the suction, when they came within a certain distance, was so great as to endanger their boats. The object was described as resembling a vessel with her keel turned upmost in the sea, or a small ridge of rock or island. Mr. Scott thinks it might have been a vessel overset, or a large whale; if the latter, it seems odd they should not have known it, as whales are the intimate acquaintances of all Zetland sailors. Whatever it was, it disappeared after a heavy gale of wind, which seems to favour the idea that it was the wreck of a vessel. Mr. Scott seems to think Pontopiddan's narrations and descriptions are much more accurate than we inland men suppose; and I find most Zetlanders of the same opinion. Mr. Turnbull, who is not credulous upon these subjects, tells me that this year a parishioner of his, a well-informed and veracious person, saw an animal, which, if his description was correct, must have been of the species of sea-snake, driven ashore on one of the Orkneys two or three years ago. It was very long, and seemed about the thickness of a Norway log, and swam on the top of the waves, occasionally lifting and bending its head. Mr. T. says he has no doubt of the veracity of the narrator, but still thinks it possible it may have been a mere log or beam of wood, and that the spectator may have been deceived by the motion of the waves, joined to the force of imagination. This for the Duke of Buccleuch.

"At Scalloway my curiosity was gratified by an account of the sword-dance, now almost lost, but still practised in the Island of Papa, belonging to Mr. Scott. There are eight performers, seven of whom represent the Seven Champions of Christendom, who enter one by one with their swords drawn, and are presented to the eighth personage, who is not named. Some rude couplets are spoken, (in *English*, not *Norse*,) containing a sort of panegyric upon each champion as he is presented. They then dance a sort of cotillion, as the ladies described it, going through a number of evolutions with their swords. One of my three Mrs. Scotts readily promised to procure me the lines, the rhymes, and the form of the dance. I regret much that young Mr. Scott was absent during this visit; he is described as a reader and an enthusiast in poetry. Probably I might have interested him in preserving the dance, by causing young persons to learn it. A few years since a party of Papa-men came to dance the sword-dance at Lerwick as a public exhibition with great applause. The warlike dances of the northern people, of which I conceive this to be the only remnant in the British dominions,* are repeatedly alluded to by their poets and historians. The introduction of the Seven Champions savours of a later period, and was probably ingrafted upon the dance when *mysteries* and *moralities* (the first scenic representations) came into fashion. In a stall pamphlet, called the history of Buckshaven, it is said those fishers sprung from Danes, and brought with them their *war-dance* or *sword-dance*, and a rude wooden cut of it is given. We resist the hospitality of our entertainers, and return to Lerwick despite a most downright fall of rain. My pony stumbles coming down hill; saddle sways round, having but one girth, and that too long, and lays me on my back. N. B. The bogs in Zetland as soft as those in Liddisdale. Get to Lerwick about ten at night. No yacht has appeared.

"*8th August.*—No yacht, and a rainy morning; bring up my journal. Day clears up, and we go to pay our farewell visits of thanks to the hospitable Lerwegians, and at the Fort. Visit kind old Mr. Mowat, and walk with him and Collector Ross to the point of Quaggers, or Twaggers, which forms one arm of the southern entrance to the sound of Bressay. From the eminence a delightful sea view, with several of those narrow capes and deep reaches or inlets of the sea, which indent the shores of that land. On the right hand a narrow bay, bounded by the isthmus of Sound, with a house upon it resembling an old castle. In the indenture of the bay, and divided from the sea by a slight causeway, the lake of *Cleik-him-in*, with its Pictish Castle. Beyond this the bay opens another yet; and, behind all, a succession of capes, headlands, and islands, as far as the cape called Sumburgh-head, which is the furthest point of Zetland in that direction. Inland, craggy, and sable muirs, with cairns, among which we distinguish the Wart or Ward of Wick, to which we walked on the 4th. On the left the island of Bressay, with its peaked hill, called the Wart of Bressay. Over Bressay see the top of Hangcliff. Admire the Bay of Lerwick, with its shipping, widening out to the northwards, and then again contracted into a narrow sound, through which the infamous Bothwell was pursued by Kirkaldy of Grange, until he escaped through the dexterity of his pilot, who sailed close along a sunken rock, upon which Kirkaldy, keeping the weather-gage, struck, and sustained damage. The rock is visible at low water, and is still called the Unicorn, from the name of Kirkaldy's vessel. Admire Mr. Mowat's little farm, of about thirty acres, bought about twenty years since for £75, and redeemed from the miserable state of the surrounding country, so that it now bears excellent corn; here also was a hay crop. With Mr. Turnbull's it makes two. Visit Mr. Ross, collector of the customs, who presents me with the most superb collection of the stone axes (or adzes, or whatever they are,) called *celts* The Zetlanders call them *thunderbolts*, and keep them in their houses as a receipt against thunder; but the Collector has succeeded in obtaining several. We are now to dress for dinner with the Notables of Lerwick, who give us an entertainment in their Town-hall. Oho!

"Just as we were going to dinner, the yacht appeared, and Mr. Stevenson landed. He gives a most favourable account of the isles to the northward, particularly Unst. I believe Lerwick is the worst part of Shetland. Are hospitably received and entertained by the Lerwick gentlemen. They are a quick intelligent race—chiefly of Scottish birth, as appears from their names Mowat, Gifford, Scott, and so forth. These are the chief proprietors. The Norwegian or Danish surnames, though of course the more ancient, belong, with some exceptions, to the lower ranks. The Veteran Corps expects to be disbanded, and the officers and Lerwegians seem to part with regret. Some of the officers talk of settling here. The price of every thing is moderate, and the style of living unexpensive. Against these conveniences are to be placed a total separation from public life, news, and literature; and a variable and inhospitable climate. Lerwick will suffer most severely if the Fort is not occupied by some force or other; for, between whisky and frolic, the Greenland sailors will certainly burn the little town. We have seen a good deal, and heard much more of the pranks of these unruly guests. A gentleman of Lerwick, who had company to dine with him, observed beneath his window a party of sailors eating a leg of roast mutton, which he witnessed with philanthropic satisfaction, till he received the melancholy information, that that individual leg of mutton, being the very sheet-anchor of his own entertainment, had been violently carried off from his kitchen, spit and all, by these honest gentlemen, who were now devouring it. Two others having carried off a sheep, were apprehended, and brought before a Justice of the Peace, who questioned them respecting the fact. The first denied he had taken the sheep, but said he had seen it taken away by a fellow with a red nose and a black wig—(this was the Justice's description)—'Don't you think he was like his honour, Tom?' he added, appealing to his comrade. 'By G—, Jack,' answered Tom, 'I believe it was the very man!' Erskine has been busy with these facetious gentlemen, and has sent several to prison, but nothing could have been done without the soldiery. We leave Lerwick at eight o'clock, and sleep on board the yacht.

* Mr. W. S. Rose informs me that, when he was at school at Winchester, the morris-dancers there used to exhibit a sword-dance resembling that described at Camacho's wedding in Don Quixote; and Mr. Morritt adds, that similar dances are even yet performed in the villages about Rokeby every Christmas.

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"*9th August*, 1814.—Waked at seven, and find the vessel has left Lerwick harbour, and is on the point of entering the sound which divides the small island of Mousa (or Queen's island) from Coningsburgh, a very wild part of the main island so called. Went ashore, and see the very ancient castle of Mousa, which stands close on the sea-shore. It is a Pictish fortress, the most entire probably in the world. In form it resembles a dice-box, for the truncated cone is continued only to a certain height, after which it begins to rise perpendicularly, or rather with a tendency to expand outwards. The building is round, and has been surrounded with an outer-wall, of which hardly the slightest vestiges now remain. It is composed of a layer of stones, without cement; they are not of large size, but rather small and thin. To give a vulgar comparison, it resembles an old ruinous pigeon-house. Mr. Stevenson took the dimensions of this curious fort, which are as follows:—Outside diameter at the base is fifty-two feet; at the top thirty-eight feet. The diameter of the interior at the base is nineteen feet six inches; at the top twenty-one feet; the curve in the inside being the reverse of the outside, or nearly so. The thickness of the walls at the base seventeen feet; at the top eight feet six inches. The height outside forty-two feet; the inside thirty-four feet. The door or entrance faces the sea, and the interior is partly filled with rubbish. When you enter you see, in the inner wall, a succession of small openings like windows, directly one above another, with broad flat stones, serving for lintels; these are about nine inches thick. The whole resembles a ladder. There were four of these perpendicular rows of windows or apertures, the situation of which corresponds with the cardinal points of the compass. You enter the galleries contained in the thickness of the wall by two of these apertures, which have been broken down. These interior spaces are of two descriptions: one consists of a winding ascent, not quite an inclined plane, yet not by any means a regular stair; but the edges of the stones, being suffered to project irregularly, serve for rude steps—or a kind of assistance. Through this narrow staircase, which winds round the building, you creep up to the top of the castle, which is partly ruinous. But besides the staircase, there branch off at irregular intervals horizontal galleries, which go round the whole building, and receive air from the holes I formerly mentioned. These apertures vary in size, diminishing as they run, from about thirty inches in width by eighteen in height, till they are only about a foot square. The lower galleries are full man height, but narrow. They diminish both in height and width as they ascend, and as the thickness of the wall in which they are enclosed diminishes. The uppermost gallery is so narrow and low, that it was with great difficulty I crept through it. The walls are built very irregularly, the sweep of the cone being different on the different sides.

"It is said by Torfæus that this fort was repaired and strengthened by Erlind, who, having forcibly carried off the mother of Harold, Earl of the Orkneys, resolved to defend himself to extremity in this place against the insulted Earl. How a castle could be defended which had no opening to the outside for shooting arrows, and which was of a capacity to be pulled to pieces by the assailants, who could advance without annoyance to the bottom of the wall, (unless it were battlemented upon the top,) does not easily appear. But to Erlind's operations the castle of Mousa possibly owes the upper and perpendicular, or rather overhanging, part of its elevation, and also its rude staircase. In these two particulars it seems to differ from all other Picts' castles, which are ascended by an inclined plane, and generally, I believe, terminate in a truncated cone, without that strange counterpart of the perpendicular or projecting part of the upper wall. Opposite to the castle of Mousa are the ruins of another Pictish fort: indeed, they all communicate with each other through the isles. The island of Mousa is the property of a Mr. Piper, who has improved it considerably, and values his castle. I advised him to clear out the interior, as he tells us there are three or four galleries beneath those now accessible, and the difference of height between the exterior and interior warrants his assertion.

"We get on board, and in time, for the wind freshens, and becomes contrary. We beat down to Sumburgh-head, through rough weather. This is the extreme south-eastern point of Zetland; and as the Atlantic and German oceans unite at this point, a frightful tide runs here, called Sumburgh-rost. The breeze, contending with the tide, flings the breakers in great style upon the high broken cliffs of Sumburgh-head. They are all one white foam, ascending to a great height. We wished to double this point, and lie by in a bay between that and the northern or north-western cape, called Fitful-head, and which seems higher than Sumburgh itself—and tacked repeatedly with this view; but a confounded islet, called *The Horse*, always baffled us, and, after three heats, fairly distanced us. So we run into a roadstead, called Quendal bay, on the south-eastern side, and there anchor for the night. We go ashore with various purposes—Stevenson to see the site of a proposed light-house on this tremendous cape—Marjoribanks to shoot rabbits—and Duff and I to look about us. I ascended the head by myself, which is lofty, and commands a wild sea-view. Zetland stretches away, with all its projecting capes and inlets, to the north-eastward. Many of those inlets approach each other very nearly; indeed, the two opposite bays at Sumburgh-head seem on the point of joining, and rendering that cape an island. The two creeks from those east and western seas are only divided by a low isthmus of blowing sand, and similar to that which wastes part of the east coast of Scotland. It has here blown like the deserts of Arabia, and destroyed some houses, formerly the occasional residences of the Earls of Orkney. The steep and rocky side of the cape, which faces the west, does not seem much more durable. These lofty cliffs are all of sand-flag, a very loose and perishable kind of rock, which slides down in immense masses, like avalanches, after every storm. The rest lies so loose, that, on the very brow of the loftiest crag, I had no difficulty in sending down a fragment as large as myself; he thundered down in tremendous style, but splitting upon a projecting cliff, descended into the ocean like a shower of shrapnel shot. The sea beneath rages incessantly among a thousand of the fragments which have fallen from the peaks, and which assume an hundred strange shapes. It would have been a fine situation to compose an ode to the Genius of Sumburgh-head, or an Elegy upon a Cormorant—or to have written and spoken madness of any kind in prose or poetry. But I gave vent to my excited feelings in a more simple way; and sitting gently down on the steep green slope which led to the beach, I e'en slid down a few hundred feet, and found the exercise quite an adequate vent to my enthusiasm. I recommend this exercise (time and place suiting) to all my brother scribblers, and I have no doubt it will save much effusion of Christian ink. Those slopes are covered with beautiful short herbage. At the foot of the ascent, and towards the isthmus, is the old house of Sumburgh, in appearance a most dreary mansion. I found, on my arrival at the beach, that the hospitality of the inhabitants had entrapped my companions. I walked back to meet them, but escaped the gin and water. On board about nine o'clock at night. A little schooner lies between us and the shore, which we had seen all day buffeting the tide and breeze like ourselves. The wind increases, and the ship is made snug—a sure sign the passengers will not be so.

"*10th August*, 1814.—The omen was but too true—a terrible combustion on board, among plates, dishes, glasses, writing-desks, &c. &c.; not a wink of sleep. We weigh and stand out into that delightful current called *Sumburgh-rost*, or *rust*. This tide certainly owes us a grudge, for it drove us to the eastward about thirty miles on the night of the first, and occasioned our missing the Fair Isle, and

now it has caught us on our return. All the landsmen sicker than sick, and our Viceroy, Stevenson, qualmish. This is the only time that I have felt more than temporary inconvenience, but this morning I have headach and nausea; these are trifles, and in a well-found vessel, with a good pilot, we have none of that mixture of danger which gives dignity to the traveller. But he must have a stouter heart than mine, who can contemplate without horror the situation of a vessel of an inferior description caught among these headlands and reefs of rocks, in the long and dark winter nights of these regions. Accordingly, wrecks are frequent. It is proposed to have a light on Sumburgh-head, which is the first land made by vessels coming from the eastward; Fitful-head is higher, but is to the west, from which quarter few vessels come.

"We are now clear of Zetland, and about ten o'clock reach the Fair Isle;* one of their boats comes off, a strange-looking thing without an entire plank in it, excepting one on each side, upon the strength of which the whole depends, the rest being patched and joined. This trumpery skiff the men manage with the most astonishing dexterity, and row with remarkable speed; they have two banks, that is, two rowers on each bench, and use very short paddles. The wildness of their appearance, with long elf-locks, striped worsted caps, and shoes of raw hide—the fragility of their boat—and their extreme curiosity about us and our cutter, give them a title to be distinguished as *natives*. One of our people told their steersman, by way of jeer, that he must have great confidence in Providence to go to sea in such a vehicle; the man very sensibly replied, that without the same confidence he would not go to sea in the best *tool* in England. We take to our boat, and row for about three miles rouud the coast, in order to land at the inhabited part of the island. This coast abounds with grand views of rock and bays. One immense portion of rock is (like the Holm of Noss) separated by a chasm from the mainland. As it is covered with herbage on the top, though a literal precipice all round, the natives contrive to ascend the rock by a place which would make a goat dizzy, and then drag the sheep up by ropes, though they sometimes carry a sheep up on their shoulders. The captain of a sloop of war, being ashore while they were at this work, turned giddy and sick while looking at them. This immense precipice is several hundred feet high, and is perforated below by some extraordinary apertures, through which a boat might pass; the light shines distinctly through these hideous chasms. After passing a square bay called the North-haven, tenanted by sea-fowl and seals, (the first we have yet seen,) we come in view of the small harbour. Land, and breakfast, for which, till now, none of us felt inclination. In front of the little harbour is the house of the tacksman, Mr. Strong, and in view are three small assemblages of miserable huts, where the inhabitants of the isle live. There are about thirty families and 250 inhabitants upon the *Fair Isle*. It merits its name, as the plain upon which the hamlets are situated bears excellent barley, oats, and potatoes, and the rest of the isle is beautiful pasture, excepting to the eastward, where there is a moss, equally essential to the comfort of the inhabitants, since it supplies them with peats for fuel. The Fair Isle is about three miles long and a mile and a half broad. Mr. Strong received us very courteously. He lives here, like Robinson Crusoe, in absolute solitude as to society, unless by a chance visit from the officers of a man-of-war. There is a signal-post maintained on the island by Government, under this gentleman's inspection; when any ship appears that cannot answer his signals, he sends off to Lerwick and Kirkwall to give the alarm. Rogers† was off here last year, and nearly cut off one of Mr. Strong's express boats, but the active islanders outstripped his people by speed of rowing. The inhabitants pay Mr. Strong for the possessions which they occupy under him as subtenants, and cultivate the Isle in their own way, *i. e.* by digging instead of ploughing, (though the ground is quite open and free from rocks, and they have several scores of ponies,) and by raising alternate crops of barley, oats, and potatoes; the first and last are admirably good. They rather overmanure their crops; the possessions lie runrig, that is, by alternate ridges, and the outfield or pasture ground is possessed as common to all their cows and ponies. The islanders fish for Mr. Strong at certain fixed rates, and the fish is his property, which he sends to Kirkwall, Lerwick, or elsewhere, in a little schooner, the same which we left in Quendal bay, and about the arrival of which we found them anxious. An equal space of rich land on the Fair Isle, situated in an inland county of Scotland, would rent for £3000 a-year at the very least. To be sure it would not be burdened with the population of 250 souls, whose bodies (fertile as it is) it cannot maintain in bread, they being supplied chiefly from the mainland. Fish they have plenty, and are even nice in their choice. Skate they will not touch; dog-fish they say is only food for Orkney-men, and when they catch them, they make a point of tormenting the poor fish for eating off their baits from the hook, stealing the haddocks from their lines, and other enormities. These people, being about half-way between Shetland and Orkney, have unfrequent connexion with either archipelago, and live and marry entirely among themselves. One lad told me, only five persons had left the island since his remembrance, and of those, three were pressed for the navy. They seldom go to Greenland; but this year five or six of their young men were on board the whalers. They seemed extremely solicitous about their return, and repeatedly questioned us about the names of the whalers which were at Lerwick, a point on which we could give little information.

"The manners of these islanders seem primitive and simple, and they are sober, good-humoured, and friendly—but *jimp* honest. Their comforts are, of course, much dependent on *their master's* pleasure; for so they call Mr. Strong. But they gave him the highest character for kindness and liberality, and prayed to God he might long be their ruler. After mounting the signal-post hill, or Malcolm's Head, which is faced by a most tremendous cliff, we separated on our different routes. The Sheriff went to rectify the only enormity on the island, which existed in the person of a drunken schoolmaster; Marchie* went to shoot sea-fowl, or rather to frighten them, as his calumniators allege. Stevenson and Duff went to inspect the remains or vestiges of a Danish lighthouse upon a distant hill, called, as usual, the Ward, or Ward-hill, and returned with specimens of copper ore. Hamilton went down to cater fish for our dinner, and see it properly cooked—and I to see two remarkable indentures in the coast called *Rivas*, perhaps from their being rifted or *riven*. They are exactly like the Buller of Buchan, the sea rolling into a large open basin within the land through a natural archway. These places are close to each other—one is oblong, and it is easy to descend into it by a rude path; the other gulf is inaccessible from the land, unless to a *crags-man*, as these venturous climbers call themselves. I sat for about an hour upon the verge, like the cormorants around me, hanging my legs over the precipice; but I could not get free of two or three well-meaning islanders, who held me fast by the skirts all the time—for it must be conceived, that our numbers and appointments had drawn out the whole population to admire and attend us. After we separated, each, like the nucleus of a comet, had his own distinct train of attendants.—Visit the capital town, a wretched assemblage of the basest huts, dirty without, and still dirtier within; pigs, fowls, cows, men, women, and children, all living promiscuously under the same roof, and in the same room—the brood-sow making (among the more opulent) a distinguished inhabitant of the

* This is a solitary island, lying about half-way between Orkney and Zetland.

† An American Commodore.

* Mr. Majoribanks.

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mansion. The compost, a liquid mass of utter abomination, is kept in a square pond of seven feet deep; when I censured it, they allowed it might be dangerous to the *bairns*; but appeared unconscious of any other objection. I cannot wonder they want meal, for assuredly they waste it. A great *bowie* or wooden vessel of porridge is made in the morning: a child comes and sups a few spoonfuls; then Mrs. Sow takes her share; then the rest of the children or the parents, and all at pleasure; then come the poultry when the mess is more cool; the rest is flung upon the dung-hill—and the good wife wonders and complains when she wants meal in winter. They are a long-lived race, notwithstanding utter and inconceivable dirt and sluttery. A man of sixty told me his father died only last year, aged ninety-eight; nor was this considered as very unusual.

"The clergyman of Dunrossness, in Zetland, visits these poor people once a-year, for a week or two, during summer. In winter this is impossible, and even the summer visit is occasionally interrupted for two years. Marriages and baptisms are performed, as one of the Isles-men told me, *by the slump*, and one of the children was old enough to tell the clergyman who sprinkled him with water, 'Deil be in your fingers.' Last time, four couple were married; sixteen children baptized. The schoolmaster reads a portion of Scripture in the church each Sunday, when the clergyman is absent; but the present man is unfit for this part of his duty. The women knit worsted stockings, night-caps, and similar trifles, which they exchange with any merchant vessels that approach their lonely isle. In these respects they greatly regret the American war; and mention with unction the happy days when they could get from an American trader a bottle of peach-brandy or rum in exchange for a pair of worsted-stockings or a dozen of eggs. The humanity of their *master* interferes much with the favourite but dangerous occupation of the islanders, which is *fowling*, that is, taking the young sea-fowl from their nests among these tremendous crags. About a fortnight before we arrived, a fine boy of fourteen had dropped from the cliff, while in prosecution of this amusement, into a roaring surf, by which he was instantly swallowed up. The unfortunate mother was labouring at the peat-moss at a little distance. These accidents do not, however, strike terror into the survivors. They regard the death of an individual engaged in these desperate exploits, as we do the fate of a brave relation who falls in battle, when the honour of his death furnishes a balm to our sorrow. It, therefore, requires all the tacksman's authority to prevent a practice so pregnant with danger. Like all other precarious and dangerous employments, the occupation of the cragsmen renders them unwilling to labour at employments of a more steady description. The Fair Isle inhabitants are a good-looking race, more like Zetlanders than Orkneymen. Evenson, and other names of a Norwegian or Danish derivation, attest their Scandinavian descent. Return and dine at Mr. Strong's, having sent our cookery ashore, not to overburthen his hospitality. In this place, and perhaps in the very cottage now inhabited by Mr. Strong, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, Commander-in-Chief of the Invincible Armada, wintered, after losing his vessel to the eastward of the island. It was not till he had spent some weeks in this miserable abode, that he got off to Norway. Independently of the moral consideration, that, from the pitch of power in which he stood a few days before, the proudest peer of the proudest nation in Europe found himself dependent on the jealous and scanty charity of these secluded islanders, it is scarce possible not to reflect with compassion on the change of situation from the palaces of Estremadura to the hamlet of the Fair Isle—

'Dost thou think on thy deserts, son of Hodeirah?
Dost thou long for the gale of Arabia?'

"Mr. Strong gave me a curious old chair belonging to Quendale, a former proprietor of the Fair Isle, and which a more zealous antiquary would have dubbed 'the Duke's chair.' I will have it refitted for Abbotsford, however. About eight o'clock we take boat, amid the cheers of the inhabitants, whose minds, subdued by our splendour, had been secured by our munificence, which consisted in a moderate benefaction of whisky and tobacco, and a few shillings laid out on their staple commodities. They agreed no such day had been seen in the isle. The signal-post displayed its flags, and to recompense these distinguished marks of honour, we hung out our colours, stood into the bay, and saluted with three guns,

'Echoing from a thousand caves,'

and then bear away for Orkney, leaving, if our vanity does not deceive us, a very favourable impression on the mind of the inhabitants of the Fair Isle. The tradition of the Fair Isle is unfavourable to those shipwrecked strangers, who are said to have committed several acts of violence to extort the supplies of provision, given them sparingly and with reluctance by the islanders, who were probably themselves very far from being well supplied.

"I omitted to say we were attended in the morning by two very sportive whales, but of a kind, as some of our crew who had been on board Greenland-men assured us, which it was very dangerous to attack. There were two Gravesend smacks fishing off the isle. Lord, what a long draught London makes!

"11*th August*, 1814.—After a sound sleep to make amends for last night, we find, at awaking, the vessel off the Start of Sanda, the first land in the Orkneys which we could make. There a lighthouse has been erected lately upon the best construction. Landed and surveyed it. All in excellent order, and the establishment of the keepers in the same style of comfort and respectability as elsewhere, far better than the house of the master of the Fair Isle, and rivalling my own baronial mansion of Abbotsford. Go to the top of the tower and survey the island, which, as the name implies, is level, flat, and sandy, quite the reverse of those in Zetland: it is intersected by creeks and small lakes, and though it abounds with shell marle, seems barren. There is one dreadful inconvenience of an island life, of which we had here an instance. The keeper's wife had an infant in her arms—her first-born, too, of which the poor woman had been delivered without assistance. Erskine told us of a horrid instance of malice which had been practised in this island of Sanda. A decent tenant, during the course of three or four successive years, lost to the number of twenty-five cattle, stabbed as they lay in their fold by some abominable wretch. What made the matter stranger was, that the poor man could not recollect any reason why he should have had the ill-will of a single being, only that in taking up names for the *militia*, a duty imposed upon him by the Justices, he thought he might possibly have given some unknown offence. The villain was never discovered.

"The wrecks on this coast were numerous before the erection of the lighthouse. It was not uncommon to see five or six vessels on shore at once. The goods and chattels of the inhabitants are all said to savour of *Flotsome* and *Jetsome*, as the floating wreck and that which is driven ashore are severally called. Mr. Stevenson happened to observe that the boat of a Sanda farmer had bad sails—'If it had been His (*i. e.* God's) will that ye hadna built sae many lighthouses hereabout'—answered the Orcadian, with great composure—'I would have had new sails last winter.' Thus do they talk and think upon these subjects; and so talking and thinking, I fear the poor mariner has little chance of any very anxious attempt to assist him. There is one wreck, a Danish vessel, now aground under our lee. These Danes are the stupidest seamen, by all accounts, that sail the sea. When this light upon the Start of Sanda was established, the Commissioners, with anxiety to extend its utility, had its description and bearings translated into Danish and sent to Copenhagen. But they never attend to such trifles. The

Norwegians are much better liked, as a clever, hardy, sensible people. I forgot to notice there was a Norwegian prize lying in the Sound of Lerwick, sent in by one of our cruisers. This was a queer-looking, half-decked vessel, all tattered and torn and shaken to pieces, looking like Coleridge's Spectre Ship. It was pitiable to see such a prize. Our servants went aboard, and got one of their loaves, and gave a dreadful account of its composition. I got and cut a crust of it; it was rye-bread, with a slight mixture of pine-fir bark or sawings of deal. It was not good, but (as Charles XII. said) might be eaten. But after all, if the people can be satisfied with such bread as this, it seems hard to interdict it to them. What would a Londoner say if, instead of his roll and muffins, this black bread, relishing of tar and turpentine, were presented for his breakfast? I would to God there could be a Jehovah-jireh, 'a ram caught in the thicket,' to prevent the sacrifice of that people.

"The few friends who may see this Journal are much indebted for these pathetic remarks to the situation under which they are recorded; for since we left the lighthouse we have been struggling with adverse wind, (pretty high too,) and a very strong tide, called the Rost of the Start, which, like Sumburgh Rost, bodes no good to our roast and boiled. The worst is that this struggle carries us past a most curious spectacle, being no less than the carcasses of two hundred and sixty-five whales, which have been driven ashore in Taftsness bay, now lying close under us. With all the inclination in the world, it is impossible to stand in close enough to verify this massacre of Leviathans with our own eyes, as we do not care to run the risk of being drawn ashore ourselves among the party. In fact, this species of spectacle has been of late years very common among the isles. Mr. Stevenson saw upwards of a hundred and fifty whales lying upon the shore in a bay at Unst, in his northward trip. They are not large, but are decided whales, measuring perhaps from fifteen to twenty-five feet. They are easily mastered, for the first that is wounded among the sounds and straits so common in the isles, usually runs ashore. The rest follow the blood, and, urged on by the boats behind, run ashore also. A cut with one of the long whaling knives under the back-fin, is usually fatal to these huge animals. The two hundred and sixty-five whales, now lying within two or three miles of us, were driven ashore by seven boats only.

"*Five o'clock.*—We are out of the *Rost*, (I detest that word,) and driving fast through a long sound among low green islands, which hardly lift themselves above the sea—not a cliff or hill to be seen—what a contrast to the land we have left! We are standing for some creek or harbour, called Lingholm-bay, to lie to or anchor for the night; for to pursue our course by night, and that a thick one, among these isles, and islets, and sandbanks, is out of the question—clear moonlight might do. Our sea is now moderate. But oh, gods and men, what misfortunes have travellers to record! Just as the quiet of the elements had reconciled us to the thought of dinner, we learn that an unlucky sea has found its way into the galley during the last infernal combustion, when the lee-side and bolt-sprit were constantly under water; so our soup is poisoned with salt water—our cod and haddocks, which cost ninepence this blessed morning, and would have been worth a couple of guineas in London, are soused in their primitive element—the curry is undone—and all gone to the devil. We all apply ourselves to comfort our Lord High Admiral Hamilton, whose despair for himself and the public might edify a patriot. His good humour—which has hitherto defied every incident, aggravated even by the gout—supported by a few bad puns, and a great many fair promises on the part of the steward and cook, fortunately restores his equilibrium.

"*Eight o'clock.*—Our supplemental dinner proved excellent, and we have glided into an admirable road-stead or harbour, called Lingholm-bay, formed by the small island of Lingholm embracing a small basin dividing that islet from the larger isle of Stronsay. Both, as well as Sanda, Eda, and others which we have passed, are low, green, and sandy. I have seen nothing to-day worth marking, except the sporting of a very large whale at some distance, and H.'s face at the news of the disaster in the cook-room. We are to weigh at two in the morning, and hope to reach Kirkwall, the capital of Orkney, by breakfast to-morrow. I trust there are no *rusts* or *rosts* in the road. I shall detest that word even when used to signify verd-antique or patina in the one sense, or roast venison in the other. Orkney shall begin a new volume of these exquisite memoranda.

"Omission.—At Lerwick the Dutch fishers had again appeared on their old haunts. A very interesting meeting took place between them and the Lerwegians, most of them being old acquaintances. They seemed very poor, and talked of having been pillaged of every thing by the French, and expected to have found Lerwick ruined by the war. They have all the careful, quiet, and economical habits of their country, and go on board their busses with the utmost haste so soon as they see the Greenland sailors, who usually insult and pick quarrels with them. The great amusement of the Dutch sailors is to hire the little ponies, and ride up and down upon them. On one occasion, a good many years ago, an English sailor interrupted this cavalcade, frightened the horses, and one or two Dutchmen got tumbles. Incensed at this beyond their usual moderation, they pursued the cause of their overthrow, and wounded him with one of their knives. The wounded man went on board his vessel, the crew of which, about fifty strong, came ashore with their long flinching knives with which they cut up the whales, and falling upon the Dutchmen, though twice their numbers, drove them all into the sea, where such as could not swim were in some risk of being drowned. The instance of aggression, or rather violent retaliation, on their part, is almost solitary. In general they are extremely quiet, and employ themselves in bartering their little merchandise of gin and gingerbread for Zetland hose and nightcaps."

CHAPTER XXIX.

DIARY ON BOARD THE LIGHTHOUSE YACHT CONTINUED —THE ORKNEYS—KIRKWALL—HOY—THE STANDING STONES OF STENNIS, ETC.—AUGUST, 1814.

"12*th August*, 1814.—With a good breeze and calm sea we weighed at two in the morning, and worked by short tacks up to Kirkwall bay, and find ourselves in that fine basin upon rising in the morning. The town looks well from the sea, but is chiefly indebted to the huge old cathedral that rises out of the centre. Upon landing we find it but a poor and dirty place, especially towards the harbour. Farther up the town are seen some decent old-fashioned houses, and the Sheriff's interest secures us good lodgings. Marchie goes to hunt for a pointer. The morning, which was rainy, clears up pleasantly, and Hamilton, Erskine, Duff, and I, walk to Malcolm Laing's, who has a pleasant house about half a mile from the town. Our old acquaintance, though an invalid, received us kindly; he looks very poorly, and cannot walk without assistance, but seems to retain all the quick, earnest, and vivacious intelligence of his character and manner. After this visit the antiquities of the place, viz.: the Bishop's palace, the Earl of Orkney's castle, and the cathedral, all situated within a stonecast of each other. The two former are ruinous. The most prominent part of the ruins of the Bishop's palace is a large round tower, similar to that of Bothwell in architecture, but not equal to it in size. This was built by Bishop Reid, *tempore Jacobi V.*, and there is a rude statue of him in a niche in the front. At the north-east corner of the building is a square tower of greater antiquity, called the Mense or Mass Tower; but, as well as a second and smaller round tower, it is quite ruinous. A suite of apartments of different sizes fill up the space between these towers.

all now ruinous. The building is said to have been of great antiquity, but was certainly in a great measure re-edified in the sixteenth century. Fronting this castle or palace of the Bishop, and about a gunshot distant, is that of the Earl of Orkney. The Earl's palace was built by Patrick Stewart, Earl of Orkney, the same who erected that of Scalloway, in Shetland. It is an elegant structure, partaking at once of the character of a palace and castle. The building forms three sides of an oblong square, but one of the sides extends considerably beyond the others. The great hall must have been remarkably handsome, opening into two or three huge rounds or turrets, the lower part of which is divided by stone shafts into three windows. It has two immense chimneys, the arches or lintels of which are formed by a flat arch, as at Crichton Castle. There is another very handsome apartment communicating with the hall like a modern drawing-room, and which has, like the former, its projecting turrets. The hall is lighted by a fine Gothic-shafted window at one end, and by others on the sides. It is approached by a spacious and elegant staircase of three flights of steps. The dimensions may be sixty feet long, twenty broad, and fourteen high, but doubtless an arched roof sprung from the side walls, so that fourteen feet was only the height from the ground to the arches. Any modern architect, wishing to emulate the real Gothic architecture, and apply it to the purposes of modern splendour, might derive excellent hints from this room. The exterior ornaments are also extremely elegant. The ruins, once the residence of this haughty and oppressive Earl, are now so disgustingly nasty, that it required all the zeal of an antiquary to prosecute the above investigation. Architecture seems to have been Earl Patrick's prevailing taste. Besides this castle and that of Scalloway, he added to or enlarged the old castle of Bressay. To accomplish these objects, he oppressed the people with severities unheard-of even in that oppressive age, drew down on himself a shameful though deserved punishment, and left these dishonoured ruins to hand down to posterity the tale of his crimes and of his fall. We may adopt, though in another sense, his own presumptuous motto—*Sic Fuit, Est, et Erit.*

"We visit the cathedral, dedicated to St. Magnus, which greeted the sheriff's approach with a merry peal. Like that of Glasgow, this church has escaped the blind fury of Reformation. It was founded in 1138, by Ronald, Earl of Orkney, nephew of the Saint. It is of great size, being 260 feet long, or thereabout, and supported by twenty-eight Saxon pillars, of good workmanship. The round arch predominates in the building, but I think not exclusively. The steeple (once a very high spire) rises upon four pillars of great strength, which occupy each angle of the nave. Being destroyed by lightning, it was rebuilt upon a low and curtailed plan. The appearance of the building is rather massive and gloomy than elegant, and many of the exterior ornaments, carving around the door-ways, &c., have been injured by time. We entered the cathedral, the whole of which is kept locked, swept, and in good order, although only the eastern end is used for divine worship. We walked some time in the nave and western end, which is left unoccupied, and has a very solemn effect as the avenue to the place of worship. There were many tombstones on the floor and elsewhere, some, doubtless, of high antiquity. One, I remarked, had the shield of arms hung by the corner, with a helmet above it of a large proportion, such as I have seen on the most ancient seals. But we had neither time nor skill to decipher what noble Orcadian lay beneath. The church is as well fitted up as could be expected; much of the old carved oak remains, but with a motley mixture of modern deal pews. All, however, is neat and clean, and does great honour to the kirk-session who maintain its decency. I remarked particularly Earl Patrick's seat, adjoining to that of the magistrates, but surmounting it and every other in the church; it is surrounded with a carved screen of oak, rather elegant, and bears his arms and initials, and the motto I have noticed. He bears the royal arms without any mark of bastardy (his father was a natural son of James V.) quarterly, with a lymphad or galley, the ancient arms of the county. This circumstance was charged against him on his trial.* I understand the late Mr. Gilbert Laing Meason left the interest of £1000 to keep up this cathedral.

"There are in the street facing the cathedral the ruins of a much more ancient castle; a proper feudal fortress belonging to the Earls of Orkney, but called the King's Castle. It appears to have been very strong, being situated near the harbour, and having, as appears from the fragments, very massive walls. While the wicked Earl Patrick was in confinement, one of his natural sons defended this castle to extremity against the King's troops, and only surrendered when it was nearly a heap of ruins, and then under condition he should not be brought in evidence against his father.

"We dine at the inn, and drink the Prince Regent's health, being that of the day—Mr. Baikie of Tankerness dines with us.

"13*th August*, 1814.—A bad morning, but clears up. No letters from Edinburgh. The country about Kirkwall is flat, and tolerably cultivated. We see oxen generally wrought in the small country carts, though they have a race of ponies, like those of Shetland, but larger. Marchie goes to shoot on a hill called Whiteford, which slopes away about two or three miles from Kirkwall. The grouse is abundant, for the gentleman who chaperons Marchie killed thirteen brace and a half with a snipe. There are no partridges nor hares. The soil of Orkney is better, and its air more genial than Shetland; but it is far less interesting, and possesses none of the wild and peculiar character of the more northern archipelago. All vegetables grow here freely in the gardens, and there are one or two attempts at trees where they are sheltered by walls. How ill they succeed may be conjectured from our bringing with us a quantity of brushwood, commissioned by Malcolm Laing from Aberbrothock, to be sticks to his pease. This trash we brought two hundred miles. I have little to add, except that the Orkney people have some odd superstitions about a stone on which they take oaths to Odin. Lovers often perform this ceremony in pledge of mutual faith, and are said to account it a sacred engagement. It is agreed that we go on board after dinner, and sail with the next tide. The magistrates of Kirkwall present us with the freedom of their ancient burgh; and Erskine, instead of being cumbered with drunken sailors, as at Lerwick, or a drunken schoolmaster, as at Fair Isle, is annoyed by his own substitute. This will occasion his remaining two days at Kirkwall, during which time it is proposed we shall visit the lighthouse upon the dangerous rocks called the Skerries, in the Pentland Firth; and then, returning to the eastern side of Pomona, take up the counsellor at Stromness. It is further settled that we leave Marchie with Erskine to get another day's shooting. On board at ten o'clock, after a little bustle in expediting our domestics, washerwomen, &c.

"14*th August*, 1814.—Sail about four, and in rounding the main land of Orkney, called Pomona, encounter a very heavy sea; about ten o'clock, get into the Sound of Holm or Ham, a fine smooth current meandering away between two low green islands, which have little to characterise them. On the right of the Sound is the mainland, and a deep

* "This noted oppressor was finally brought to trial, and beheaded at the Cross of Edinburgh [6th February, 1614.] It is said that the King's mood was considerably heated against him by some ill-chosen and worse written Latin inscriptions with which his father and himself had been unlucky enough to decorate some of their insular palaces. In one of these, Earl Robert, the father, had given his own designation thus:—'Orcadius Comes *Rex* Jacobi quinti filius.' In this case he was not, perhaps, guilty of any thing worse than bad Latin. But James VI. who had a keen nose for puzzling out treason, and with whom an assault and battery upon Priscian ranked in nearly the same degree of crime, had little doubt that the use of the nominative *Rex*, instead of the genitive *Regis*, had a treasonable savour."—SCOTT'S *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xxi. p. 199.

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bay called Scalpa Flow indents it up to within two miles of Kirkwall. A canal through this neck of the island would be of great consequence to the burgh. We see the steeple and church of Kirkwall across the island very distinctly. Getting out of the Sound of Holm, we stand into the harbour or roadstead of Widewall, where we find seven or eight foreign vessels bound for Ireland, and a sloop belonging to the light-house service. These roadsteads are common all through the Orkneys, and afford excellent shelter for small vessels. The day is pleasant and sunny, but the breeze is too high to permit landing at the Skerries. Agree, therefore, to stand over for the mainland of Scotland, and visit Thurso. Enter the Pentland Frith, so celebrated for the strength and fury of its tides, which is boiling even in this pleasant weather; we see a large ship battling with this heavy current, and though with all her canvass set and a breeze, getting more and more involved. See the two Capes of Dungsby or Duncansby, and Dunnet-head, between which lies the celebrated John o'Groat's house, on the north-eastern extremity of Scotland. The shores of Caithness rise bold and rocky before us, a contrast to the Orkneys, which are all low, excepting the Island of Hoy. On Duncansby-head appear some remarkable rocks, like towers, called the stacks of Duncansby; near this shore runs the remarkable breaking tide called the *Merry Men of Mey*, whence Mackenzie takes the scenery of a poem—

> 'Where the dancing men of Mey.
> Speed the current to the land.'

Here, according to his locality, the Caithness man witnessed the vision, in which was introduced the song translated by Gray, under the title of the Fatal Sisters. On this subject, Mr. Baikie told me the following remarkable circumstance:—A clergymen told him that while some remnants of the Norse were yet spoken in North Ronaldsha, he carried thither the translation of Mr. Gray, then newly published, and read it to some of the old people as referring to the ancient history of their islands. But so soon as he had proceeded a little way, they exclaimed they knew it very well in the original, and had often sung it to himself when he asked them for an old Norse song; they called it *The Enchantresses*. The breeze dies away between two wicked little islands called Swona and Stroma, the latter belonging to Caithness, the former to Orkney. *Nota Bene.*—The inhabitants of the rest of the Orcades despise those of Swona for eating limpets, as being the last of human meannesses. Every land has its fashions. The Fair-Islesmen disdain Orkney-men for eating dog-fish. Both islands have dangerous reefs and whirlpools, where, even in this fine bay, the tide rages furiously. Indeed, the large high unbroken billows, which at every swell hide from our deck each distant object, plainly intimate what a dreadful current this must be when vexed by high or adverse winds. Finding ourselves losing ground in the tide, and unwilling to waste time, we give up Thurso—run back into the roadstead or bay of Long-Hope, and anchor under the fort. The bay has four entrances, and safe anchorage in most winds, and having become a great rendezvous for shipping, (there are nine vessels lying here at present,) has been an object of attention with Government.

"Went ashore after dinner, and visited the fort, which is only partly completed; it is a *fleche* to the sea, with eight guns, twenty-four pounders, but without any land defences; the guns are mounted *en barbette*, without embrasures, each upon a kind of moveable stage, which stage wheeling upon a pivot in front, and traversing by means of wheels behind, can be pointed in any direction that may be thought necessary. Upon this stage, the gun-carriage moves forward and recoils, and the depth of the parapet shelters the men even better than an embrasure: at a little distance from this battery they are building a Martello tower, which is to cross the fire of the battery, and also that of another projected tower upon the opposite point of the bay. The expedience of these towers seems excessively problematical. Supposing them impregnable, or nearly so, a garrison of fourteen or fifteen men may be always blockaded by a very trifling number, while the enemy dispose of all in the vicinity at their pleasure. In the case of Long-Hope, for instance, a frigate might disembark 100 men, take the fort in the rear, where it is undefended even by a palisade, destroy the magazines, spike and dismount the cannon, carry off or cut out any vessels in the roadstead, and accomplish all the purposes that could bring them to so remote a spot, in spite of a sergeant's party in the Martello tower, and without troubling themselves about them at all. Meanwhile, Long-Hope will one day turn out a flourishing place; there will soon be taverns and slop-shops, where sailors rendezvous in such numbers; then will come quays, docks, and warehouses; and then a thriving town. Amen, so be it. This is the first fine day we have enjoyed to an end since Sunday, 31st ult. Rainy, cold, and hazy, have been our voyages around these wild islands; I hope the weather begins to mend, though Mr. Wilson, our master, threatens a breeze to-morrow. We are to attempt the Skerries, if possible; if not, we will, I believe, go to Stromness.

"15*th August*, 1814.—Fine morning; we get again into the Pentland Frith, and with the aid of a pilotboat belonging to the lighthouse service, from South Ronaldshaw, we attempt the Skerries. Notwithstanding the fair weather, we have a specimen of the violence of the flood-tide, which forms whirlpools on the shallow sunken rocks by the islands of Swona and Stroma, and in the deep water makes strange, smooth, whirling, and swelling eddies, called by the sailors, *wells*. We run through the *wells of Tuftile* in particular, which in the least stress of weather, wheel a large ship round and round, without respect either to helm or sails. Hence the distinction of *wells* and *waves* in old English; the *well* being that smooth, glassy, oily-looking eddy, the force of which seems to the eye almost resistless. The bursting of the waves in foam around these strange eddies has a bewildering and confused appearance, which it is impossible to describe. Get off the Skerries about ten o'clock, and land easily; it is the first time a boat has got there for several days. The *Skerries** is an island about 60 acres, of fine short herbage, belonging to Lord Dundas; it is surrounded by a reef of precipitous rocks not very high, but inaccessible, unless where the ocean has made ravines among them, and where stairs have been cut down to the water for the lighthouse service. Those inlets have a romantic appearance, and have been christened by the sailors, the Parliament House, the Seals' Lying-in-Hospital, &c. The last inlet, after rushing through a deep chasm, which is open overhead, is continued under ground, and then again opens to the sky in the middle of the island: in this hole the seals bring out their whelps; when the tide is high, the waves rise up through this aperture in the middle of the isle—like the blowing of a whale in noise and appearance. There is another round cauldron of solid rock, to which the waves have access through a natural arch in the rock, having another and lesser arch rising just above it; in hard weather, the waves rush through both apertures with a horrid noise; the workmen called it the Carron Blast, and, indeed, the variety of noises which issued from the abyss, somewhat reminded me of that engine. Take my rifle and walk round the cliffs in search of seals, but see none, and only disturb the digestion of certain aldermen-cormorants, who were sitting on the points of the crags after a good fish breakfast; only made one good shot out of four. The light-house is too low, and on the old construction, yet it is of the last importance. The keeper is an old man-of-war's-man, of whom Mr. Stevenson observed that he was a great swearer when he first came; but after a year or two's residence in the solitary abode, became a

* 'A Skerrie means a flattish rock which the sea does not overflow.' *Edmondstone's View of the Zetlands.*

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changed man. There are about fifty head of cattle on the island; they must be got in and off with great danger and difficulty. There is no water upon the isle except what remains after rain in some pools; these sometimes dry in summer, and the cattle are reduced to great straits. Leave the isle about one; and the wind and tide being favourable, crowd all sail, and get on at the rate of fourteen miles an hour. Soon reach our old anchorage at the Long-Hope, and passing, stand to the north-westward, up the sound of Hoy for Stromness.

"I should have mentioned, that in going down the Pentland Firth this morning we saw Johnnie Groat's house, or rather the place where it stood, now occupied by a storehouse. Our pilot opines there was no such man as Johnnie Groat, for, he says, he cannot hear that any body *ever saw him*. This reasoning would put down most facts of antiquity; they gather shells on the shore called *Johnnie Groat's buckies*, but I cannot procure any at present. I may also add, that the interpretation given to *wells* may apply to the *Wells of Slain*, in the fine ballad of Clerk Colvin; such eddies in the romantic vicinity of Slains Castle would be a fine place for a mermaid.

"Our wind fails us, and what is worse, becomes westerly; the Sound has now the appearance of a fine landlocked bay, the passages between the several islands being scarce visible. We have a superb view of Kirkwall Cathedral, with a strong gleam of sunshine upon it. Gloomy weather begins to collect around us, particularly on the island of Hoy, which, covered with gloom and vapour, now assumes a majestic mountainous character. On Pomona we pass the Hill of Orphir, which reminds me of the clergyman of that parish, who was called to account for some of his inaccuracies to the General Assembly; one charge he held particularly cheap, viz., that of drunkenness. 'Reverend Moderator,' said he, in reply, 'I *do* drink, as other gentlemen do.' This Orphir of the north must not be confounded with the Ophir of the south. From the latter came gold, silver, and precious stones; the former seems to produce little except peats. Yet these are precious commodities, which some of the Orkney Isles altogether want, and lay waste, and burn the turf of their land instead of importing coal from Newcastle. The Orcadians seem by no means an alert or active race; they neglect the excellent fisheries which lie under their very noses, and in their mode of managing their boats, as well as in the general tone of urbanity and intelligence, are excelled by the less favoured Zetlanders. I observe they always crowd their boat with people in the bows, being the ready way to send her down in any awkward circumstance. There are remains of their Norwegian descent and language in North Ronaldshaw, an isle I regret we did not see. A missionary preacher came ashore there a year or two since, but being a very little black-bearded unshaved man, the seniors of the isle suspected him of being an ancient Pecht or Pict, and *no canny*, of course. The schoolmaster came down to entreat our worthy Mr. Stevenson, then about to leave the island, to come up and verify whether the preacher was an ancient Pecht, yea or no. Finding apologies were in vain, he rode up to the house where the unfortunate preacher, after three nights' watching, had got to bed, little conceiving under what odious suspicion he had fallen. As Mr. S. declined disturbing him, his boots were produced, which being a *little—little—very little* pair, confirmed, in the opinion of all the bystanders, the suspicion of Pechtism. Mr. S. therefore found it necessary to go into the poor man's sleeping apartment, where he recognized one Campbell, heretofore an ironmonger in Edinburgh but who had put his hand for some years to the missionary plough; of course he warranted his quondam acquaintance to be no ancient Pecht. Mr. Stevenson carried the same schoolmaster who figured in the adventure of the Pecht to the mainland of Scotland, to be examined for his office. He was extremely desirous to see a tree; and, on seeing one, desired to know what *girss* it was that grew at the top on't—the leaves appearing to him to be grass. They still speak a little Norse, and indeed I hear every day words of that language; for instance, *Ja kul*, for '*Yes, sir.*' We creep slowly up Hoy Sound, working under the Pomona shore; but there is no hope of reaching Stromness till we have the assistance of the evening tide. The channel now seems like a Highland loch; not the least ripple on the waves. The passage is narrowed, and (to the eye) blocked up by the interposition of the green and apparently fertile isle of Græmsay, the property of Lord Armadale.* Hoy looks yet grander, from comparing its black and steep mountains with this verdant isle. To add to the beauty of the Sound, it is rendered lively by the successive appearance of seven or eight whaling vessels from Davies' Straits; large strong ships, which pass successively, with all their sails set, enjoying the little wind that is. Many of these vessels display the *garland*; that is, a wreath of ribbons which the young fellows on board have got from their sweethearts, or come by otherwise, and which hangs between the foremast and mainmast, surmounted sometimes by a small model of the vessel. This garland is hung up upon the 1st May, and remains till they come into port. I believe we shall dodge here till the tide makes about nine, and then get into Stromness; no boatman or sailor in Orkney thinks of the wind in comparison of the tides and currents. We must not complain, though the night gets rainy, and the Hill of Hoy is now completely invested with vapour and mist. In the forepart of the day we executed very cleverly a task of considerable difficulty and even danger.

"10*th August*, 1814.—Get into Stromness bay, and anchor before the party are up. A most decided rain all night. The bay is formed by a deep indention in the mainland, or Pomona; on one side of which stands Stromness—a fishing village and harbour of *call* for the Davies' Straits whalers, as Lerwick is for the Greenlanders. Betwixt the vessels we met yesterday, seven or eight which passed us this morning, and several others still lying in the bay, we have seen between twenty and thirty of these large ships in this remote place. The opposite side of Stromness bay is protected by Hoy, and Græmsay lies between them; so that the bay seems quite land-locked, and the contrast between the mountains of Hoy, the soft verdure of Græmsay, and the swelling hill of Orphir on the mainland, has a beautiful effect. The day clears up, and Mr. Rae, Lord Armadale's factor, comes off from his house, called Clestrom, upon the shore opposite to Stromness, to breakfast with us. We go ashore with him. His farm is well cultivated, and he has procured an excellent breed of horses from Lanarkshire, of which county he is a native; strong hardy Galloways, fit for labour or hacks. By this we profited, as Mr. Rae mounted us all, and we set off to visit the Standing Stones of Stenhouse or Stennis.

"At the upper end of the bay, about half way between Clestrom and Stromness, there extends a loch of considerable size, of fresh water, but communicating with the sea by apertures left in a long bridge or causeway which divides them. After riding about two miles along this lake, we open another called the Loch of Harray, of about the same dimensions, and communicating with the lower lake, as the former does with the sea, by a stream, over which is constructed a causeway, with openings to suffer the flow and reflux of the water, as both lakes are affected by the tide. Upon the tongues of land which, approaching each other, divide the lakes of Stennis and Harray, are situated the Standing Stones. The isthmus on the eastern side exhibits a semicircle of immensely large upright pillars of unhewn stone, surrounded by a mound of earth. As the mound is discontinued, it does not seem that the circle was ever completed. The flat or open part of the semicircle looks up a plain, where, at a distance, is seen a large tumulus. The highest of these stones may be about sixteen or seventeen feet, and I think

* The late Sir William Honeyman, Bart.—a Judge of the Court of Session by the title of Lord Armadale

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there are none so low as twelve feet. At irregular distances are pointed out other unhewn pillars of the same kind. One, a little to the westward, is perforated with a round hole, perhaps to bind a victim; or rather, I conjecture, for the purpose of solemnly attesting the deity, which the Scandinavians did by passing their head through a ring,—*vide* Eyrbiggia Saga. Several barrows are scattered around this strange monument. Upon the opposite isthmus is a complete circle, of ninety-five paces in diameter, surrounded by standing stones, less in size than the others, being only from ten or twelve to fourteen feet in height, and four in breadth. A deep trench is drawn around this circle on the outside of the pillars, and four tumuli, or mounds of earth, are regularly placed, two on each side.

"Stonehenge excels these monuments, but I fancy they are otherwise unparalleled in Britain. The idea that such circles were exclusively Druidical is now justly exploded. The northern nations all used such erections to mark their places of meeting, whether for religious purposes or civil policy; and there is repeated mention of them in the Sagas. See the Eyrbiggia Saga, for the establishment of the Helga-fels, or holy mount, where the people held their Comitia, and where sacrifices were offered to Thor and Woden. About the centre of the semicircle is a broad flat stone, probably once the altar on which human victims were sacrificed.—Mr. Rae seems to think the common people have no tradition of the purpose of these stones, but probably he has not inquired particularly. He admits they look upon them with superstitious reverence; and it is evident that those which have fallen down (about half the original number) have been wasted by time, and not demolished. The materials of these monuments lay near, for the shores and bottom of the lake are of the same kind of rock. How they were raised, transported, and placed upright, is a puzzling question. In our ride back, noticed a round entrenchment or *tumulus*, called the Hollow of Tongue.

"The hospitality of Mrs. Rae detained us to an early dinner at Clestrom. About four o'clock took our longboat and rowed down the bay to visit the Dwarfie Stone of Hoy. We have all day been pleased with the romantic appearance of that island, for though the Hill of Hoy is not very high, perhaps about 1200 feet, yet rising perpendicularly (almost) from the sea, and being very steep and furrowed with ravines, and catching all the mists from the western ocean, it has a noble and picturesque effect in every point of view. We land upon the island, and proceed up a long and very swampy valley broken into peatbogs. The one side of this valley is formed by the Mountain of Hoy, the other by another steep hill, having at the top a circular belt of rock; upon the slope of this last hill, and just where the principal mountain opens into a wide and precipitous and circular *corrie* or hollow, lies the Dwarfie stone. It is a huge sandstone rock, of one solid stone, being about seven feet high, twenty-two feet long, and seventeen feet broad. The upper end of this stone is hewn into a sort of apartment containing two beds of stone and a passage between them. The uppermost and largest is five feet eight inches long, by two feet broad, and is furnished with a stone pillow. The lower, supposed for the Dwarf's Wife, is shorter, and rounded off, instead of being square at the corners. The entrance may be about three feet and a-half square. Before it lies a huge stone, apparently intended to serve the purpose of a door, and shaped accordingly. In the top, over the passage which divides the beds, there is a hole to serve for a window or chimney, which was doubtless originally wrought square with irons, like the rest of the work, but has been broken out by violence into a shapeless hole. Opposite to this stone, and proceeding from it in a line down the valley, are several small barrows, and there is a very large one on the same line, at the spot where we landed. This seems to indicate that the monument is of heathen times, and probably was meant as the temple of some northern edition of the *Dii Manes*. There are no symbols of Christian devotion—and the door is to the westward; it therefore does not seem to have been the abode of a hermit, as Dr. Barry* has conjectured. The Orcadians have no tradition on the subject, excepting that they believe it to be the work of a dwarf, to whom, like their ancestors, they attribute supernatural powers and malevolent disposition. They conceive he may be seen sometimes sitting at the door of his abode, but he vanishes on a nearer approach. Whoever inhabited this den, certainly enjoyed

'Pillow cold and sheets not warm.'

"Duff, Stevenson, and I, now walk along the skirts of the Hill of Hoy, to rejoin Robert Hamilton, who in the mean while had rode down to the clergyman's house, the wet and boggy walk not suiting his gout. Arrive at the manse completely wet, and drink tea there. The clergyman (Mr. Hamilton) has procured some curious specimens of natural history for Bullock's Museum, particularly a pair of fine eaglets. He has just got another of the golden, or white kind, which he intends to send him. The eagle, with every other ravenous bird, abounds among the almost inaccessible precipices of Hoy, which afford them shelter, while the moors, abounding with grouse, and the small uninhabited islands and holms, where sheep and lambs are necessarily left unwatched, as well as the all-sustaining ocean, give these birds of prey the means of support. The clergyman told us that a man was very lately alive in the Island of ———, who, when an infant, was transported from thence by an eagle over a broad sound, or arm of the sea, to the bird's nest in Hoy. Pursuit being instantly made, and the eagle's nest being known, the infant was found there playing with the young eaglets. A more ludicrous instance of transportation he himself witnessed. Walking in the fields, he heard the squeaking of a pig for some time, without being able to discern whence it proceeded, until looking up, he beheld the unfortunate grunter in the talons of an eagle, who soared away with him towards the summit of Hoy. From this it may be conjectured, that the island is very thinly inhabited. In fact, we only saw two or three little wigwams. After tea we walked a mile farther, to a point where the boat was lying, in order to secure the advantage of the flood-tide. We rowed with toil across one stream of tide, which set strongly up between Græmsay and Hoy; but, on turning the point of Græmsay, the other branch of the same flood-tide carried us with great velocity alongside our yacht, which we reached about nine o'clock. Between riding, walking, and running, we have spent a very active and entertaining day.

"*Domestic Memoranda*—The eggs on Zetland and Orkney are very indifferent, having an earthy taste and being very small. But the hogs are an excellent breed—queer wild-looking creatures, with heads like wildboars, but making capital bacon."

CHAPTER XXX.

DIARY CONTINUED—STROMNESS—BESSY MILLIE'S CHARM—CAPE WRATH—CAVE OF SMOWE—THE HEBRIDES—SCALPA, ETC.—1814.

"*Off Stromness, 17th August*, 1814—Went on shore after breakfast, and found W. Erskine and Marjoribanks had been in this town all last night, without our hearing of them or they of us. No letters from Abbotsford or Edinburgh. Stromness is a little dirty straggling town, which cannot be traversed by a cart, or even by a horse, for there are stairs up and down, even in the principal streets. We paraded its whole length like turkeys in a string, I suppose to satisfy ourselves that there was a worse town in the Orkneys than the metropolis, Kirkwall. We clomb, by steep and dirty lanes, an eminence rising above the town, and commanding a fine view. An old hag lives in a wretched cabin on this height, and subsists by selling winds. Each captain of a

* History of the Orkney Islands, by the Rev. George Barry, D. D. 4to. Edinburgh: 1805.

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merchantman, between jest and earnest, gives the old woman sixpence, and she boils her kettle to procure a favourable gale. She was a miserable figure; upwards of ninety, she told us, and dried up like a mummy. A sort of clay-coloured cloak, folded over her head, corresponded in colour to her corpse-like complexion. Fine light-blue eyes, and nose and chin that almost met, and a ghastly expression of cunning, gave her quite the effect of Hecate. She told us she remembered *Gow the pirate*, who was born near the House of Clestrom, and afterwards commenced buccaneer. He came to his native country about 1725, with a *snow* which he commanded, carried off two women from one of the islands, and committed other enormities. At length, while he was dining in a house in the Island of Eda, the islanders, headed by Malcolm Laing's grandfather, made him prisoner, and sent him to London, where he was hanged. While at Stromness, he made love to a Miss Gordon, who pledged her faith to him by shaking hands, an engagement which, in her idea, could not be dissolved without her going to London to seek back again her 'faith and troth,' by shaking hands with him again after execution. We left our Pythoness, who assured us there was nothing evil in the intercession she was to make for us, but that we were only to have a fair wind through the benefit of her prayers. She repeated a sort of rigmarole which I suppose she had ready for such occasions, and seemed greatly delighted and surprised with the amount of our donations, as every body gave her a trifle, our faithful Captain Wilson making the regular offering on behalf of the ship. So much for buying a wind. Bessy Millie's habitation is airy enought for Æolus himself, but if she is a special favourite with that divinity, he has a strange choice. In her house I remarked a quern, or hand-mill. A cairn, a little higher, commands a beautiful view of the bay, with its various entrances and islets. Here we found the vestiges of a bonfire, lighted in memory of the battle of Bannockburn, concerning which every part of Scotland has its peculiar traditions. The Orcadians say that a Norwegian prince, then their ruler, called by them Harold, brought 1400 men of Orkney to the assistance of Bruce, and that the King, at a critical period of the engagement, touched him with his scabbard, saying, 'The day is against us.'—'I trust,' returned the Orcadian, 'your Grace will *venture again*;' which has given rise to their motto, and passed into a proverb. On board at half-past three, and find Bessy Millie a woman of her word, for the expected breeze has sprung up, if it but last us till we double Cape Wrath. Weigh anchor (I hope) to bid farewell to Orkney.*

"The land in Orkney is, generally speaking, excellent, and what is not fitted for the plough, is admirably adapted for pasture. But the cultivation is very bad, and the mode of using these extensive commons, where they tear up, without remorse, the turf of the finest pasture, in order to make fuel, is absolutely execrable. The practice has already peeled and exhausted much fine land, and must in the end ruin the country entirely. In other respects, their mode of cultivation is to manure for barley and oats, and then manure again, and this without the least idea of fallow or green crops. Mr. Rae thinks that his example—and he farms very well—has had no effect upon the natives, except in the article of potatoes, which they now cultivate a little more, but crops of turnips are unknown. For this slovenly labour the Orcadians cannot, like the Shetland men, plead the occupation of fishing, which is wholly neglected by them, excepting that about this time of the year all the people turn out for the dog-fish; the liver of which affords oil, and the bodies are a food as much valued here by the lower classes as it is contemned in Zetland. We saw nineteen boats out at this work. But cod, tusk, ling, haddocks, &c., which abound round these isles, are totally neglected. Their inferiority in husbandry is therefore to be ascribed to the prejudices of the people, who are all peasants of the lowest order. On Lord Armadale's estate, the number of tenantry amounts to 300, and the average of rent is about seven pounds each. What can be expected from such a distribution; and how is the necessary restriction to take place, without the greatest immediate distress and hardship to these poor creatures? It is the hardest chapter in economicks; and if I were an Orcadian laird, I feel I should shuffle on with the old useless creatures, in contradiction to my better judgment. Stock is improved in these islands, and the horses seem to be better bred than in Shetland; at least, I have seen more clever animals. The good horses find a ready sale; Mr. Rae gets twenty guineas readily for a colt of his rearing—to be sure, they are very good.

"*Six o'clock.*—Our breeze has carried us through the Mouth of Hoy, and so into the Atlantic. The north-western face of the island forms a ledge of high perpendicular cliffs, which might have surprised us more, had we not already seen the Ord of Bressay, the Noup of Noss, and the precipices of the Fair Isle. But these are formidable enough. One projecting cliff, from the peculiarities of its form, has acquired the name of the Old Man of Hoy, and is well known to mariners as marking the entrance to the Mouth. The other jaw of this mouth is formed by a lower range of crags, called the Burgh of Birsa. The access through this strait would be easy, were it not for the Island of Græmsay, lying in the very throat of the passage, and two other islands covering the entrance to the harbour of Stromness. Græmsay is infamous for shipwrecks, and the chance of these *God-sends*, as they were impiously called, is said sometimes to have doubled the value of the land. In Stromness, I saw many of the sad relics of shipwrecked vessels applied to very odd purposes, and indeed to all sorts of occasions. The gates, or *grinds*, as they are here called, are usually of ship planks and timbers, and so are their bridges, &c. These casualties are now much less common since the lights on the Skerries and the Start have been established. Enough of memoranda for the present. We have hitherto kept our course pretty well; and a King's ship, about eighteen guns or so, two miles upon our lea-boom, has shortened sail, apparently to take us under her wing, which may not be altogether unnecessary in the latitude of Cape Wrath, where several vessels have been taken by Yankee-Doodle. The sloop-of-war looks as if she could bite hard, and is supposed by our folks to be the Malay. If we can speak the captain we will invite him to some grouse, or send him some, as he likes best, for Marchie's campaign was very successful.

"18*th August*, 1814.—Bessy Millie's charm has failed us. After a rainy night, the wind has come round to the north-west, and is getting almost contrary. We have weathered Whitten-head, however, and Cape Wrath, the north-western extremity of Britain, is now in sight. The weather gets rainy and squally. Hamilton and Erskine keep their berths. Duff and I sit upon deck, like two great bears, wrapt in watch-cloaks, the sea flying over us every now and then. At length, after a sound buffeting with the rain, the doubling Cape Wrath with this wind is renounced as impracticable, and we *stand* away for Loch Eribol, a lake running into the extensive country of Lord Reay. No sickness; we begin to get hardy sailors in that particular. The ground rises upon us very bold and mountainous, especially a very high steep mountain, called Ben-y-Hope, at the head of a lake called Loch Hope. The weather begins to mitigate as we get under the *lea* of the land. Loch Eribol opens, running up into a wild and barren scene of crags and hills. The proper anchorage is said to be at the head of the lake, but to go eight miles up so narrow an inlet would expose us to be wind-bound. A pilot boat comes off from Mr. Anderson's house, a principal tacksman of Lord Reay's. After some discussion we anchor,

* Lord Teignmouth, in his recent "Sketches of the Coasts and Islands of Scotland," says—"The publication of the Pirate satisfied the natives of Orkney as to the authorship of the Waverley Novels. It was remarked by those who had accompanied Sir Walter Scott in his excursions in these Islands, that the vivid descriptions which the work contains were confined to those scenes which he visited."—Vol. i. p. 28.

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within a reef of sunken rocks, nearly opposite to Mr. Anderson's house of Rispan; the situation is not, we are given to understand, altogether without danger if the wind should blow hard, but it is now calm. In front of our anchorage a few shapeless patches of land, not exceeding a few yards in diameter, have been prepared for corn by the spade, and bear wretched crops. All the rest of the view is utter barrenness; the distant hills, we are told, contain plenty of deer, being part of a forest belonging to Lord Reay, who is proprietor of all the extensive range of desolation now under our eye. The water has been kinder than the land, for we hear of plenty of salmon, and haddocks, and lobsters, and send our faithful minister of the interior, John Peters, the steward, to procure some of those good things of this very indifferent land, and to invite Mr. Anderson to dine with us. Four o'clock,—John has just returned, successful in both commissions, and the evening concludes pleasantly.

"19*th August*, 1814. *Loch Eribol, near Cape Wrath.*—Went off before eight A. M. to breakfast with our friend Mr. Anderson. His house, invisible from the vessel at her moorings, and, indeed, from any part of the entrance into Loch Eribol, is a very comfortable one, lying obscured behind a craggy eminence. A little creek, winding up behind the crag, and in front of the house, forms a small harbour, and gives a romantic air of concealment and snugness. There we found a ship upon the stocks, built from the keel by a Highland carpenter, who had magnanimously declined receiving assistance from any of the ship-carpenters who happened to be here occasionally, lest it should be said he could not have finished his task without their aid. An ample Highland breakfast of excellent new-taken herring, equal to those of Lochfine, fresh haddocks, fresh eggs, and fresh butter, not forgetting the bottle of whisky, and bannocks of barley and oat-cakes, with the Lowland luxuries of tea and coffee. After breakfast, took the long-boat, and under Mr. Anderson's pilotage, row to see a remarkable natural curiosity, called Uamh Smowe, or the Largest Cave. Stevenson, Marchie, and Duff, go by land. Take the fowling-piece, and shoot some sea-fowl, and a large hawk of an uncommon appearance. Fire four shots, and kill three times. After rowing about three miles to the westward of the entrance from the sea to Loch Eribol, we enter a creek, between two ledges of very high rocks, and landing, find ourselves in front of the wonder we came to see. The exterior apartment of the cavern opens under a tremendous rock, facing the creek, and occupies the full space of the ravine where we landed. From the top of the rock to the base of the cavern, as we afterwards discovered by plumb, is eighty feet, of which the height of the arch is fifty-three feet; the rest, being twenty-seven feet, is occupied by the precipitous rock under which it opens; the width is fully in proportion to this great height, being 110 feet. The depth of this exterior cavern is 200 feet, and it is apparently supported by an intermediate column of natural rock. Being open to daylight and the sea air, the cavern is perfectly clean and dry, and the sides are incrusted with stalactites. This immense cavern is so well-proportioned, that I was not aware of its extraordinary height and extent, till I saw our two friends, who had somewhat preceded us, having made the journey by land, appearing like pigmies among its recesses. Afterwards, on entering the cave, I climbed up a sloping rock at its extremity, and was much struck with the prospect, looking outward from this magnificent arched cavern upon our boat and its crew, the view being otherwise bounded by the ledge of rocks which formed each side of the creek. We now propose to investigate the farther wonders of the cave of Smowe. In the right or west side of the cave opens an interior cavern of a different aspect. The height of this second passage may be about twelve or fourteen feet, and its breadth about six or eight, neatly formed into a Gothic portal by the hand of nature. The lower part of this porch is closed by a ledge of rock, rising to the height of between five and six feet, and which I can compare to nothing but the hatch-door of a shop. Beneath this hatch a brook finds its way out, forms a black deep pool before the Gothic archway, and then escapes to the sea, and forms the creek in which we landed. It is somewhat difficult to approach this strange pass, so as to gain a view into the interior of the cavern. By clambering along a broken and dangerous cliff, you can, however, look into it; but only so far as to see a twilight space filled with dark-coloured water in great agitation, and representing a subterranean lake, moved by some fearful convulsion of nature. How this pond is supplied with water you cannot see from even this point of vantage, but you are made partly sensible of the truth by a sound like the dashing of a sullen cataract within the bowels of the earth. Here the adventure has usually been abandoned, and Mr. Anderson only mentioned two travellers whose curiosity had led them farther. We were resolved, however, to see the adventures of this new cave of Montesinos to an end. Duff had already secured the use of a fisher's boat and its hands, our own log-boat being too heavy and far too valuable to be ventured upon this Cocytus. Accordingly the skiff was dragged up the brook to the rocky ledge, or hatch, which barred up the interior cavern, and there, by force of hands, our boat's crew and two or three fishers first raised the boat's bow upon the ledge of rock, then brought her to a level, being poised upon that narrow hatch, and lastly launched her down into the dark and deep subterranean lake within. The entrance was so narrow, and the boat so clumsy, that we, who were all this while clinging to the rock like sea-fowl, and with scarce more secure footing, were greatly alarmed for the safety of our trusty sailors. At the instant when the boat sloped inward to the cave, a Highlander threw himself into it with great boldness and dexterity, and, at the expense of some bruises, shared its precipitate fall into the waters under the earth. This dangerous exploit was to prevent the boat drifting away from us, but a cord at its stern would have been a safer and surer expedient.

"When our *enfant perdu* had recovered breath and legs, he brought the boat back to the entrance, and took us in. We now found ourselves embarked on a deep black pond of an irregular form, the rocks rising like a dome all around us, and high over our heads. The light, a sort of dubious twilight, was derived from two chasms in the roof of the vault, for that offered by the entrance was but trifling. Down one of those rents there poured from the height of eighty feet, in a sheet of foam, the brook, which, after supplying the subterranean pond with water, finds its way out beneath the ledge of rock that blocks its entrance. The other skylight, if I may so term it, looks out at the clear blue sky. It is impossible for description to explain the impression made by so strange a place, to which we had been conveyed with so much difficulty. The cave itself, the pool, the cataract, would have been each separate objects of wonder, but all united together, and affecting at once the ear, the eye, and the imagination, their effect is indescribable. The length of this pond, or loch, as the people here call it, is seventy feet over, the breadth about thirty at the narrowest point, and it is of great depth.

"As we resolved to proceed, we directed the boat to a natural arch on the right hand, or west side of the cataract. This archway was double, a high arch being placed above a very low one, as in a Roman aqueduct. The ledge of rock which forms this lower arch is not above two feet and a half high above the water, and under this we were to pass in the boat; so that we were fain to pile ourselves flat upon each other like a layer of herringe. By this judicious disposition we were pushed in safety beneath this low-browed rock into a region of utter darkness. For this, however, we were provided, for we had a tinder-box and lights. The view back upon the twilight lake we had crossed, its sullen eddies wheeling round and round, and its echoes resounding to the ceaseless thunder of the waterfall, seemed dismal enough, and was aggravated

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by temporary darkness, and in some degree by a sense of danger. The lights, however, dispelled the latter sensation, if it prevailed to any extent, and we now found ourselves in a narrow cavern, sloping somewhat upward from the water. We got out of the boat, proceeded along some slippery places upon shelves of the rock, and gained the dry land. I cannot say *dry*, excepting comparatively. We were then in an arched cave, twelve feet high in the roof, and about eight feet in breadth, which went winding into the bowels of the earth for about an hundred feet. The sides, being (like those of the whole cavern) of limestone rock, were covered with stalactites, and with small drops of water like dew, glancing like ten thousand thousand sets of birth-day diamonds under the glare of our lights. In some places these stalactites branch out into broad and curious ramifications, resembling coral, and the foliage of submarine plants.

"When we reached the extremity of this passage, we found it declined suddenly to a horrible ugly gulf, or well, filled with dark water, and of great depth, over which the rock closed. We threw in stones, which indicated great profundity by their sound; and growing more familiar with the horrors of this den, we sounded with an oar, and found about ten feet depth at the entrance, but discovered, in the same manner, that the gulf extended under the rock, deepening as it went, God knows how far. Imagination can figure few deaths more horrible than to be sucked under these rocks into some unfathomable abyss, where your corpse could never be found to give intimation of your fate. A water kelpy, or an evil spirit of any aquatic propensities, could not choose a fitter abode; and, to say the truth, I believe at out first entrance, and when all our feelings were afloat at the novelty of the scene, the unexpected plashing of a seal would have routed the whole dozen of us. The mouth of this ugly gulf was all covered with slimy alluvious substances, which led Mr. Stevenson to observe, that it could have no separate source, but must be fed from the waters of the outer lake and brook, as it lay upon the same level, and seemed to rise and fall with them, without having any thing to indicate a separate current of its own. Rounding this perilous hole, or gulf, upon the aforesaid alluvious substances, which formed its shores, we reached the extremity of the cavern, which there ascends like a vent, or funnel, directly up a sloping precipice, but hideously black, and slippery from wet and sea-weeds. One of our sailors, a Zetlander, climbed up a good way, and by holding up a light, we could plainly perceive that this vent closed after ascending to a considerable height; and here, therefore, closed the adventure of the cave of Smowe, for it appeared utterly impossible to proceed further in any direction whatever. There is a tradition, that the first Lord Reay went through various subterranean abysses, and at length returned, after ineffectually endeavouring to penetrate to the extremity of the Smowe cave; but this must be either fabulous, or an exaggerated account of such a journey as we performed. And under the latter supposition, it is a curious instance how little the people in the neighbourhood of this curiosity have cared to examine it.

"In returning, we endeavoured to familiarize ourselves with the objects in detail, which, viewed together, had struck us with so much wonder. The stalactites, or limy incrustations, upon the walls of the cavern, are chiefly of a dark-brown colour, and in this respect, Smowe is inferior, according to Mr. Stevenson, to the celebrated cave of Macallister in the Isle of Skye. In returning, the men with the lights, and the various groups and attitudes of the party, gave a good deal of amusement. We now ventured to clamber along the side of the rock above the subterranean water, and thus gained the upper arch, and had the satisfaction to see our admirable and good-humoured commodore, Hamilton, floated beneath the lower arch into the second cavern. His goodly countenance being illumined by a single candle, his recumbent posture, and the appearance of a hard-favoured fellow guiding the boat, made him the very picture of Bibo, in the catch, when he wakes in Charon's boat,

'When Bibo thought fit from this world to retreat,
As full of Champagne as an egg's full of meat,
He waked in the boat, and to Charon he said,
That he would be row'd back, for he was not yet dead.'

"Descending from our superior station on the upper arch, we now again embarked, and spent some time in rowing about and examining this second cave. We could see our dusky entrance, into which daylight streamed faint, and at a considerable distance; and under the arch of the outer cavern stood a sailor, with an oar in his hand, looking, in the perspective, like a fairy with his wand. We at length emerged unwillingly from this extraordinary basin, and again enjoyed ourselves in the large exterior cave. Our boat was hoisted with some difficulty over the ledge, which appears the natural barrier of the interior apartments, and restored in safety to the fishers, who were properly gratified for the hazard which their skiff, as well as one of themselves, had endured. After this we resolved to ascend the rocks, and discover the opening by which the cascade was discharged from above into the second cave. Erskine and I, by some chance, took the wrong side of the rocks, and, after some scrambling, got into the face of a dangerous precipice, where Erskine, to my great alarm, turned giddy, and declared he could not go farther. I clambered up without much difficulty, and shouting to the people below, go two of them to assist the Counsellor, who was brought into, by the means which have sent many a good fellow out of the world—I mean a rope. We easily found the brook, and traced its descent till it precipitates itself down a chasm of the rock into the subterranean apartment, where we first made its acquaintance. Divided by a natural arch of stone from the chasm down which the cascade falls, there is another rent, which serves as a skylight to the cavern, as I already noticed. Standing on a natural foot-bridge, formed by the arch which divides these two gulfs, you have a grand prospect into both. The one is deep, black, and silent, only affording at the bottom a glimpse of the dark and sullen pool which occupies the interior of the cavern. The right-hand rent, down which the stream discharges itself, seems to ring and reel with the unceasing roar of the cataract which envelopes its side in mist and foam. This part of the scene alone is worth a day's journey. After heavy rains, the torrent is discharged into this cavern with astonishing violence; and the size of the chasm being inadequate to the reception of such a volume of water, it is thrown up in spouts like the blowing of a whale. But at such times the entrance of the cavern is inaccessible.

"Taking leave of this scene with regret, we rowed back to Loch Enbol. Having yet an hour to spare before dinner, we rowed across the mouth of the lake to its shore on the east side. This rises into a steep and shattered stack of mouldering calcareous rock and stone, called Whiten Head. It is pierced with several caverns, the abode of seals and cormorants. We entered one, where our guide promised to us a grand sight, and so it certainly would have been to any who had not just come from Smowe. In this last cave the sea enters through a lofty arch, and penetrates to a great depth; but the weight of the tide made it dangerous to venture very far, so we did not see the extremity of Friskin's Cavern, as it is called. We shot several cormorants in the cave, the echoes roaring like thunder at every discharge. We received, however, a proper rebuke from Hamilton, our commodore, for killing any thing which was not fit for *eating*. It was in vain I assured him that the Zetlanders make excellent hare-soup out of these sea-fowl. He will listen to no subordinate authority, and rules us by the Almanach des Gourmands. Mr. Anderson showed me the spot where the Norwegian monarch, Haco, moored his fleet, after the discomfiture he received at Largs. He caused all the cattle to be driven from the hills, and houghed, and slain upon a broad flat rock, for the refreshment of his dispirited army. Mr. Anderson dines with us, and very handsomely

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presents us with a stock of salmon, haddocks, and so forth, which we requite by a small present of wine from our sea stores. This has been a fine day; the first fair day here for these eight weeks.

"*20th August*, 1814.—Sail by four in the morning, and by half-past six, are off Cape Wrath. All hands ashore by seven, and no time allowed to breakfast, except on beef and biscuit. On this dread Cape, so fatal to mariners, it is proposed to build a lighthouse, and Mr. Stevenson has fixed on an advantageous situation. It is a high promontory, with steep sides that go sheer down to the breakers, which lash its feet. There is no landing, except in a small creek about a mile and a half to the eastward. There the foam of the sea plays at long bowls with a huge collection of large stones, some of them a ton in weight, but which these fearful billows chuck up and down as a child tosses a ball. The walk from thence to the Cape was over rough boggy ground, but good sheep pasture. Mr. —— Dunlop, brother to the laird of Dunlop, took from Lord Reay, some years since, a large track of sheep-land, including the territories of Cape Wrath, for about £300 a-year, for the period of two-nineteen years and a life-rent. It is needless to say, that the tenant has an immense profit, for the value of pasture is now understood here. Lord Reay's estate, containing 150,000 square acres, and measuring eighty miles by sixty, was before commencement of the last leases, rented at £1,200 a-year. It is now worth £5,000, and Mr. Anderson says he may let it this ensuing year (when the leases expire) for about £15,000. But then he must resolve to part with his people, for these rents can only be given upon the supposition that sheep are generally to be introduced on the property. In an economical, and perhaps in a political point of view, it might be best that every part of a country were dedicated to that sort of occupation for which nature has best fitted it. But to effect this reform in the present instance, Lord Reay must turn out several hundred families who have lived under him and his fathers for many generations, and the swords of whose fathers probably won the lands from which he is now expelling them. He is a good-natured man, I suppose, for Mr. A. says he is hesitating whether he shall not take a more moderate rise, (£7000 or £8000,) and keep his Highland tenantry. This last war (before the short peace,) he levied a fine fencible corps, (the Reay fencibles,) and might have doubled their number. *Wealth* is no doubt *strength* in a country, while all is quiet and governed by law, but on any altercation or internal commotion, it ceases to be strength, and is only the means of tempting the strong to plunder the possessors. Much may be said on both sides.*

"Cape Wrath is a striking point, both from the dignity of its own appearance, and from the mental association of its being the extreme cape of Scotland, with reference to the north-west. There is no land in the direct line between this point and America. I saw a pair of large eagles, and if I had had the rifle-gun might have had a shot, for the birds, when I first saw them, were perched on a rock within about sixty or seventy yards. They are, I suppose, little disturbed here, for they showed no great alarm. After the Commissioners and Mr. Stevenson had examined the headland, with reference to the site of a lighthouse, we strolled to our boat, and came on board between ten and eleven. Get the boat up upon deck, and set sail for the Lewis with light winds and a great swell of tide. Pass a rocky islet called Gousla. Here a fine vessel was lately wrecked; all her crew perished but one, who got upon the rocks from the bolt-sprit, and was afterwards brought off. In front of Cape Wrath are some angry breakers, called the *Staggs*; the rocks which occasion them are visible at low water. The country behind Cape Wrath swells in high sweeping elevations, but without any picturesque or dignified mountainous scenery. But on sailing westward a few miles, particularly after doubling a headland called the Stour of Assint, the coast assumes the true Highland character, being skirted with a succession of picturesque mountains of every variety of height and outline. These are the hills of Ross-shire—a waste and thinly-peopled district at this extremity of the island. We would willingly have learned the names of the most remarkable, but they are only laid down in the charts by the cant names given them by mariners, from their appearance, as the Sugar-loaf, and so forth. Our breeze now increases, and seems steadily favourable, carrying us on with exhilarating rapidity, at the rate of eight knots an hour, with the romantic outline of the mainland under our lee-beam, and the dusky shores of the Long Island beginning to appear ahead. We remain on deck long after it is dark, watching the phosphoric effects occasioned, or made visible, by the rapid motion of the vessel, and enlightening her course with a continued succession of sparks and even flashes of broad light, mingled with the foam which she flings from her bows and head. A rizard haddock, and to bed. Charming weather all day.

"*21st August*, 1814.—Last night went out like a lamb, but this morning came in like a lion, all roar and tumult. The wind shifted and became squally; the mingled and confused tides that run among the Hebrides got us among their eddies, and gave the cutter such concussions, that, besides reeling at every wave, she trembled from head to stern, with a sort of very uncomfortable and ominous vibration. Turned out about three, and went on deck; the prospect dreary enough, as we are beating up a narrow channel between two dark and disconsolate-looking islands, in a gale of wind and rain, guided only by the twinkling glimmer of the light on an island called Ellan Glas.—Go to bed and sleep soundly, notwithstanding the rough rocking. Great bustle about four; the light-keeper having seen our flag comes off to be our pilot, as in duty bound. Asleep again till eight. When I went on deck, I found we had anchored in the little harbour of Scalpa, upon the coast of Harris, a place dignified by the residence of Charles Edward in his hazardous attempt to escape in 1746. An old man, lately alive here, called Donald Macleod, was his host and temporary protector, and could not, until his dying hour, mention the distresses of the Adventurer without tears. From this place, Charles attempted to go to Stornoway; but the people of the Lewis had taken arms to secure him, under an idea that he was coming to plunder the country. And although his faithful attendant, Donald Macleod, induced them by fair words, to lay aside their purpose, yet they insisted upon his leaving the island. So the unfortunate Prince was obliged to return back to Scalpa. He afterwards escaped to South Uist, but was chased in the passage by Captain Fergusson's sloop of war. The harbour seems a little neat secure place of anchorage. Within a small island, there seems more shelter than where we are lying; but it is crowded with vessels, part of those whom we saw in the Long-Hope—so Mr. Wilson chose to remain outside. The ground looks hilly and barren in the extreme; but I can say little for it, as an incessant rain prevents my keeping the deck. Stevenson and Duff, accompanied by Marchie, go to examine the lighthouse on Ellan Glas. Hamilton and Erskine keep their beds, having scarce slept last night—and I bring up my journal. The day continues bad, with little intermission of rain. Our party return with little advantage from their expedition, excepting some fresh butter from the lighthouse. The harbour of Scalpa is composed of a great number of little uninhabited islets. The masts of the vessels at anchor behind them have a good effect. To bed early, to make amends for last night, with the purpose of sailing for Dunvegan in the Isle of Skye with daylight."

* The whole of the immense district called *Lord Reay's country*—the habitation as far back as history reaches of the clan Mackay—has passed, since Sir W. Scott's journal was written, into the hands of the noble family of Sutherland.

CHAPTER XXXI.

DIARY CONTINUED—ISLE OF HARRIS—MONUMENTS OF THE CHIEFS OF MACLEOD—ISLE OF SKYE—DUNVE-

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GAN CASTLE—LOCH CORRISKIN—MACALLISTER'S CAVE.—1814.

"22*d August*, 1814.—Sailed early in the morning from Scalpa Harbour, in order to cross the Minch, or Channel, for Dunvegan; but the breeze being contrary, we can only creep along the Harris shore, until we shall gain the advantage of the tide. The east coast of Harris, as we now see it, is of a character which sets human industry at utter defiance, consisting of high sterile hills, covered entirely with stones, with a very slight sprinkling of stunted heather. Within, appear still higher peaks of mountains. I have never seen any thing more unpropitious, excepting the southern side of Griban, on the shores of Loch-na-Gaoil, in the Isle of Mull. We sail along this desolate coast (which exhibits no mark of human habitation) with the advantage of a pleasant day, and a brisk, though not a favourable gale. *Two o'clock*—Row ashore to see the little harbour and village of Rowdill, on the coast of Harris. There is a decent three-storied house, belonging to the laird, Mr. Macleod of the Harris, where we were told two of his female relations lived. A large vessel had been stranded last year, and two or three carpenters were about repairing her, but in such a style of Highland laziness that I suppose she may float next century. The harbour is neat enough, but wants little more cover to the eastward. The ground, on landing, does not seem altogether so desolate as from the sea. In the former point of view, we overlook all the retired glens and crevices which, by infinite address and labour, are rendered capable of a little cultivation. But few and evil are the patches so cultivated in Harris, as far as we have seen. Above the house is situated the ancient church of Rowdill. This pile was unfortunately burned down by accident some years since, by fire taking to a quantity of wood laid in for fitting it up. It is a building in the form of a cross, with a rude tower at the eastern end, like some old English churches. Upon this tower are certain pieces of sculpture, of a kind the last which one would have expected on a building dedicated to religious purposes. Some have lately fallen in a storm, but enough remains to astonish us at the grossness of the architect and the age.

"Within the church are two ancient monuments. The first, on the right hand of the pulpit, presents the effigy of a warrior completely armed in plate armour, with his hand on his two-handed broadsword. His helmet is peaked, with a gorget or upper corslet, which seems to be made of mail. His figure lies flat on the monument, and is in bas relief, of the natural size. The arch which surmounts this monument is curiously carved with the figures of the apostles. In the flat space of the wall beneath the arch, and above the tombstone, are a variety of compartments, exhibiting the arms of the Macleods, being a galley with the sails spread, a rude view of Dunvegan Castle, some saints and religious emblems, and a Latin inscription, of which our time (or skill) was inadequate to decipher the first line; but the others announced the tenant of the monument to be *Alexander, filius Willielmi Mac-Leod, de Dunvegan, Anno Dni* M.CCCC.XXVIII. A much older monument (said also to represent a Laird of Macleod) lies in the transept, but without any arch over it. It represents the grim figure of a Highland chief, not in feudal armour like the former, but dressed in a plaid—(or perhaps a shirt of mail)—reaching down below the knees, with a broad sort of hem upon its lower extremity. The figure wears a high-peaked open helmet, or scull-cap, with a sort of tippet of mail attached to it, which falls over the breast of the warrior, pretty much as women wear a handkerchief or short shawl. This remarkable figure is bearded most tyrannically, and has one hand on his long two-handed sword, the other on his dirk, both of which hang at a broad belt. Another weapon, probably his knife, seems to have been also attached to the baldric. His feet rest on his two dogs entwined together, and a similar emblem is said to have supported his head, but is now defaced, as indeed the whole monument bears marks of the unfortunate fire. A lion is placed at each end of the stone. Who the hero was whom this martial monument commemorated, we could not learn. Indeed, our cicerone was but imperfect. He chanced to be a poor devil of an excise-officer who had lately made a seizure of a still upon a neighbouring island, after a desperate resistance. Upon seeing our cutter, he mistook it, as has often happened to us, for an armed vessel belonging to the revenue, which the appearance and equipments of the yacht, and the number of men, make her resemble considerably. He was much disappointed when he found we had nothing to do with the tribute to Cæsar, and begged us not to undeceive the natives, who were so much irritated against him that he found it necessary to wear a loaded pair of pistols in each pocket, which he showed to our Master, Wilson, to convince him of the perilous state in which he found himself while exercising so obnoxious a duty in the midst of a fierce-tempered people, and at many miles distance from any possible countenance or assistance. The village of Rowdill consists of Highland huts of the common construction, *i. e.* a low circular wall of large stones, without mortar, deeply sunk in the ground, surmounted by a thatched roof secured by ropes, without any chimney but a hole in the roof. There may be forty such houses in the village. We heard that the laird was procuring a schoolmaster—he of the parish being ten miles distant—and there was a neatness about the large house which seems to indicate that things are going on well. Adjacent to the churchyard were two eminences, apparently artificial. Upon one was fixed a stone, seemingly the staff of a cross; upon another the head of a cross, with a sculpture of the crucifixion. There monuments (which refer themselves to Catholic times of course) are popularly called, *The Croshlets*—crosslets, or little crosses.

"Get on board at five, and stand across the Sound for Skye with the ebb-tide in our favour. The sunset being delightful, we enjoy it upon deck, admiring the Sound on each side bounded by islands. That of Skye lies in the east, with some very high mountains in the centre, and a bold rocky coast in front, opening up into several lochs, or arms of the sea: —that of Loch Folliart, near the upper end of which Dunvegan is situated, is opposite to us, but our breeze has failed us, and the flood-tide will soon set in, which is likely to carry us to the northward of this object of our curiosity until next morning. To the west of us lies Harris, with its variegated ridges of mountains, now clear, distinct, and free from clouds. The sun is just setting behind the Island of Bernera, of which we see one conical hill. North Uist and Benbecula continue from Harris to the southerly line of what is called the Long Island. They are as bold and mountainous, and probably as barren as Harris—worse they cannot be. Unnumbered islets and holms, each of which has its name and its history, skirt these larger isles, and are visible in this clear evening as distinct and separate objects, lying lone and quiet upon the face of the undisturbed and scarce-rippling sea. To our berths at ten, after admiring the scenery for some time.

"23*d August*, 1814.—Wake under the Castle of Dunvegan, in the Loch of Folliart. I had sent a card to the Laird of Macleod in the morning, who came off before we were dressed, and carried us to his castle to breakfast. A part of Dunvegan is very old; 'its birth tradition notes not.' Another large tower was built by the same Alaster Macleod whose burial-place and monument we saw yesterday at Rowdill. He had a Gaelic surname, signifying the Hump-backed. Roderick More (knighted by James VI.) erected a long edifice combining these two ancient towers: and other pieces of building, forming a square, were accomplished at different times. The whole castle occupies a precipitous mass of rock overhanging the lake, divided by two or three islands in that place, which form a snug little harbour under the walls. There is a court-yard looking out upon the sea, protected by a battery, at least a succession of embrasures, for only two guns are

pointed, and these unfit for service. The ancient entrance rose up a flight of steps cut in the rock, and passed into this courtyard through a portal, but this is now demolished. You land under the castle, and, walking round, find yourself in front of it. This was originally inaccessible, for a brook coming down on the one side, a chasm of the rocks on the other, and a ditch in front, made it impervious. But the late Macleod built a bridge over the stream, and the present laird is executing an entrance suitable to the character of this remarkable fortalice, by making a portal between two advanced towers and an outer court, from which he proposes to throw a drawbridge over to the high rock in front of the castle. This, if well executed, cannot fail to have a good and characteristic effect. We were most kindly and hospitably received by the chieftain, his lady, and his sister;* the two last are pretty and accomplished young women, a sort of persons whom we have not seen for some time; and I was quite as much pleased with renewing my acquaintance with them, as with the sight of a good field of barley just cut, (the first harvest we have seen,) not to mention an extensive young plantation and some middle-aged trees, though all had been strangers to mine eyes since I left Leith. In the garden—or rather the orchard which was formerly the garden—is a pretty cascade, divided into two branches, and called Rorie More's Nurse, because he loved to be lulled to sleep by the sound of it. The day was rainy, or at least inconstant, so we could not walk far from the castle. Besides the assistance of the laird himself, who was most politely and easily attentive, we had that of an intelligent gentlemanlike clergyman, Mr. Suter, minister of Kilmore, to explain the *carte-de-pays*. Within the castle we saw a remarkable drinking-cup, with an inscription dated A.D. 993, which I have described particularly elsewhere.† I saw also a fairy flag, a pennon of silk, with something like round red rowan-berries wrought upon it. We also saw the drinking-horn of Rorie More, holding about three pints English measure, an ox's horn tipped with silver, not nearly so large as Watt of Harden's bugle. The rest of the curiosities in the castle are chiefly Indian, excepting an old dirk, and the fragment of a twohanded sword. We learn that most of the Highland superstitions, even that of the second-sight, are still in force. Gruagach, a sort of tutelary divinity, often mentioned by Martin in his History of the Western Islands, has still his place and credit, but is modernized into a tall man, always a Lowlander, with a long coat and white waistcoat. Passed a very pleasant day. I should have said the fairy-flag had three properties. Produced in battle, it multiplied the numbers of the Macleods—spread on the nuptial bed, it ensured fertility—and lastly, it brought herring into the loch.‡

"*24th August*, 1814.—This morning resist with difficulty Macleod's kind and pressing entreaty to send round the ship and go to the cave at Airds by land; but our party is too large to be accommodated without inconvenience, and divisions are always awkward. Walk and see Macleod's farm. The plantations seem to thrive admirably, although I think he hazards planting his trees greatly too tall. Macleod is a spirited and judicious improver, and if he does not hurry too fast, cannot fail to be of service to his people. He seems to think and act much like a chief, without the fanfaronade of the character. See a female school patronised by Mrs. M. There are about twenty girls, who learn reading, writing, and spinning; and being compelled to observe habits of cleanliness and neatness when at school, will probably be the means of introducing them by degrees at home. The roads around the castle are, generally speaking, very good; some are old, some made under the operation of the late act. Macleod says almost all the contractors for these last roads have failed, being tightly looked after by Government, which I confess I think very right. If Government is to give relief where a disadvantageous contract has been engaged in, it is plain it cannot be refused in similar instances, so that all calculations of expenses in such operations are at an end. The day being delightfully fair and warm, we walk up to the Church of Kilmore. In a cottage, at no great distance, we heard the women singing as they *waulked* the cloth by rubbing it with their hands and feet, and screaming all the while in a sort of chorus. At a distance, the sound was wild and sweet enough, but rather discordant when you approached too near the performers. In the churchyard (otherwise not remarkable) was a pyramidical monument erected to the father of the celebrated Simon, Lord Lovat, who was fostered at Dunvegan. It is now nearly ruinous, and the inscription has fallen down. Return to the castle, take our luncheon, and go aboard at three—Macleod accompanying us in proper style with his piper. We take leave of the castle, where we have been so kindly entertained, with a salute of seven guns. The chief returns ashore, with his piper playing 'the Macleods' gathering,' heard to advantage along the calm and placid loch, and dying as it retreated from us.

"The towers of Dunvegan, with the banner which floated over them in honour of their guests, now showed to great advantage. On the right were a succession of three remarkable hills, with round flat tops, popularly called Macleod's Dining-Tables. Far behind these, in the interior of the island, arise the much higher and more romantic mountains, called Quillen, or Cuillin, a name which they have been said to owe to no less a person than Cuthullin, or Cuchullin, celebrated by Ossian. I ought, I believe, to notice, that Macleod and Mr. Suter have both heard a tacksman of Macleod's, called Grant, recite the celebrated Address to the Sun; and another person, whom they named, repeat the description of Cuchullin's car. But all agree as to the gross infidelity of Macpherson as a translator and editor. It ends in the explanation of the Adventures in the Cave of Montesinos, afforded to the Knight of La Mancha, by the ape of Gines de Passamonte—some are true and some are false. There is little poetical tradition in this country, yet there should be a great deal, considering how lately the bards and genealogists existed as a distinct order. Macleod's *hereditary* piper is called MacCrimmon, but the present holder of the office has risen above his profession. He is an old man, a lieutenant in the army, and a most capital piper, possessing about 200 tunes and pibrochs, most of which will probably die with him.

* Miss Macleod, now Mrs. Spencer Perceval.

† See Note, Lord of the Isles, Scott's Poetical Works, vol. x. p. 28.

‡ The following passage from the last of Scott's Letters on Demonology, (written in 1830,) refers to the night of this 23d of August, 1814. He mentions that twice in his life he had experienced the sensation which the Scotch call *eerie*; gives a night-piece of his early youth in the castle of Glammis, which has already been quoted (*ante*, p. 49—50;) and proceeds thus:—"Amid such tales of ancient tradition, I had from Macleod and his lady the courteous offer of the haunted apartment of the castle, about which, as a stranger, I might be supposed interested. Accordingly I took possession of it about the witching hour. Except, perhaps, some tapestry hangings, and the extreme thickness of the walls, which argued great antiquity, nothing could have been more comfortable than the interior of the apartment; but if you looked from the windows, the view was such as to correspond with the highest tone of superstition. An autumnal blast, sometimes clear, sometimes driving mist before it, swept along the troubled billows of the lake, which it occasionally concealed, and by fits disclosed. The waves rushed in wild disorder on the shore, and covered with foam the steep pile of rocks, which, rising from the sea in forms resembling the human figure, have obtained the name of Macleod's Maidens, and, in such a night, seemed no bad representation of the Norwegian goddesses, called Choosers of the Slain, or Riders of the Storm. There was something of the dignity of danger in the scene; for, on a platform beneath the windows, lay an ancient battery of cannon, which had sometimes been used against privateers even of late years. The distant scene was a view of that part of the Quillen mountains which are called, from their form, Macleod's Dining-Tables. The voice of an angry cascade, termed the Nurse of Rorie Mhor, because that chief slept best in its vicinity, was heard from time to time mingling its notes with those of wind and wave. Such was the haunted room at Dunvegan; and, as such, it well deserved a less sleepy inhabitant. In the language of Dr. Johnson, who has stamped his memory on this remote place,—'I looked around me, and wondered that I was not more affected; but the mind is not at all times equally ready to be moved.' In a word, it is necessary to confess that, of all I heard or saw, the most engaging spectacle was the comfortable bed in which I hoped to make amends for some rough nights on shipboard, and where I slept accordingly without thinking of ghost or goblin, till I was called by my servant in the morning."

as he declines to have any of his sons instructed in his art. He plays to Macleod and his lady, but only in the same room, and maintains his minstrel privilege by putting on his bonnet so soon as he begins to play. These MacCrimmons formerly kept a college in Skye for teaching the pipe-music. Macleod's present piper is of the name, but scarcely as yet a deacon of his craft. He played every day at dinner. After losing sight of the Castle of Dunvegan, we open another branch of the loch on which it is situated, and see a small village upon its distant bank. The mountains of Quillen continue to form a background to the wild landscape with their variegated and peaked outline. We approach Dunvegan-head, a bold bluff cape, where the loch joins the ocean. The weather, hitherto so beautiful that we had dined on deck *en seigneurs*, becomes overcast and hazy, with little or no wind. Laugh and lie down.

"*25th August*, 1814.—Rise about eight o'clock, the yacht gliding delightfully along the coast of Skye with a fair wind and excellent day. On the opposite side lie the islands of Canna, Rum, and Muick, popularly Muck. On opening the Sound between Rum and Canna, see a steep circular rock, forming one side of the harbour, on the point of which we can discern the remains of a tower of small dimensions, built, it is said, by a King of the Isles to secure a wife of whom he was jealous. But, as we kept the Skye side of the Sound, we saw little of these island but what our spy-glasses could show us; the coast of Skye is highly romantic, and at the same time displayed a richness of vegetation on the lower grounds, to which we have hitherto been strangers. We passed three salt water lochs, or deep embayments, called Loch Bracadale, Loch Eynort, and Loch Britta—and about eleven o'clock open Loch Scavig. We were now under the western termination of the high mountains of Quillen, whose weather-beaten and serrated peaks we had admired at a distance from Dunvegan. They sunk here upon the sea, but with the same bold and peremptory aspect which their distant appearance indicated. They seemed to consist of precipitous sheets of naked rock, down which the torrents were leaping in a hundred lines of foam. The tops, apparently inaccessible to human foot, were rent and split into the most tremendous pinnacles; towards the base of these bare and precipitous crags, the ground, enriched by the soil washed away from them, is verdant and productive. Having past within the small isle of Soa, we enter Loch Scavig under the shoulder of one of these grisly mountains, and observe that the opposite side of the loch is of a milder character, softened down into steep green declivities. From the depth of the bay advanced a headland of high rocks which divided the lake into two recesses, from each of which a brook seemed to issue. Here Macleod had intimated we should find a fine romantic loch, but we were uncertain up what inlet we should proceed in search of it. We chose, against our better judgment, the southerly inlet, where we saw a house which might afford us information. On manning our boat and rowing ashore, we observed a hurry among the inhabitants, owing to our being as usual suspected for *king's men*, although, Heaven knows, we have nothing to do with the revenue, but to spend the part of it corresponding to our equipment. We find that there is a lake adjoining to each branch of the bay, and foolishly walk a couple of miles to see that next the farm-house, merely because the honest man seemed jealous of the honour of his own loch, though we were speedily convinced it was not that which we had been recommended to examine. It had no peculiar merit excepting from its neighbourhood to a very high cliff or mountain of precipitous granite; otherwise, the sheet of water does not equal even Cauldshiels Loch. Returned and re-embarked in our boat, for our guide shook his head at our proposal to climb over the peninsula which divides the two bays and the two lakes. In rowing round the headland, surprised at the infinite number of sea-fowl, then busy apparently with a shoal of fish; at the depth of the bay, find that the discharge from this second lake forms a sort of waterfall or rather rapid; round this place were assembled hundreds of trouts and salmon struggling to get up into the fresh water; with a net we might have had twenty salmon at a haul, and a sailor, with no better hook than a crooked pin, caught a dish of trouts during our absence.

"Advancing up this huddling and riotous brook we found ourselves in a most extraordinary scene; we were surrounded by hills of the boldest and most precipitous character, and on the margin of a lake which seemed to have sustained the constant ravages of torrents from these rude neighbours. The shores consisted of huge layers of naked granite, here and there intermixed with bogs, and heaps of gravel and sand marking the course of torrents. Vegetation there was little or none, and the mountains rose so perpendicularly from the water's edge, that Borrowdale is a jest to them. We proceeded about one mile and a half up this deep, dark, and solitary lake, which is about two miles long, half a mile broad, and, as we learned, of extreme depth. The vapour which enveloped the mountain ridges obliged us by assuming a thousand shapes, varying its veils in all sort of forms, but sometimes clearing off altogether. It is true it made us pay the penalty by some heavy and downright showers, from the frequency of which, a Highland boy, whom we brought from the farm, told us the lake was popularly called the Water Kettle. The proper name is Loch Corriskin, from the deep *corrie* or hollow in the mountains of Cuillin, which affords the basin for this wonderful sheet of water. It is as exquisite as a savage scene, as Loch Katrine is as a scene of stern beauty. After having penetrated so far as to distinctly to observe the termination of the lake, under an immense mountain which rises abruptly from the head of the waters, we returned, and often stopped to admire the ravages which storms must have made in these recesses, when all human witnesses were driven to places of more shelter and security. Stones, or rather large massive fragments of rock of a composite kind, perfectly different from the granite barriers of the lake, lay upon the rocky beach in the strangest and most precarious situations, as if abandoned by the torrents which had borne them down from above; some lay loose and tottering upon the ledges of the natural rock, with so little security that the slightest push moved them, though their weight exceeded many tons. These detached rocks were chiefly what are called plum-pudding stones. Those which formed the shore were granite. The opposite side of the lake seemed quite pathless as a huge mountain, one of the detached ridges of the Quillen, sinks in a profound and almost perpendicular precipice down to the water. On the left hand side, which we traversed, rose a higher and equally inaccessible mountain, the top of which seemed to contain the crater of an exhausted volcano. I never saw a spot on which there was less appearance of vegetation of any kind; the eye rested on nothing but brown and naked crags," and

> "'Rarely human eye has known
> A scene so stern as that dread lake,
> With its dark ledge of barren stone.
> Seems that primeval earthquake's sway
> Hath rent a strange and shatter'd way
> Through the rude bosom of the hill;
> And that teach naked precipice,
> Sable ravine, and dark abyss,
> Tells of the outrage still.
> The wildest glen, but this, can show
> Some touch of Nature's genial glow;
> On high Benmore green mosses grow,
> And heath-bells bud in deep Glencroe,
> And copse on Cruchan-Ben;
> But here—above, around, below,
> On mountain or in glen,
> Nor tree, nor shrub, nor plant, nor flower,
> Nor aught of vegetative power,
> The weary eye may ken;
> For all is rocks at random thrown,
> Bleak waves, bare crags, and banks of stone,
> As if here here denied
> The summer's sun, the spring's sweet dew,
> That clothe with many a varied hue
> The bleakest mountain-side.'
>
> *Lord of the Isles*, III.

rocks on which we walked by the side of the loch were as bare as the pavement of Cheapside. There are one or two spots of islets in the loch which seem to bear juniper, or some such low bushy shrub.

"Returned from our extraordinary walk, and went on board. During dinner, our vessel quitted Loch Scavig, and having doubled its southern cape, opened the bay or salt-water Loch of Sleapin. There went again on shore to visit the late discovered and much celebrated cavern, called Macallister's Cave. It opens at the end of a deep ravine running upward from the sea, and the proprietor, Mr. Macallister of Strath Aird, finding that visiters injured it, by breaking and carrying away the stalactites with which it abounds, has secured this cavern by an eight or nine feet wall, with a door. Upon inquiring for the key, we found it was three miles up the loch at the laird's house. It was now late, and to stay until a messenger had gone and returned three miles, was not to be thought of, any more than the alternative of going up the loch and lying there all night. We therefore, with regret, resolved to scale the wall, in which attempt, by the assistance of a rope and some ancient acquaintance with orchard breaking, we easily succeeded. The first entrance to this celebrated cave is rude and impromising, but the light of the torches with which we were provided, is soon reflected from roof, floor, and walls, which seem as if they were sheeted with marble, partly smooth, partly rough with frost work and rustic ornaments, and partly wrought into statuary. The floor forms a steep and difficult ascent, and might be fancifully compared to a sheet of water, which, while it rushed whitening and foaming down a declivity, had been suddenly arrested and consolidated by the spell of an enchanter. Upon attaining the summit of this ascent, the cave descends with equal rapidity to the brink of a pool of the most limpid water, about four or five yards broad. There opens beyond this pool a portal arch, with beautiful white chasing upon the sides, which promises a continuation of the cave. One of our sailors swam across, for there was no other mode of passing, and informed us (as indeed we partly saw by the light he carried,) that the enchantment of Macallister's cave terminated with this portal, beyond which there was only a rude ordinary cavern, speedily choked with stones and earth. But the pool, on the brink of which we stood, surrounded by the most fanciful mouldings in a substance resembling white marble, and distinguished by the depth and purity of its waters, might be the bathing grotto of a Naiad. I think a statuary might catch beautiful hints from the fanciful and romantic disposition of the stalactites. There is scarce a form or group that an active fancy may not trace among the grotesque ornaments which have been gradually moulded in this cavern by the dropping of the calcareous water, and its hardening into petrifactions; many of these have been destroyed by the senseless rage of appropriation among recent tourists, and the grotto has lost (I am informed,) through the smoke of torches, much of that vivid silver tint which was originally one of its chief distinctions. But enough of beauty remains to compensate for all that may be lost. As the easiest mode of return, I slid down the polished sheet of marble which forms the rising ascent, and thereby injured my pantaloons in a way which my jacket is ill calculated to conceal. Our wearables, after a month's hard service, begin to be frail, and there are daily demands for repairs. Our eatables also begin to assume a real nautical appearance—no soft bread—milk a rare commodity—and those gentlemen most in favour with John Peters, the steward, who prefer salt beef to fresh. To make amends, we never hear of sea-sickness, and the good-humour and harmony of the party continue uninterrupted. When we left the cave, we carried off two grandsons of Mr. Macallister's, remarkably fine boys; and Erskine, who may be called *L'ami des Enfans*, treated them most kindly, and showed them all the curiosities in the vessel, causing even the guns to be fired for their amusement, besides filling their pockets with almonds and raisins. So that, with a handsome letter of apology, I hope we may erase any evil impression Mr. Macallister may adopt from our storming the exterior defences of his cavern. After having sent them ashore in safety, stand out of the bay with little or no wind, for the opposite island of Egg."

CHAPTER XXXII.

DIARY CONTINUED—CAVE OF EGG—IONA—STAFFA—DUNSTAFFNAGE—DUNLUCE CASTLE—GIANTS' CAUSEWAY—ISLE OF ARRAN, ETC.—DIARY CONCLUDED.—AUGUST—SEPTEMBER, 1814.

"*26th August*, 1814.—At seven this morning were in the Sound which divides the Isle of Rum from that of Egg. Rum is rude, barren, and mountainous; Egg, although hilly and rocky, and traversed by one remarkable ridge called Scuir-Egg, has, in point of soil, a much more promising appearance. Southward of both lies Muick, or Muck, a low and fertile island, and though the least, yet probably the most valuable of the three. Caverns being still the order of the day, we man the boat, and row along the shore of Egg, in quest of that which was the memorable scene of a horrid feudal vengeance. We had rounded more than half the island, admiring the entrance of many a bold natural cave which its rocks exhibit, but without finding that which we sought, until we procured a guide. This noted cave has a very narrow entrance, through which one can hardly creep on knees and hands. It rises steep and lofty within, and runs into the bowels of the rock to the depth of 255 measured feet. The height at the entrance may be about three feet, but rises to eighteen or twenty, and the breadth may vary in the same proportion. The rude and stony bottom of this cave is strewed with the bones of men, women, and children, being the sad relics of the ancient inhabitants of the island, 200 in number, who were slain on the following occasion:—The Macdonalds of the Isle of Egg, a people dependent on Clanranald, had done some injury to the Laird of Macleod. The tradition of the isle says, that it was by a personal attack on the chieftain, in which his back was broken; but that of the other isles bears that the injury was offered to two or three of the Macleods, who, landing upon Egg and using some freedom with the young women, were seized by the islanders, bound hand and foot, and turned adrift in a boat, which the winds and waves safely conducted to Skye. To avenge the offence given, Macleod sailed with such a body of men as rendered resistance hopeless. The natives, fearing his vengeance, concealed themselves in this cavern, and after strict search, the Macleods went on board their galleys, after doing what mischief they could, concluding the inhabitants had left the isle. But next morning they espied from their vessel a man upon the island, and, immediately landing again, they traced his retreat, by means of a light snow on the ground, to this cavern. Macleod then summoned the subterraneous garrison, and demanded that the individuals who had offended him should be delivered up. This was peremptorily refused. The chieftain thereupon caused his people to divert the course of a rill of water, which, falling over the mouth of the cave, would have prevented his purposed vengeance. He then kindled at the entrance of the cavern a huge fire, and maintained it until all within were destroyed by suffocation. The date of this dreadful deed must have been recent, if one can judge from the fresh appearance of those relics. I brought off, in spite of the prejudices of our sailors, a skull, which seems that of a young woman.

"Before re-embarking, we visit another cave opening to the sea, but of a character widely different, being a large open vault as high as that of a cathedral, and running back a great way into the rock at the same height; the height and width of the opening give light to the whole. Here, after 1745, when the Catholic priests were scarcely tolerated, the priest of Egg used to perform the Romish service. A huge ledge of rock, almost half-way up

one side of the vault, served for altar and pulpit; and the appearance of a priest and Highland congregation in such an extraordinary place of worship, might have engaged the pencil of Salvator. Most of the inhabitants of Eggare still Catholics, and laugh at their neighbours of Rum, who, having been converted by the cane of their chieftain, are called *Protestants of the yellow stick*. The Presbyterian minister and Catholic priest live upon this little island on very good terms. The people here were much irritated against the men of a revenue vessel who had seized all the stills, &c., in the neighbouring Isle of Muck, with so much severity as to take even the people's bedding. We had been mistaken for some time for this obnoxious vessel. Got on board about two o'clock, and agreed to stand over for Coll, and to be ruled by the wind as to what was next to be done. Bring up my journal.

"*27th August*, 1814.—The wind, to which we resigned ourselves, proves exceedingly tyrannical, and blows squally the whole night, which with the swell of the Atlantic, now unbroken by any islands to windward, proves a means of great combustion in the cabin. The dishes and glasses in the steward's cupboards become locomotive—portmanteaus and writing-desks are more active than necessary—it is scarce possible to keep one's self within bed, and impossible to stand upright if you rise. Having crept upon deck about four in the morning, I find we are beating to windward off the Isle of Tyree, with the determination on the part of Mr. Stevenson, that his constituents should visit a reef of rocks called *Skerry Vhor*, where he thought it would be essential to have a lighthouse. Loud remonstrances on the part of the Commissioners, who one and all declare they will subscribe to his opinion, whatever it may be, rather than continue this infernal buffeting. Quiet perseverance on the part of Mr. S., and great kicking, bouncing, and squabbling upon that of the Yacht, who seems to like the idea of Skerry Vhor as little as the Commissioners. At length by dint of exertion, come in sight of this long ridge of rocks, (chiefly under water,) on which the tide breaks in a most tremendous style. There appear a few low broad rocks at one end of the reef, which is about a mile in length. These are never entirely under water, though the surf dashes over them. To go through all the forms, Hamilton, Duff, and I, resolved to land upon these bare rocks in company with Mr. Stevenson. Pull through a very heavy swell with great difficulty, and approach a tremendous surf dashing over black pointed rocks. Our rowers, however, get the boat into a quiet creek between two rocks, where we contrive to land well wetted. I saw nothing remarkable in my way, excepting several seals, which we might have shot, but, in the doubtful circumstances of the landing, we did not care to bring guns. We took possession of the rock in the name of the Commissioners, and generously bestowed our own great names on its crags and creeks. The rock was carefully measured by Mr. S. It will be a most desolate position for a lighthouse—the Bell Rock and Eddystone a joke to it, for the nearest land is the wild island of Tyree, at fourteen miles' distance. So much for the Skerry Vhor.

"Came on board proud of our achievement; and, to the great delight of all parties, put the ship before the wind, and run swimmingly down for Iona. See a large square rigged vessel, supposed an American. Reach Iona about five o'clock. The inhabitants of the isle of Columbia, understanding their interest as well as if they had been Deal boatmen, charged two guineas for pilotage, which Captain W. abridged into fifteen shillings, too much for ten minutes' work. We soon got on shore, and landed in the bay of Martyrs, beautiful for its white sandy beach. Here all dead bodies are still landed, and laid for a time upon a small rocky eminence, called the Sweyne, before they are interred. Iona, the last time I saw it, seemed to me to contain the most wretched people I had any where seen. But either they have got better since I was here, or my eyes, familiarized with the wretchedness of Zetland and the Harris, are less shocked with that of Iona. Certainly their houses are better than either, and the appearance of the people not worse. This little fertile isle contains upwards of 400 inhabitants, all living upon small farms, which they divide and subdivide as their families increase, so that the country is greatly overpeopled, and in some danger of a famine in case of a year of scarcity. Visit the nunnery and Reilig Oran, or burial-place of St. Oran, but the night coming on we return on board.

"*28th August*, 1814.—Carry our breakfast ashore—take that repast in the house of Mr. Maclean, the schoolmaster and cicerone of the island—and resume our investigation of the ruins of the cathedral and the cemetery. Of these monuments, more than of any other, it may be said with propriety,

> 'You never tread upon them but you set
> Your feet upon some ancient history.'

I do not mean to attempt a description of what is so well known as the ruins of Iona. Yet I think it has been as yet inadequately performed, for the vast number of carved tombs, containing the reliques of the great, exceeds credibility. In general, even in the most noble churches, the number of the vulgar dead exceed in all proportion the few of eminence who are deposited under monuments. Iona is in all respects the reverse; until lately the inhabitants of the isle did not presume to mix their vulgar dust with that of chiefs, reguli, and abbots. The number, therefore, of carved and inscribed tombstones is quite marvellous, and I can easily credit the story told by Sacheverell, who assures us that three hundred inscriptions had been collected, and were lost in the troubles of the 17th century. Even now many more might be deciphered than have yet been made public, but the rustic step of the peasants and of Sassenach visitants is fast destroying these faint memorials of the valiant of the isles. A skilful antiquary remaining here a week, and having (or assuming) the power of raising the half-sunk monuments, might make a curious collection. We could only gaze and grieve; yet had the day not been Sunday, we would have brought our seamen ashore, and endeavoured to have raised some of these monuments. The celebrated ridges called *Jomaire na'n Righrean*, or Graves of the Kings, can now scarce be said to exist, though their site is still pointed out. Undoubtedly, the thirst of spoil, and the frequent custom of burying treasures with the ancient princes, occasioned their early violation; nor am I any sturdy believer in their being regularly ticketed off by inscriptions into the tombs of the kings of Scotland, of Ireland, of Norway, and so forth. If such inscriptions ever existed, I should deem them the work of some crafty bishop or abbot, for the credit of his diocese or convent. Macbeth is said to have been the last king of Scotland here buried; sixty preceded him, all doubtless as powerful in their day, but now unknown—*carent quia vate sacro*. A few weeks' labour of Shakspeare, an obscure player, has done more for the memory of Macbeth, than all the gifts, wealth, and monuments of this cemetery of princes, have been able to secure to the rest of its inhabitants. It also occurred to me in Iona, (as it has on many similar occasions,) that the traditional recollections concerning the monks themselves are wonderfully faint, contrasted with the beautiful and interesting monuments of architecture which they have left behind them. In Scotland, particularly, the people have frequently traditions wonderfully vivid of the persons and achievements of ancient warriors, whose towers have long been levelled with the soil. But of the monks of Melrose, Kelso, Aberbrothock, Iona, &c., &c., &c., they can tell nothing but that such a race existed, and inhabited the stately ruins of these monasteries. The quiet, slow, and uniform life of those recluse beings, glided on, it may be, like a dark and silent stream, fed from unknown resources, and vanishing from the eye, without leaving any marked trace of its course. The life of the chieftain was a mountain torrent thundering over rock and precipice, which, less deep and profound in itself, leaves

on the minds of the terrified spectators those deep impressions of awe and wonder which are most readily handed down to posterity.

"Among the various monuments exhibited at Iona, is one where a Maclean lies in the same grave with one of the Macfies or Macduffies of Colonsay, with whom he had lived in alternate friendship and enmity during their lives. 'He lies above him during death,' said one of Maclean's followers, as his chief was interred, 'as he was above him during life.' There is a very ancient monument lying among those of the Macleans, but perhaps more ancient than any of them; it has a knight riding on horseback, and behind him a minstrel playing on a harp; this is conjectured to be Reginald Macdonald of the Isles, but there seems no reason for disjoining him from his kindred who sleep in the cathedral. A supposed ancestor of the Stewarts, called Paul Pearson, or Paul the purse-bearer, (treasurer to the king of Scotland,) is said to lie under a stone near the Lord of the Isles. Most of the monuments engraved by Pennant are still in the same state of preservation, as are the few ancient crosses which are left. What a sight Iona must have been, when three hundred and sixty crosses, of the same size and beautiful workmanship, were ranked upon the little rocky ridge of eminences, which form the background to the cathedral! Part of the tower of the cathedral has fallen since I was here. It would require a better architect than I am, to say any thing concerning the antiquity of these ruins, but I conceive those of the nunnery, and of the *Reilig nan Oran*, or Oran's chapel, are decidedly the most ancient. Upon the cathedral, and buildings attached to it, there are marks of repairs at different times, some of them of a late date, being obviously designed not to enlarge the buildings, but to retrench them. We take a reluctant leave of Iona, and go on board.

"The haze and dulness of the atmosphere seem to render it dubious if we can proceed, as we intended, to Staffa to-day—for mist among these islands is rather unpleasant. Erskine reads prayers on deck to all hands, and introduces a very apt allusion to our being now in sight of the first Christian church from which Revelation was diffused over Scotland, and all its islands. There is a very good form of prayer for the Lighthouse Service, composed by the Rev. Mr. Brunton.* A pleasure vessel lies under our lee from Belfast, with an Irish party related to Macniel of Colonsay. The haze is fast degenerating into downright rain, and that right heavy—verifying the words of Collins—

> 'And thither where beneath the *showery west*,
> The mighty kings of three fair realms are laid.'

After dinner, the weather being somewhat cleared, sailed for Staffa, and took boat. The surf running heavy up between the island and the adjacent rock, called Booshala, we landed at a creek near the Cormorant's cave. The mist now returned so thick as to hide all view of Iona, which was our landmark; and although Duff, Stevenson, and I, had been formerly on the isle, we could not agree upon the proper road to the cave. I engaged myself, with Duff and Erskine, in a clamber of great toil and danger, and which at length brought me to the *Cannon-ball*, as they call a round granite stone moved by the sea up and down in a groove of rock, which it has worn for itself, with a noise resembling thunder. Here I gave up my research, and returned to my companions, who had not been more fortunate. As night was now falling, we resolved to go aboard, and postpone the adventure of the enchanted cavern until next day. The yacht came to an anchor with the purpose of remaining off the island all night, but the hardness of the ground, and the weather becoming squally, obliged us to return to our safer mooring at Y-Columb-Kill.

"*29th August*, 1814.—Night squally and rainy—morning ditto—we weigh, however, and return toward Staffa, and, very happily, the day clears as we approach the isle. As we ascertained the situation of the cave, I shall only make this memorandum, that when the weather will serve, the best landing is to the lee of Booshala, a little conical islet or rock, composed of basaltic columns placed in an oblique or sloping position. In this way, you land at once on the flat causeway, formed by the heads of the truncated pillars, which leads to the cave. But if the state of tide renders it impossible to land under Booshala, then take one of the adjacent creeks; in which case, keeping to the left hand along the top of the ledge of rocks which girdles in the isle, you find a dangerous and precipitous descent to the causeway aforesaid, from the table. Here we were under the necessity of towing our commodore, Hamilton, whose gallant heart never fails him, whatever the tenderness of his toes may do. He was successfully lowered by a rope down the precipice, and proceeding along the flat terrace or causeway already mentioned, we reached the celebrated cave. I am not sure whether I was not more affected by this second, than by the first view of it. The stupendous columnar side walls—the depth and strength of the ocean with which the cavern is filled—the variety of tints formed by stalactites dropping and petrifying between the pillars, and resembling a sort of chasing of yellow or cream-coloured marble filling the interstices of the roof—the corresponding variety below, where the ocean rolls over a red, and in some places, a violet-coloured rock, the basis of the basaltic pillars—the dreadful noise of those august billows so well corresponding with the grandeur of the scene—are all circumstances elsewhere unparalleled. We have now seen in our voyage the three grandest caverns in Scotland, Smowe, Macallister's cave, and Staffa; so that, like the Troglodytes of yore, we may be supposed to know something of the matter. It is, however, impossible to compare scenes of natures so different; nor, were I compelled to assign a preference to any of the three, could I do it but with reference to their distinct characters, which might affect different individuals in different degrees. The characteristic of the Smowe cave may in this case be called the terrific, for the difficulties which oppose the stranger are of a nature so uncommonly wild, as, for the first time at least, convey an impression of terror—with which the scenes to which he is introduced fully correspond. On the other hand, the dazzling whiteness of the incrustations in Macallister's cave, the elegance of the entablature, the beauty of its limpid pool, and the graceful dignity of its arch, render its leading features those of severe and chastened beauty. Staffa, the third of these subterraneous wonders, may challenge sublimity as its principal characteristic. Without the savage gloom of the Smowe cave, and investigated with more apparent ease, though, perhaps, with equal real danger, the stately regularity of its columns forms a contrast to the grotesque imagery of Macallister's cave, combining at once the sentiments of grandeur and beauty. The former is, however, predominant, as it must necessarily be in any scene of the kind.

"We had scarce left Staffa when the wind and rain returned. It was Erskine's object and mine, to dine at Torloisk on Loch Tua, the seat of my valued friend Mrs. Maclean Clephane, and her accomplished daughters. But in going up Loch Tua between Ulva and Mull with this purpose,

> 'So thick was the mist on the ocean green,
> Nor cape nor headland could be seen.'

It was late before we came to anchor in a small bay presented by the little island of Gometra, which may be regarded as a continuation of Ulva. We therefore dine aboard, and after dinner, Erskine and I take the boat and row across the loch under a heavy rain. We could not see the house of Torloisk, so very thick was the haze, and we were a good deal puzzled how and where to achieve a landing; at length, espying a cartroad, we resolved to trust to its guidance, as we knew we must be near the house. We therefore went ashore with our servants, *à la bonne arenture*, under a drizzling rain. This was

* The Rev. Alexander Brunton, D. D., now (1826) Professor of Oriental Languages in the University of Edinburgh.

soon a matter of little consequence, for the necessity of crossing a swollen brook wetted me considerably, and Erskine, whose foot slipped, most completely. In wet and weary plight we reached the house after a walk of a mile, in darkness, dirt, and rain, and it is hardly necessary to say, that the pleasure of seeing our friends soon banished all recollection of our unpleasant voyage and journey.

"*30th August*, 1814.—The rest of our friends come ashore by invitation, and breakfast with the ladies, whose kindness would fain have delayed us for a few days, and at last condescended to ask for one day only—but even this could not be, our time wearing short. Torloisk is finely situated upon the coast of Mull, facing Staffa. It is a good comfortable house, to which Mrs. Clephane has made some additions. The grounds around have been dressed, so as to smooth their ruggedness, without destroying the irregular and wild character peculiar to the scene and country. In this, much taste has been displayed. At Torloisk, as at Dunvegan, trees grow freely and rapidly, and the extensive plantations formed by Mrs. C. serve to show that nothing but a little expense and patience on the part of the proprietors, with attention to planting in proper places at first, and in keeping up fences afterward, are awanting to remove the reproach of nakedness so often thrown upon the Western Isles. With planting comes shelter, and the proper allotment and division of fields. With all this Mrs. Clephane is busied, and, I trust, successfully; I am sure, actively and usefully. Take leave of my fair friends, with regret that I cannot prolong my stay for a day or two. When we come on board, we learn that Staffa-Macdonald is just come to his house of Ulva; this is a sort of unpleasant dilemma, for we cannot now go there without some neglect towards Mrs. Maclean Clephane; and, on the other hand, from his habits with all of us, he may be justly displeased with our quitting his very threshold without asking for him. However, upon the whole matter, and being already under weigh, we judged it best to work out of the loch, and continue our purpose of rounding the northern extremity of Mull, and then running down the Sound between Mull and the mainland. We had not long pursued our voyage before we found it was like to be a very slow one. The wind fell away entirely, and after repeated tacks we could hardly clear the extreme north-western point of Mull by six o'clock—which must have afforded amusement to the ladies whose hospitable entreaties we had resisted, as we were almost all the while visible from Torloisk. A fine evening, but scarce a breath of wind.

"*31st August*, 1814.—Went on deck between three and four in the morning, and found the vessel almost motionless in a calm sea, scarce three miles advanced on her voyage. We had, however, rounded the northwestern side of Mull, and were advancing between the north-eastern side and the rocky and wild shores of Ardnamurchan on the mainland of Scotland. Astern were visible in bright moonlight the distant mountains of Rum; yet nearer, the remarkable ridge in the Isle of Egg, called Scuir-Egg; and nearest of all the low isle of Muick. After enjoying this prospect for some time, returned to my berth. Rise before eight—a delightful day, but very calm, and the little wind there is decidedly against us. Creeping on slowly, we observe, upon the shore of Ardnamurchan, a large old castle, called Mingary. It appears to be surrounded with a very high wall, forming a kind of polygon, in order to adapt itself to the angles of a precipice overhanging the sea, on which the castle is founded. Within or beyond the wall, and probably forming part of an inner court, I observed a steep roof and windows, probably of the 17th century. The whole, as seen with a spyglass, seems ruinous. As we proceed, we open on the left hand Loch Sunart, running deep into the mainland, crossed by distant ridges of rocks, and terminating apparently among the high mountains above Stronnan. On the right hand we open the Sound of Mull, and pass the Bloody Bay, which acquired that name from a desperate battle fought between an ancient Lord of the Isles and his son. The latter was assisted by the M'Leans of Mull, then in the plenitude of their power, but was defeated. This was a seafight; gallies being employed on each side. It has bequeathed a name to a famous pibroch.

"Proceeding southward, we open the beautiful bay of Tobermory, or Mary's Well. The mouth of this fine natural roadstead is closed by an isle called Colvay, having two passages, of which only one, the northerly, is passable for ships. The bay is surrounded by steep hills, covered with copse wood, through which several brooks seek the sea in a succession of beautiful cascades. The village has been established as a fishing station by the Society for British Fisheries. The houses along the quay are two and three stories high, and well built; the feuars paying to the Society six-pence per foot of their line of front. On the top of a steep bank, rising above the first town, runs another line of second-rate cottages, which pay four-pence per foot; and behind are huts much superior to the ordinary sheds of the country, which pay only two-pence per foot. The town is all built upon a regular plan, laid down by the Society. The new part is reasonably clean, and the old not unreasonably dirty. We landed at an excellent quay, which is not yet finished, and found the little place looked thriving and active. The people were getting in their patches of corn; and the shrill voices of the children attending their parents in the field, and loading the little ponies which are used in transporting the grain, formed a chorus not disagreeable to those whom it reminds of similar sounds at home. The praise of comparative cleanliness does not extend to the lanes around Tobermory, in one of which I had nearly been effectually bogged. But the richness of the round steep green knolls, clothed with copse, and glancing with cascades, and a pleasant peep at a small fresh-water loch embosomed among them—the view of the bay, surrounded and guarded by the island of Colvay—the gliding of two or three vessels in the more distant Sound—and the row of the gigantic Ardnamurchan mountains closing the scene to the north, almost justify the eulogium of Sachoverell, who, in 1688, declared the bay of Tobermory might equal any prospect in Italy. It is said that Sacheverell made some money by weighing up the treasures lost in the Florida, a vessel of the Spanish Armada, which was wrecked in the harbour. He himself affirms, that though the use of divingbells was at first successful, yet the attempt was afterwards disconcerted by bad weather.

"Tobermory takes its name from a spring dedicated to the Virgin, which was graced by a chapel; but no vestiges remain of the chapel, and the spring rises in the middle of a swamp, whose depth and dirt discouraged the nearer approach of Protestant pilgrims. Mr. Stevenson, whose judgment is unquestionable, thinks that the village should have been built on the island called Colvay, and united to the continent by a key, or causeway, built along the southernmost channel, which is very shallow. By this means the people would have been much nearer the fishings, than retired into the depth of the bay.

"About three o'clock we get on board, and a brisk and favourable breeze arises, which carries us smoothly down the Sound. We soon pass Arros, with its fragment of a castle, behind which is the house of Mr. Maxwell, (an odd name for this country,) chamberlain to the Duke of Argyle, which reminds me of much kindness and hospitality received from him and Mr. Stewart, the sheriff-substitute, when I was formerly in Mull. On the shore of Morven, on the opposite side, passed the ruins of a small fortalice, called Donagail, situated as usual on a precipice overhanging the sea. The 'woody Morven,' though the quantity of shaggy diminutive copse, which springs up where it obtains any shelter, still shows that it must once have merited the epithet, is now, as visible from the Sound of Mull, a bare country—of which the hills towards the sea have a slope much resembling those in Selkirkshire, and accordingly afford excellent pasture, and around several farmhouses well cultivated and improved fields. I think I observe considerable improvement in husbandry,

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even since I was here last; but there is a difference in coming from Oban and Cape Wrath. Open Loch Alline, a beautiful salt-water lake, with a narrow outlet to the Sound. It is surrounded by round hills, sweetly fringed with green copse below, and one of which exhibits to the spy-glass ruins of a castle. There is great promise of beauty in its interior, but we cannot see every thing. The land on the southern bank of the entrance slopes away into a sort of promontory, at the extremity of which are the very imperfect ruins of the castle of Ardtornish, to which the Lords of the Isles summoned parliaments, and from whence one of them dated a treaty with the Crown of England as an independent Prince. These ruins are seen to most advantage from the south, where they are brought into a line with one high fragment towards the west predominating over the rest. The shore of the promontory on the south side becomes rocky, and when it slopes round to the west rises into a very bold and high precipitous bank, skirting the bay on the western side, partly cliffy, partly covered with brushwood, with various streams dashing over it from a great height. Above the old castle of Ardtornish, and about where the promontory joins the land, stands the present mansion, a neat white-washed house, with several well enclosed and well-cultivated fields surrounding it.

"The high and dignified character assumed by the shores of Morven after leaving Ardtornish, continues till we open the Loch Linnhe, the commencement of the great chain of inland lakes running up to Fort-William, and which it is proposed to unite with Inverness by means of the Caledonian Canal. The wisdom of the plan adopted in this national measure seems very dubious. Had the canal been of more moderate depth, and the burdens imposed upon passing vessels less expensive, there can be no doubt that the coasters, sloops, and barks, would have carried on a great trade by means of it. But the expense and plague of locks, &c. may prevent these humble vessels from taking this abridged voyage, while ships above twenty or thirty tons will hesitate to engage themselves in the intricacies of a long lake navigation, exposed, without room for manœuvring, to all the sudden squalls of the mountainous country. Ahead of us, in the mouth of Loch Linnhe, lies the low and fertile isle of Lismore, formerly the appanage of the Bishops of the Isles, who, as usual, knew where to choose church patrimony. The coast of the Mull, on the right hand of the Sound, has a black, rugged, and unimproved character. Above Scallister bay are symptoms of improvement. Moonlight has risen upon us as we pass Duart castle, now an indistinct mass upon its projecting promontory. It was garrisoned for Government so late as 1760, but is now ruinous. We see, at about a mile's distance, the fatal shelve on which Duart exposed the daughter of Argyle, on which Miss Baillie's play of the Family Legend is founded, but now,

> 'Without either sound or sign of their shock,
> The waves roll over the Lady's rock.'

The placid state of the sea is very different from what I have seen it, when six stout rowers could scarce give a boat headway through the conflicting tides. These fits of violence so much surprised and offended a body of the Camerons, who were bound upon some expedition to Mull, and had been accustomed to the quietness of lake-navigation, that they drew their dirks, and began to stab the waves—from which popular tale this run of tide is called *the Men of Lochaber*. The weather being delightfully moderate, we agree to hover hereabout all night, or anchor under the Mull shore, should it be necessary, in order to see Dunstaffnage to-morrow morning. The isle of Kerrera is now in sight, forming the bay of Oban. Beyond lie the varied and magnificent summits of the chain of mountains bordering Loch Linnhe, as well as those between Loch Awe and Loch Etive, over which the summit of Ben Cruachan is proudly prominent. Walk on deck, admiring this romantic prospect until ten; then below, and turn in.

"1*st September*, 1814.—Rise betwixt six and seven, and having discreetly secured our breakfast, take boat for the old castle of Dunstaffnage, situated upon a promontory on the side of Loch Linnhe and near to Loch Etive. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the day and of the prospect. We coasted the low, large, and fertile isle of Lismore, where a Catholic Bishop, Chisholm, has established a seminary of young men intended for priests, and what is a better thing, a valuable lime-work. Report speaks well of the lime, but indifferently of the progress of the students. Tacking to the shore of the loch, we land at Dunstaffnage, once, it is said, the seat of the Scottish monarchy, till success over the Picts and Saxons transferred their throne to Scoone, Dumfermline, and at length to Edinburgh. The Castle is still the King's (nominally,) and the Duke of Argyle (nominally also,) is hereditary keeper. But the real right of property is in the family of the depute-keeper, to which it was assigned as an appanage, the first possessor being a natural son of an Earl of Argyle. The shell of the castle, for little more now remains, bears marks of extreme antiquity. It is square in form, with round towers at three of the angles, and is situated upon a lofty precipice, carefully scarped on all sides to render it perpendicular. The entrance is by a staircase, which conducts you to a wooden landing-place in front of the portal-door. This landing-place could formerly be raised at pleasure, being of the nature of a drawbridge. When raised, the place was inaccessible. You pass under an ancient arch, with a low vault (being the porter's lodge) on the right hand, and flanked by loopholes, for firing upon any hostile guest who might force his passage thus far. This admits you into the inner-court, which is about eighty feet square. It contains two mean-looking buildings, about sixty or seventy years old; the ancient castle having been consumed by fire in 1715. It is said that the nephew of the proprietor was the incendiary. We went into the apartments, and found they did not exceed the promise of the exterior; but they admitted us to walk upon the battlements of the old castle, which displayed a most splendid prospect. Beneath, and far projected into the loch, were seen the woods and houses of Campbell of Lochnell. A little summer-house, upon an eminence, belonging to this wooded bank, resembles an ancient monument. On the right, Loch Etive, after pouring its waters like a furious cataract over a strait called Connell-ferry, comes between the castle and a round island belonging to its demesne, and nearly insulates the situation. In front is a low rocky eminence on the opposite side of the arm, through which Loch Etive flows into Loch Linnhe. Here was situated *Beregenium*, once, it is said, a British capital city; and, as our informant told us, the largest market-town in Scotland. Of this splendour are no remains but a few trenches and excavations, which the distance did not allow us to examine. The ancient masonry of Dunstaffnage is mouldering fast under time and neglect. The foundations are beginning to decay, and exhibit gaps between the rock and the wall; and the battlements are become ruinous. The inner court is encumbered with ruins. A hundred pounds or two would put this very ancient fortress in a state of preservation for ages, but I fear this is not to be expected. The stumps of large trees, which had once shaded the vicinity of the castle, gave symptoms of decay in the family of Dunstaffnage. We were told of some ancient spurs and other curiosities preserved in the castle, but they were locked up. In the vicinity of the castle is a chapel which had once been elegant, but by the building up of windows, &c., is now heavy enough. I have often observed that the means adopted in Scotland for repairing old buildings are generally as destructive of their grace and beauty, as if that had been the express object. Unfortunately most churches, particularly, have gone through both stages of destruction, having been first repaired by the building-up of the beautiful shafted windows, and then the roof being suffered to fall in, they became ruins indeed, but without any touch of the picturesque farther than their massive walls and

columns may afford. Near the chapel of Dunstaffnage is a remarkable echo.

"Re-embarked, and rowing about a mile and a half or better along the shore of the lake, again landed under the ruins of the old castle of Dunolly. This fortress, which, like that of Dunstaffnage, forms a marked feature in this exquisite landscape, is situated on a bold and precipitous promontory overhanging the lake. The principal part of the ruins now remaining is a square tower or keep of the ordinary size, which had been the citadel of the castle; but fragments of other buildings, overgrown with ivy, show that Dunolly had once been a place of considerable importance. These had enclosed a courtyard, of which the keep probably formed one side, the entrance being by a very steep ascent from the land side, which had formerly been cut across by a deep moat, and defended doubtless by outworks and a drawbridge. Beneath the castle stands the modern house of Dunolly, a decent mansion, suited to the reduced state of the MacDougalls of Lorn, who from being Barons powerful enough to give battle to and defeat Robert Bruce, are now declined into private gentlemen of moderate fortune.

"This very ancient family is descended from Somerled, Thane, or rather, under that name, *King* of Argyle and the Hebrides. He had two sons, to one of whom he left his insular possessions—and he became founder of the dynasty of the Lords of the Isles, who maintained a stirring independence during the middle ages. The other was founder of the family of the MacDougalls of Lorn. One of them being married to a niece of the Red Cumming, in revenge of his slaughter at Dumfries, took a vigorous part against Robert Bruce in his struggles to maintain the independence of Scotland. At length the King, turning his whole strength towards MacDougall, encountered him at a pass near Loch Awe; but the Highlanders, being possessed of the strong ground, compelled Bruce to retreat, and again gave him battle at Dalry, near Tynedrum, where he had concentrated his forces. Here he was again defeated, and the tradition of the MacDougall family bears, that in the conflict the Lord of Lorn engaged hand to hand with Bruce, and was struck down by that monarch. As they grappled together on the ground, Bruce being uppermost, a vassal of MacDougall, called MacKeoch, relieved his master by pulling Bruce from him. In this close struggle the King left his mantle and brooch in the hands of his enemies, and the latter trophy was long preserved in the family, until it was lost in an accidental fire. Barbour tells the same story, but I think with circumstances somewhat different. When Bruce had gained the throne for which he fought so long, he displayed his resentment against the MacDougalls of Lorn, by depriving them of the greatest part of their domains, which were bestowed chiefly upon the Steward of Scotland. Sir Colin Campbell, the Knight of Loch Awe, and the Knight of Glenurchy, Sir —— Campbell, married daughters of the Steward, and received with them great portion of the forfeiture of MacDougall. Bruce even compelled or persuaded the Lord of the Isles to divorce his wife, who was a daughter of MacDougall, and take in marriage a relation of his own. The son of the divorced lady was not permitted to succeed to the principality of the Isles, on account of his connexion with the obnoxious MacDougall. But a large appanage was allowed him upon the Mainland, where he founded the family of Glengarry.

"The family of MacDougall suffered farther reduction during the great civil war, in which they adhered to the Stewarts, and in 1715 they forfeited the small estate of Dunolly, which was then all that remained of what had once been a principality. The then representative of the family fled to France, and his son (father of the present proprietor) would have been without any means of education, but for the spirit of clanship, which induced one of the name in the humble situation of keeper of a public-house at Dumbarton, to take his young chief to reside with him, and be at the expense of his education and maintenance until his fifteenth or sixteenth year. He proved a clever and intelligent man, and made good use of the education he received. When the affair of 1745 was in agitation, it was expected by the south-western clans that Charles Edward would have landed near Oban, instead of which he disembarked at Loch-nan-uagh, in Arisaig. Stuart of Appin sent information of his landing to MacDougall, who gave orders to his brother to hold the clan in readiness to rise, and went himself to consult with the chamberlain of the Earl of Breadalbane, who was also in the secret. He found this person indisposed to rise, alleging that Charles had disappointed them both in the place of landing, and the support he had promised. MacDougall then resolved to play cautious, and went to visit the Duke of Argyle, then residing at Roseneath, probably without any determined purpose as to his future proceedings. While he was waiting the Duke's leisure, he saw a horseman arrive at full gallop, and shortly after, the Duke entering the apartment where MacDougall was, with a map in his hand, requested him, after friendly salutations, to point out Loch-nan-uagh on that map. MacDougall instantly saw that the secret of Charles's landing had transpired, and resolved to make a merit of being the first who should give details. The persuasions of the Duke determined him to remain quiet, and the reward was the restoration of the little estate of Dunolly, lost by his father in 1715. This gentleman lived to a very advanced stage of life, and was succeeded by Peter MacDougall, Esq. now of Dunolly. I had these particulars respecting the restoration of the estate from a near relation of the family, whom we met at Dunstaffnage.

"The modern house of Dunolly is on the neck of land under the old castle, having on the one hand the lake with its islands and mountains, on the other, two romantic eminences tufted with copsewood, of which the higher is called Barmore, and is now planted. I have seldom seen a more romantic and delightful situation, to which the peculiar state of the family gave a sort of moral interest. Mrs. MacDougall, observing strangers surveying the ruins, met us on our return, and most politely insisted upon our accepting fruit and refreshments. This was a compliment meant to absolute strangers; but when our names became known to her, the good lady's entreaties that we would stay till Mr. MacDougall returned from his ride, became very pressing. She was in deep mourning for the loss of an eldest son, who had fallen bravely in Spain and under Wellington, a death well becoming the descendant of so famed a race. The second son, a lieutenant in the navy, had, upon this family misfortune, obtained leave to visit his parents for the first time after many years' service, but had now returned to his ship. Mrs. M. spoke with melancholy pride of the death of her eldest son, with hope and animation of the prospects of the survivor. A third is educated for the law. Declining the hospitality offered us, Mrs. M. had the goodness to walk with us along the shore towards Oban, as far as the property of Dunolly extends, and showed us a fine spring, called *Tobar nan Gall*, or the Well of the Stranger, where our sailors supplied themselves with excellent water, which has been rather a scarce article with us, as it soon becomes past a landsman's use on board ship. On the sea-shore, about a quarter of a mile from the castle, is a huge fragment of the rock called *plum-pudding stone*, which art or nature has formed into a gigantic pillar. Here it is said Fion or Fingal tied his dog Bran —here also the celebrated Lord of the Isles tied up his dogs when he came upon a visit to the Lords of Lorn. Hence it is called *Clach nan Con; i. e.* the Dog's Stone. A tree grew once on the top of this bare mass of composite stone, but it was cut down by a curious damsel of the family, who was desirous to see a treasure said to be deposited beneath it. Enjoyed a pleasant walk of a mile along the beach to Oban, a town of some consequence, built in a semicircular form, around a good harbour formed by the opposite side of Kerrera, on which Mrs. M. pointed out the place where Alexander II. died, while, at the head of a powerful armament, he meditated the re-

duction of the Hebrides.—The field is still called Dalry—the King's field.

"Having taken leave of Mrs. MacDougall, we soon satisfied our curiosity concerning Oban, which owed its principal trade to the industry of two brothers, Messrs. Stevenson, who dealt in ship-building. One is now dead, the other almost retired from business, and trade is dull in the place. Heard of an active and industrious man, who had set up a nursery of young trees, which ought to succeed, since at present whoever wants plants must send to Glasgow; and how much the plants suffer during a voyage of such length, any one may conceive. Go on board after a day delightful for the serenity and clearness of the weather, as well as for the objects we had visited. I forgot to say, that through Mr. MacDougall's absence we lost an opportunity of seeing a bronze figure of one of his ancestors, called *Bacach*, or the lame, armed and mounted as for a tournament. The hero flourished in the twelfth century. After a grand council of war, we determine, as we are so near the coast of Ulster, that we will stand over and view the celebrated Giant's Causeway: and Captain Wilson receives directions accordingly.

"*2d Sept.* 1814.—Another most beautiful day. The heat, for the first time since we sailed from Leith, is somewhat incommodious; so we spread a handsome awning, to save our complexions. God wot, and breakfast beneath it in style. The breeze is gentle, and quite favourable. It has conducted us from the extreme cape of Mull, called the Black Head of Mull, into the Sound of Ilay. We view in passing that large and fertile island, the property of Campbell of Shawfield, who has introduced an admirable style of farming among his tenants. Still farther behind us retreats the island of Jura, with the remarkable mountains called the Paps of Jura, which form a landmark at a great distance. They are very high, but in our eyes, so much accustomed of late to immense height, do not excite much surprise. Still farther astern is the small isle of Scarba, which, as we see it, seems to be a single hill. In the passage or sound between Scarba and the extremity of Jura, is a terrible run of tide, which, contending with the sunk rocks and islets of that foul channel, occasions the succession of whirlpools, called the Gulf of Cornevreckan. Seen at this distance we cannot judge of its terrors. The sight of Corrievreckan and of the low rocky isle of Colonsay, betwixt which and Ilay we are now passing, strongly recalls to my mind poor John Leyden and his tale of the Mermaid and MacPhail of Colonsay.* Probably the name of the hero should have been MacFie, for to the MacDuffies (by abridgment MacFies) Colonsay of old pertained. It is said the last of these MacDuffies was executed as an oppressor by order of the Lord of the Isles, and lies buried in the adjacent small island of Oransay, where there is an old chapel with several curious monuments, which, to avoid losing this favourable breeze, we are compelled to leave unvisited. Colonsay now belongs to a gentleman named MacNiel. On the right beyond it, opens at a distance the western coast of Mull, which we already visited in coming from the northward. We see the promontory of Ross, which is terminated by Y-Columbkill, also now visible. The shores of Loch Tua and Ulva are in the blue distance, with the little archipelago which lies around Staffa. Still farther the hills of Rum can just be distinguished from the blue sky. We are now arrived at the extreme point of Ilay, termed, from the strong tides, the *Runs of Ilay*. We here only feel them as a large but soft swell of the sea, the weather being delightfully clear and serene. In the course of the evening we lose sight of the Hebrides, excepting Ilay, having now attained the western side of that island.

"*3d September*, 1814.—In the morning early, we are off Innistulhan, an islet very like Inchkeith in size and appearance, and like Inchkeith, displaying a lighthouse. Messrs. Hamilton, Duff, and Stevenson go ashore to visit the Irish lighthouse and compare notes. A fishing-boat comes off with four or five stout lads, without neckkerchiefs or hats, and the best of whose joint garments selected would hardly equip an Edinburgh beggar. Buy from this specimen of Paddy in his native land some fine John Dories for threepence each. The mainland of Ireland adjoining to this island (being part of the county of Donegal) resembles Scotland, and though hilly, seems well cultivated upon the whole. A brisk breeze directly against us. We beat to windward by assistance of a strong tide-stream, in order to weather the head of Innishowen, which covers the entrance of Lough Foyle, with the purpose of running up the loch to see Londonderry, so celebrated for its siege in 1699. But short tacks and long tacks were in vain, and at dinner-time, having lost our tide, we find ourselves at all disadvantage both against wind and sea. Much combustion at our meal, and the manœuvres by which we attempted to eat and drink remind me of the enchanted drinking-cup in the old ballad,—

> Some shed it on their shoulder,
> Some shed it on their thigh;
> And he that did not hit his mouth
> Was sure to hit his eye.'

In the evening, backgammon and cards are in great request. We have had our guns shotted all this day for fear of the Yankees—a privateer having been seen off Tyree Islands, and taken some vessels—as is reported.—About nine o'clock weather the Innishowen head, and enter the Lough, and fire a gun as a signal for a pilot. The people here are great smugglers; and at the report of the gun, we see several lights on shore disappear.—About the middle of the day too, our appearance (much resembling a revenue cutter) occasioned a smoke being made in the midst of a very rugged cliff on the shore—a signal probably to any of the smugglers' craft that might be at sea. Come to anchor in eight fathom water, expecting our pilot.

"*4th September*, 1814.—Waked in the morning with good hope of hearing service in Derry Cathedral, as we had felt ourselves under weigh since daylight; but these expectations vanished when, going on deck, we found ourselves only half way up Lough Foyle, and at least ten miles from Derry. Very little wind, and that against us; and the navigation both shoally and intricate. Called a council of war; and after considering the difficulty of getting up to Derry, and the chance of being wind-bound when we do get there, we resolve to renounce our intended visit to that town. We had hardly put the ship about, when the Irish Æolus shifted his trumpet, and opposed our exit, as he had formerly been unfavourable to our progress up the lake. At length, we are compelled to betake ourselves to towing, the wind fading into an absolute calm. This gives us time enough to admire the northern, or Donegal, side of Lough Foyle—the other being hidden from us by haze and distance. Nothing can be more favourable than this specimen of Ireland.—A beautiful variety of cultivated slopes, intermixed with banks of wood; rocks skirted with a distant ridge of heathy hills, watered by various brooks; the glens or banks being, in general, planted or covered with copse; and finally, studded by a succession of villas and gentlemen's seats, good farm-houses, and neat white-washed cabins. Some of the last are happily situated upon the verge of the sea, with banks of copse or a rock or two rising behind them, and the white sand in front. The land, in general, seems well cultivated and enclosed—but in some places the enclosures seem too small, and the ridges too crooked, for proper farming. We pass two gentlemen's seats, called White Castle and Red Castle; the last a large good-looking mansion, with trees, and a pretty vale sloping upwards from the sea. As we approach the termination of the Lough, the ground becomes more rocky and barren, and the cultivation interrupted by impracticable patches, which have been necessarily abandoned. Come in view of Green Castle, a large ruinous castle, said to have belonged to the Macwilliams. The remains are romantically situated upon a green bank sloping

* See Minstrelsy of the Border—Scott's Poetical Works, vol. iv. pp. 295—308.

down to the sea, and are partly covered with ivy. From their extent the place must have been a chieftain's residence of the very first consequence. Part of the ruins appear to be founded upon a high red rock, which the eye at first blends with the masonry. To the east of the ruins, upon a cliff overhanging the sea, are a modern fortification and barrack-yard, and beneath, a large battery for protection of the shipping which may enter the Lough; the guns are not yet mounted. The Custom-house boat boards us, and confirms the account that American cruisers are upon the coast. Drift out of the Lough, and leave behind us this fine country, all of which belongs in property to Lord Donegal; other possessors only having long leases, as sixty years, or so forth. Red Castle, however, before distinguished as a very good-looking house, is upon a perpetual lease. We discharge our pilot—the gentlemen go ashore with him in the boat, in order to put foot on Irish land. I shall defer that pleasure till I can promise myself something to see. When our gentlemen return we read prayers on deck. After dinner go ashore at the small fishing-village of Port Rush, pleasantly situated upon a peninsula, which forms a little harbour. Here we are received by Dr. Richardson, the inventor of the fiorin-grass (or of some of its excellencies.) He cultivates this celebrated vegetable on a very small scale, his whole farm not exceeding four acres. Here I learn with inexpressible surprise and distress, the death of one of the most valued of the few friends whom these memoranda might interest.* She was, indeed, a rare example of the soundest good sense, and the most exquisite purity of moral feeling, united with the utmost grace and elegance of personal beauty, and with manners becoming the most dignified rank in British society. There was a feminine softness in all her deportment, which won universal love, as her firmness of mind and correctness of principle commanded veneration. To her family her loss is inexpressibly great. I know not whether it was the purity of her mind or the ethereal cast of her features and form, but I could never associate in my mind her idea and that of mortality; so that the shock is the more heavy, as being totally unexpected. God grant comfort to the afflicted survivor and his family!

"5th *September*, 1814.—Wake, or rather rise at six, for I have waked the whole night, or fallen into broken sleeps only to be hag-ridden by the nightmare. Go ashore with a heavy heart, to see sights which I had much rather leave alone. Land under Dunluce, a ruined castle built by the MacGillans, or MacQuillans, but afterwards taken from them by a Macdonnell, ancestor of the Earls of Antrim, and destroyed by Sir John Perrot, Lord-Lieutenant in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. This Macdonnell came from the Hebrides at the head of a Scottish colony. The site of the castle much resembles Dunnotter, but is on a smaller scale. The ruins occupy perhaps more than an acre of ground, being the level top of a high rock advanced into the sea, by which it is surrounded on three sides, and divided from the mainland by a deep chasm. The access was by a narrow bridge, of which there now remains but a single rib, or ledge, forming a doubtful and a precarious access to the ruined castle. On the outer side of the bridge are large remains of outworks, probably for securing cattle, and for domestic offices—and the vestiges of a chapel. Beyond the bridge are an outer and inner gateway, with their defences. The large gateway forms an angle of the square enclosure of the fortress, and at the other landward angle is built a large round tower. There are vestiges of similar towers occupying the angles of the precipice overhanging the sea. These towers were connected by a curtain, on which artillery seems to have been mounted. Within this circuit are the ruins of an establishment of feudal grandeur on the large scale. The great hall, forming, it would seem, one side of the inner court, is sixty paces long, lighted by windows which appear to have been shafted with stone, but are now ruined. Adjacent are the great kitchen and ovens, with a variety of other buildings, but no square tower, or keep. The most remarkable part of Dunluce, however, is that the whole mass of plum-pudding rock on which the fort is built, is completely perforated by a cave sloping downwards from the inside of the moat or dry-ditch beneath the bridge, and opening to the sea on the other side. It might serve the purpose of a small harbour, especially if they had, as is believed, a descent to the cave from within the castle. It is difficult to conceive the use of the aperture to the land, unless it was in some way enclosed and defended. Above the ruinous castle is a neat farm-house. Mrs. More, the good-wife, a Scoto-Hibernian, received us with kindness and hospitality, which did honour to the nation of her birth, as well as of her origin, in a house whose cleanliness and neatness might have rivalled England. Her churn was put into immediate motion on our behalf, and we were loaded with all manner of courtesy, as well as good things. We heard here of an armed schooner having been seen off the coast yesterday, which fired on a boat that went off to board her, and would seem therefore to be a privateer, or armed smuggler.

"Return on board for breakfast, and then again take boat for the Giant's Causeway—having first shotted the guns, and agreed on a signal, in case this alarming stranger should again make his appearance. Visit two caves, both worth seeing, but not equal to those we have seen; one, called Port Coon, opens in a small cove, or bay—the outer reach opens into an inner cave, and that again into the sea. The other, called Down Kerry, is a sea-cave, like that on the eastern side of Loch Eribol—a high arch, up which the sea rolls:—the weather being quiet, we sailed in very nearly to the upper end. We then rowed on to the celebrated Causeway, a platform composed of basaltic pillars, projecting into the sea like the pier of a harbour. As I was tired, and had a violent headach, I did not land, but could easily see that the regularity of the columns was the same as at Staffa; but that island contains a much more extensive and curious specimen of this curious phenomenon.

"Row along the shores of this celebrated point, which are extremely striking as well as curious. They open into a succession of little bays, each of which has precipitous banks graced with long ranges of the basaltic pillars, sometimes placed above each other, and divided by masses of interweaving strata, or by green sloping banks of earth of extreme steepness. These remarkable ranges of columns are in some places chequered by horizontal strata of a red rock or earth, of the appearance of ochre; so that the green of the grassy banks, the dark-gray or black appearance of the columns, with those red seams and other varieties of the interposed strata, have most uncommon and striking effects. The outline of these cliffs is as singular as their colouring. In several places the earth has wasted away from single columns, and left them standing insulated and erect, like the ruined colonnade of an ancient temple, upon the verge of the precipice. In other places, the disposition of the basaltic ranges present singular appearances, to which the guides give names agreeable to the images which they are supposed to represent. Each of the little bays or inlets has also its appropriate name. One is called the Spanish Bay, from one of the Spanish Armada having been wrecked there. Thus our voyage has repeatedly traced the memorable remnants of that celebrated squadron. The general name of the cape adjacent to the Causeway, is Bengore Head. To those who have seen Staffa, the peculiar appearance of the Causeway itself will lose much of its effect; but the grandeur of the neighbouring scenery will still maintain the reputation of Bengore Head. The people ascribe all these wonders to Fin MacCoul, whom they couple with a Scottish giant called Ben-an something or other. The traveller is plied by guides, who make their profit by selling pieces of crystal, agate, or chalcedony, found in the interstices of the rocks. Our party brought off some curious joints of the columns, and, had I been quite as I am wont to be, I would have selected four to be capitals of a rustic

* Harriet, Duchess of Buccleuch, died Aug. 24, 1814.

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porch at Abbotsford. But, alas! alas! I am much out of love with vanity at this moment. From what we hear at the Causeway, we have every reason to think that the pretended privateer has been a gentleman's pleasure-vessel.—Continue our voyage southward, and pass between the Main of Ireland and the Isle of Rachrin, a rude heathy-looking island, once a place of refuge to Robert Bruce. This is said, in ancient times, to have been the abode of banditti, who plundered the neighbouring coast. At present it is under a long lease to a Mr. Gage, who is said to maintain excellent order among the islanders. Those of bad character be expels to Ireland, and hence it is a phrase among the people of Rachrin, when they wish ill to any one, '*May Ireland be his kinder end.*' On the Main we see the village of Ballintry, and a number of people collected, the remains of an Irish fair. Close by is a small islet, called Sheep Island. We now take leave of the Irish coast, having heard nothing of its popular complaints, excepting that the good lady at Dunluce made a heavy moan against the tithes, which had compelled her husband to throw his whole farm into pasture. Stand over toward Scotland, and see the Mull of Cantyre light.

"6*th September*, 1814.—Under the lighthouse at the Mull of Cantyre: situated on a desolate spot among rocks, like a Chinese pagoda in Indian drawings. Duff and Stevenson go ashore at six. Hamilton follows, but is unable to land, the sea having got up. The boat brings back letters, and I have the great comfort to learn all are well at Abbotsford. About eight the tide begins to run very strong, and the wind rising at the same time, makes us somewhat apprehensive for our boat, which had returned to attend D. and S. We observe them set off along the hills on foot, to walk, as we understand, to a bay called Carskey, five or six miles off, but the nearest spot at which they can hope to re-embark in this state of the weather. It now becomes very squally, and one of our jibsails splits. We are rather awkwardly divided into three parties—the pedestrians on shore, with whom we now observe Captain Wilson, mounted upon a pony—the boat with four sailors, which is stealing along in-shore, unable to row, and scarce venturing to carry any sail—and we in the yacht, tossing about most exceedingly. At length we reach Carskey, a quiet-looking bay, where the boat gets into shore, and fetches off our gentlemen. After this the coast of Cantyre seems cultivated and arable, but bleak and unenclosed, like many other parts of Scotland. We then learn that we have been repeatedly in the route of two American privateers, who have made many captures in the Irish Channel, particularly at Innistruhul, at the back of Islay, and on the Lewis. They are the Peacock, of twenty-two guns, and 165 men, and a schooner of eighteen guns, called the Prince of Neufchatel. These news, added to the increasing inclemency of the weather, induce us to defer a projected visit to the coast of Galloway; and indeed it is time one of us was home on many accounts. We therefore resolve, after visiting the lighthouse at Pladda, to proceed for Greenock. About four, drop anchor off Pladda, a small islet lying on the south side of Arran. Go ashore and visit the establishment. When we return on board, the wind being unfavourable for the mouth of Clyde, we resolve to weigh anchor and go into Lamlash Bay.

"7*th September*, 1814.—We had amply room to repent last night's resolution, for the wind, with its usual caprice, changed so soon as we had weighed anchor, blew very hard, and almost directly against us, so that we were beating up against it by short tacks, which made a most disagreeable night; as between the noise of the wind and the sea, the clattering of the ropes and sails above, and of the moveables below, and, the eternal '*ready about*,' which was repeated every ten minutes when the vessel was about to tack, with the lurch and clamour which succeeds, sleep was much out of the question. We are not now in the least sick, but want of sleep is uncomfortable, and I have no agreeable reflections to amuse waking hours, excepting the hope of again rejoining my family. About six o'clock went on deck to see Lamlash Bay, which we have at length reached after a hard struggle. The morning is fine, and the wind abated, so that the coast of Arran looks extremely well. It is indented with two deep bays. That called Lamlash, being covered by an island with an entrance at either end, makes a secure roadstead. The other bay, which takes its name from Brodick Castle, a seat of the Duke of Hamilton, is open. The situation of the castle is very fine, among extensive plantations, laid out with perhaps too much formality, but pleasant to the eye, as the first tract of plantation we have seen for a long time. One stripe, however, with singular want of taste, runs straight up a finely-rounded hill, and turning by an obtuse angle, cuts down the opposite side with equal lack of remorse. This vile habit of opposing the line of the plantation to the natural line and bearing of the ground, is one of the greatest practical errors of early planters. As to the rest, the fields about Brodick, and the lowland of Arran in general, seem rich, well enclosed, and in good cultivation. Behind and around rise an amphitheatre of mountains, the principal a long ridge with fine swelling serrated tops, called Goat-Fell. Our wind now altogether dies away, while we want its assistance to get to the mouth of the Firth of Clyde, now opening between the extremity of the large and fertile Isle of Bute, and the lesser islands called the Cumbrays. The fertile coast of Ayrshire trends away to the south-westward, displaying many villages and much appearance of beauty and cultivation. On the north-eastward arises the bold and magnificent screen formed by the mountains of Argyleshire and Dunbartonshire, rising above each other in gigantic succession. About noon, a favourable breath of wind enables us to enter the mouth of the Clyde, passing between the larger Cumbray and the extremity of Bute. As we advance beyond the Cumbray and open the opposite coast, see Largs, renowned for the final defeat of the Norwegian invaders by Alexander III. [A. D. 1263.] The ground of battle was a sloping, but rather gentle ascent from the sea, above the modern Kirk of Largs. Had Haco gained the victory, it would have opened all the south-west of Scotland to his arms. On Bute, a fine and well-improved island, we open the Marquis of Bute's house of Mount Stewart, neither apparently large nor elegant in architecture, but beautifully situated among well-grown trees, with an open and straight avenue to the sea-shore. The whole isle is prettily varied by the rotation of crops; and the rocky ridges of Goat-Fell and other mountains in Arran are now seen behind Bute as a background. These ridges resemble much the romantic and savage outline of the mountains of Cuillin, in Skye. On the southward of Largs is Kelburn, the seat of Lord Glasgow, with extensive plantations; on the northward, Skelmorlie, an ancient seat of the Montgomeries. The Firth, closed to appearance by Bute and the Cumbrays, now resembles a long irregular inland lake, bordered on the one side by the low and rich coast of Renfrewshire, studded with villages and seats, and on the other by the Highland mountains. Our breeze dies totally away, and leaves us to admire this prospect till sunset. I learn incidentally, that, in the opinion of honest Captain Wilson, I have been myself the cause of all this contradictory weather. 'It is all,' says the Captain to Stevenson, 'owing to the cave at the Isle of Egg,' —from which I had abstracted a skull. Under this odium I may labour yet longer, for assuredly the weather has been doggedly unfavourable. Night quiet and serene, but dead calm—a fine contrast to the pitching, rolling, and walloping of last night.

"8*th September*.—Waked very much in the same situation—a dead calm, but the weather very serene. With much difficulty, and by the assistance of the tide, we advanced up the Firth, and passing the village of Gourock, at length reached Greenock. Took an early dinner, and embarked in the steam-boat for Glasgow. We took leave of our little yatch under the repeated cheers of the sailors, who had been much pleased with their erratic mode of travelling

about, so different from the tedium of a regular voyage. After we reached Glasgow—a journey which we performed at the rate of about eight miles an hour, and with a smoothness of motion which probably resembles flying—we supped together, and prepared to separate.—Erskine and I go to-morrow to the Advocate's at Killirmont, and thence to Edinburgh. So closes my Journal. But I must not omit to say, that among five or six persons, some of whom were doubtless different in tastes and pursuits, there did not occur, during the close communication of more than six weeks aboard a small vessel, the slightest difference of opinion. Each seemed anxious to submit his own wishes to those of his friends. The consequence was, that by judicious arrangement all were gratified in their turn, and frequently he who made some sacrifices to the views of his companions, was rewarded by some unexpected gratification calculated particularly for his own amusement. Thus ends my little excursion, in which, bating one circumstance, which must have made me miserable for the time wherever I had learned it, I have enjoyed as much pleasure as in any six weeks of my life. We had constant exertion, a succession of wild and uncommon scenery, good humour on board, and objects of animation and interest when we went ashore—

'Sed fugit interea—fugit irrevocabile tempus.'"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LETTER IN VERSE FROM ZETLAND AND ORKNEY—DEATH OF THE DUCHESS OF BUCCLEUCH—CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE DUKE—ALTRIVE LAKE—NEGOTIATION CONCERNING THE LORD OF THE ISLES COMPLETED—SUCCESS OF WAVERLEY—CONTEMPORANEOUS CRITICISMS ON THE NOVEL—LETTERS TO SCOTT FROM MR. MORRITT—MR. LEWIS—AND MISS MACLEAN CLEPHANE—LETTER FROM JAMES BALLANTYNE TO MISS EDGEWORTH.—1814.

I QUESTION if any man ever drew his own character more fully or more pleasingly than Scott has done in the preceding diary of a six weeks' pleasure voyage. We have before us, according to the scene and occasion, the poet, the antiquary, the magistrate, the planter, and the agriculturist; but every where the warm yet sagacious philanthropist—every where the courtesy, based on the unselfishness, of the thoroughbred gentleman;—and surely never was the tenderness of a manly heart portrayed more touchingly than in the closing pages. I ought to mention that Erskine received the news of the Duchess of Buccleuch's death on the day when the party landed at Dunstaffnage; but, knowing how it would affect Scott, took means to prevent its reaching him until the expedition should be concluded. He heard the event casually mentioned by a stranger during dinner at Port Rush, and was for the moment quite overpowered.

Of the letters which Scott wrote to his friend during those happy six weeks, I have recovered only one, and it is, thanks to the leisure of the yacht, in verse. The strong and easy heroics of the first section prove, I think, that Mr. Canning did not err when he told him that if he chose he might emulate even Dryden's command of that noble measure; and the dancing anapæsts of the second show that he could with equal facility have rivalled the gay graces of Cotton, Anstey, or Moore. This epistle did not reach the Duke of Buccleuch until his lovely Duchess was no more; and I shall annex to it some communications relating to that affliction, which afford a contrast, not less interesting than melancholy, to the light-hearted glee reflected in the rhymes from the region of Magnus Troill.

To his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c. &c. &c.

"Lighthouse Yacht, the Sound of Lerwick, Zetland,
8th August, 1814.

"Health to the Chieftain from his clansman true!
From her true minstrel health to fair Buccleuch!
Health from the isles, where dewy Morning weaves
Her chaplet with the tints that Twilight leaves;
Where late the sun scarce vanished from the sight,
And his bright pathway graced the short-lived night,
Though darker now as autumn's shades extend,
The north winds whistle and the mists ascend.
Health from the land where eddying whirlwinds toss
The storm-rocked *cradle* of the Cape of Noss;
On outstretched cords the giddy engine slides,
His own strong arm the bold adventurer guides,
And he that lists such desperate feat to try,
May, like the sea-mew, skim 'twixt surf and sky,
And feel the mid-air gales around him blow,
And see the billows rage five hundred feet below.

"Here by each stormy peak and desert shore,
The hardy Islesman tugs the daring oar,
Practised alike his venturous course to keep
Through the white breakers or the pathless deep,
By ceaseless peril and by toil to gain
A wretched pittance from the niggard main.
And when the worn-out drudge old ocean leaves,
What comfort greets him, and what hut receives?
Lady! the worst your presence ere has cheered
(When want and sorrow fled as you appeared)
Were to a Zetlander as the high dome
Of proud Drumlanrig to my humble home.
Here rise no groves, and here no gardens blow,
Here even the hardy heath scarce dares to grow;
But rocks on rocks, in mist and storm arrayed,
Stretch far to sea their giant colonnade,
With many a cavern scam'd, the dreary haunt
Of the dun seal and swarthy cormorant.
Wild round their rifted brows with frequent cry,
As of lament, the gulls and gannets fly,
And from their sable base, with sullen sound,
In sheets of whitening foam the waves rebound.

"Yet even these coasts a touch of envy gain
From those whose land has known oppression's chain;
For here the industrious Dutchman comes once more
To moor his fishing craft by Bressay's shore;
Greets every former mate and brother tar,
Marvels how Lerwick 'scaped the rage of war,
Tells many a tale of Gallic outrage done,
And ends by blessing God and Wellington.
Here too the Greenland tar, a fiercer guest,
Claims a brief hour of riot, not of rest;
Proves each wild frolic that in wine has birth,
And wakes the land with brawls and boisterous mirth.
A sadder sight on yon poor vessel's prow,
The captive Norse-man sits in silent wo,
And eyes the flags of Britain as they flow.
Hard fate of war, which bade her terrors sway
His destined course, and seize so mean a prey;
A bark with planks so warp'd and seams so riven,
She scarce might face the gentlest airs of heaven:
Pensive he sits, and questions oft if none
Can list his speech and understand his moan;
In vain—no islesman now can use the tongue
Of the bold Norse, from whom their lineage sprung.
Not thus of old the Norse-man hither came,
Won by the love of danger or of fame;
On every storm-beat cape a shapeless tower
Tells of their wars, their conquest, and their power;
For ne'er for Grecia's vales, nor Latian land,
Was fiercer strife than for this barren strand—
A race severe—the isle and ocean lords,
Loved for its own delight the strife of swords—
With scornful laugh the mortal pang defied,
And blessed their gods that they in battle died.

"Such were the sires of Zetland's simple race,
And still the eye may faint resemblance trace
In the blue eye, tall form, proportion fair,
The limbs athletic, and the long light hair—
(Such was the mien, as Scald and Minstrel sings,
Of fair-haired Harold, first of Norway's Kings;)
But their high deeds to scale these crags confined,
Their only warfare is with waves and wind.

"Why should I talk of Mousa's castled coast?
Why of the horrors of the Sumburgh Rost?
May not these bald disjointed lines suffice,
Pen'd while my comrades whirl the rattling dice—
While down the cabin skylight lessening shine
The rays, and eve is chased with mirth and wine?—
Imagined, while down Mousa's desert bay
Our well-trimm'd vessel urged her nimble way—
While to the freshening breeze she leaned her side—
And bade her bowsprit kiss the foamy tide—?

"Such are the lays that Zetland Isles supply;
Drenched with the drizzly spray and dropping sky,
Weary and wet, a sea-sick minstrel I.——
W. Scott."

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"*Postscriptum.*

"Kirkwall, Orkney, Aug. 13, 1814.

"In respect that your grace has commissioned a Kraken,
You will please be informed that they seldom are taken;
It is January two years, the Zetland folks say,
Since they saw the last Kraken in Scalloway bay;
He lay in the offing a fortnight or more,
But the devil a Zetlander put from the shore.
Though bold in the seas of the North to assail
The morse and the sea-horse, the grampus and whale.
If your Grace thinks I'm writing the thing that is not,
You may ask at a namesake of ours, Mr. Scott—
(He's not from our clan, though his merits deserve it,
But springs, I'm inform'd, from the Scotts of Scotstarvet;)*
He questioned the folks, who beheld it with eyes,
But they differed confoundedly as to its size.
For instance, the modest and diffident swore
That it seemed like the keel of a ship, and no more—
Those of eyesight more clear, or of fancy more high,
Said it rose like an island 'twixt ocean and sky—
But all of the hulk had a steady opinion
That 'twas sure a *live* subject of Neptune's dominion—
And I think, my Lord Duke, your Grace hardly would wish
To cumber your house such a kettle of fish.
Had your order related to night-caps or hose,
Or mittens of worsted, there's plenty of those.
Or would you be pleased but to fancy a whale?
And direct me to send it—by sea or by mail?
The season, I'm told, is nigh over, but still
I could get you one fit for the lake at Bowhill.
Indeed, as to whales, there's no need to be thrifty,
Since one day last fortnight two hundred and fifty,
Pursued by seven Orkneymen's boats and no more,
Betwixt Truffness and Luffness were drawn on the shore!
You'll ask if I saw this same wonderful sight;
I own that I did not, but easily might—
For this mighty shoal of leviathans lay
On our lee-beam a mile, in the loop of the bay,
And the islesmen of Sanda were all at the spoil,
And *flinching* (so term it) the blubber to boil;
(Ye spirits of lavender drown the reflection
That awakes at the thoughts of this odorous dissection.)
To see this huge marvel, full fain would we go,
But Wilson, the wind, and the current said no.
We have now got to Kirkwall, and needs I must stare
When I think that in verse I have once called it *fair;*
'Tis a base little borough, both dirty and mean—
There is nothing to hear, and there's nought to be seen,
Save a church, where, of old times, a prelate harangued,
And a palace that's built by an earl that was hanged.
But farewell to Kirkwall—aboard we are going,
The anchor's a-peak, and the breezes are blowing;
Our Commodore calls all his band to their places,
And 'tis time to release you—good night to your Graces!"

To his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c.

"Glasgow, Sept. 8, 1814.

"My dear Lord Duke,

"I take the earliest opportunity, after landing, to discharge a task so distressing to me, that I find reluctance and fear even in making the attempt, and for the first time address so kind and generous a friend without either comfort and confidence in myself, or the power of offering a single word of consolation to his affliction. I learned the late calamitous news (which indeed no preparation could have greatly mitigated) quite unexpectedly, when upon the Irish coast; nor could the shock of an earthquake have affected me in the same proportion. Since that time I have been detained at sea, thinking of nothing but what has happened, and of the painful duty I am now to perform. If the deepest interest in this inexpressible loss could qualify me for expressing myself upon a subject so distressing, I know few whose attachment and respect for the lamented object of our sorrows can, or ought to exceed my own, for never was more attractive kindness and condescension displayed by one of her sphere, or returned with deeper and more heartfelt gratitude by one in my own. But selfish regret and sorrow, while they claim a painful and unavailing ascendance, cannot drown the recollection of the virtues lost to the world, just when their scene of acting had opened wider, and to her family when the prospect of their speedy entry upon life rendered her precept and example peculiarly important. And such an example! for of all whom I have ever seen, in whatever rank, she possessed most the power of rendering virtue lovely—combining purity of feeling and soundness of judgment with a sweetness and affability which won the affections of all who had the happiness of approaching her. And this is the partner of whom it has been God's pleasure to deprive your Grace, and the friend for whom I now sorrow, and shall sorrow while I can remember any thing. The recollection of her excellencies can but add bitterness, at least in the first pangs of calamity, yet it is impossible to forbear the topic: it runs to my pen as to my thoughts, till I almost call in question, for an instant, the Eternal Wisdom which has so early summoned her from this wretched world, where pain and grief and sorrow is our portion, to join those to whom her virtues, while upon earth, gave her so strong a resemblance. Would to God I could say, *be comforted;* but I feel every common topic of consolation must be, for the time at least, even an irritation to affliction. Grieve, then, my dear Lord, or I should say my dear and much honoured friend, for sorrow for the time levels the highest distinctions of rank; but do not grieve as those who have no hope. I know the last earthly thoughts of the departed sharer of your joys and sorrows must have been for your Grace and the dear pledges she has left to your care. Do not, for their sake, suffer grief to take that exclusive possession which disclaims care for the living, and is not only useless to the dead, but is what their wishes would have most earnestly deprecated. To time, and to God, whose are both time and eternity, belongs the office of future consolation; it is enough to require from the sufferer under such a dispensation to bear his burthen of sorrow with fortitude, and to resist those feelings which prompt us to believe that that which is galling and grievous is therefore altogether beyond our strength to support. Most bitterly do I regret some levity which I fear must have reached you when your distress was most poignant, and most dearly have I paid for venturing to anticipate the time which is not ours, since I received these deplorable news at the very moment when I was collecting some trifles that I thought might give satisfaction to the person whom I so highly honoured, and who, among her numerous excellencies, never failed to seem pleased with what she knew was meant to afford her pleasure.

"But I must break off, and have perhaps already written too much. I learn by a letter from Mrs. Scott, this day received, that your Grace is at Bowhill—in the beginning of next week I will be in the vicinity—and when your Grace can receive me without additional pain, I shall have the honour of waiting upon you. I remain, with the deepest sympathy, my Lord Duke, your Grace's truly distressed and most grateful servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

The following letter was addressed to Scott by the Duke of Buccleuch, before he received that which the Poet penned on landing at Glasgow. I present it here, because it will give a more exact notion of what Scott's relations with his noble patron really were, than any other single document which I could produce; and to set that matter in its just light is essential to the business of this narrative. But I am not ashamed to confess, that I embrace with satisfaction the opportunity of thus offering to the readers of the present time a most instructive lesson. They will here see what pure and simple virtues and humble piety may be cultivated as the only sources of real comfort in this world and consolation in the prospect of futurity,—among circles which the giddy and envious mob are apt to regard as intoxicated with the pomps and vanities of wealth and rank; which so many of our popular writers represent systematically as sunk in selfish indulgence—as viewing all below them with apathy and indifference—and last, not least, as upholding, when they do uphold, the religious institutions of their country, merely because they have been taught to believe that their own hereditary privileges and possessions derive security from the prevalence of Christian maxims and feelings among the mass of the people.

To Walter Scott, Esq., Post Office, Greenock.

"Bowhill, Sept. 3, 1814.

"My dear Sir,

"It is not with the view of distressing you with my griefs, in order to relieve my own feelings, that I address you at this moment. But knowing your attachment to myself, and more particularly the real affection which you bore to my poor wife, I thought that a few lines from me would be acceptable, both to explain the state of my mind at present, and to mention a few circumstances connected with that melancholy event.

"I am calm and resigned. The blow was so severe that it stunned me, and I did not feel that agony of mind which might have been expected. I now see the full extent of my misfortune; but that extended view of it has come gradually upon me. I am fully aware how imperative it is upon me to exert myself to the utmost on account of

* The Scotts of Scotstarvet, and other families of the name in Fife and elsewhere, claim no kindred with the great clan of the Border—and their armorial bearings are entirely different.

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my children. I must not depress their spirits by a display of my own melancholy feelings. I have many new duties to perform,—or rather, perhaps, I now feel more pressingly the obligation of duties which the unceasing exertions of my poor wife rendered less necessary, or induced me to attend to with less than sufficient accuracy. I have been taught a severe lesson; it may and ought to be a useful one. I feel that my lot, though a hard one, is accompanied by many alleviations denied to others. I have a numerous family, thank God, in health, and profiting, according to their different ages, by the admirable lessons they have been taught. My daughter, Anne, worthy of so excellent a mother, exerts herself to the utmost to supply her place, and has displayed a fortitude and strength of mind beyond her years, and (as I had foolishly thought) beyond her powers. I have most kind friends, willing and ready to afford me every assistance. These are my worldly comforts, and they are numerous and great.

"Painful as it may be, I cannot reconcile it to myself to be totally silent as to the last scene of this cruel tragedy. As she had lived, so she died—an example of every noble feeling—of love, attachment, and the total want of every thing selfish. Endeavouring to the last to conceal her suffering, she evinced a fortitude, a resignation, a Christian courage, beyond all power of description. Her last injunction was to attend to her poor people. It was a dreadful but instructive moment. I have learned that the most truly heroic spirit may be lodged in the tenderest and the gentlest breast. Need I tell *you* that she expired in the full hope and expectation, nay, in the firmest certainty of passing to a better world, through a steady reliance on her Saviour. If ever there was a proof of the efficacy of our religion in moments of the deepest affliction, and in the hour of death, it was exemplified in her conduct. But I will no longer dwell upon a subject which must be painful to you. Knowing her sincere friendship for you, I have thought it would give you pleasure, though a melancholy one, to hear from me that her last moments were such as to be envied by every lover of virtue, piety, and true and genuine religion.

"I will endeavour to do in all things what I know she would wish. I have therefore determined to lay myself open to all the comforts my friends can afford me. I shall be most happy to cultivate their society as heretofore. I shall love them more and more because I know they loved her. Whenever it suits your convenience I shall be happy to see you here. I feel that it is particularly my duty not to make my house the house of mourning to my children; for I know it was *her* decided opinion, that it is most mischievous to give an early impression of gloom to the mind.

"You will find me tranquil, and capable of going through the common occupations of society. Adieu for the present. Yours very sincerely,

BUCCLEUCH, &c."

To his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c. &c. &c.

"Edinburgh, 11th Sept. 1814.

"My dear Lord Duke,

"I received your letter (which had missed me at Greenock) upon its being returned to this place, and cannot sufficiently express my gratitude for the kindness which, at such a moment, could undertake the task of writing upon such a subject to relieve the feelings of a friend. Depend upon it, I am so far worthy of your Grace's kindness that, among many proofs of it, this affecting and most distressing one can never be forgotten. It gives me great though melancholy satisfaction, to find that your Grace has had the manly and Christian fortitude to adopt that resigned and patient frame of spirit, which can extract from the most bitter calamity a wholesome mental medicine. I trust in God that as so many and such high duties are attached to your station, and as he has blessed you with the disposition that draws pleasure from the discharge of them, your Grace will find your first exertions, however painful, rewarded with strength to persevere, and finally, with that comfort which attends perseverance in that which is right. The happiness of hundreds depends upon your Grace almost directly, and the effect of your example in the country, and of your constancy in support of a constitution daily undermined by the wicked and designing, is almost incalculable. Justly, then, and well has your Grace resolved to sacrifice all that is selfish in the indulgence of grief, to the duties of your social and public situation. Long may you have health and strength to be to your dear and hopeful family an example and guide in all that becomes their high rank. It is enough that one light, and alas, what a light that was! has been recalled by the Divine Will to another and a better sphere.

"I wrote a hasty and unconnected letter immediately on landing. I am detained for two days in this place, but shall wait upon your Grace immediately on my return to Abbotsford. If my society cannot, in the circumstances, give much pleasure, it will, I trust, impose no restraint.

"Mrs. Scott desires me to offer her deepest sympathy upon this calamitous occasion. She has much reason, for she has lost the countenance of a friend, such as she cannot expect the course of human life again to supply. I am ever, with much and affectionate respect, your Grace's truly faithful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M. P., Worthing.

"Edinburgh, September 14, 1814.

"My dear Morritt,

"'At the end of my tour on the 22d August!!!' Lord help us!—this comes of going to the Levant and the Hellespont, and your Euxine, and so forth. A poor devil who goes to Nova Zembla and Thule is treated as if he had been only walking as far as Barnard Castle or Cauldshiel's Loch.' I would have you to know, I only returned on the 10th current, and the most agreeable thing I found was your letter. I am sure you must know I had need of something pleasant, for the news of the death of the beautiful, the kind, the affectionate, and generous Duchess of Buccleuch, gave me a shock, which, to speak God's truth, could not have been exceeded, unless by my own family's sustaining a similar deprivation. She was indeed a light set upon a hill, and had all the grace which the most accomplished manners and the most affable address could give to those virtues, by which she was raised still higher than by rank. As she always distinguished me by her regard and confidence, and as I had many opportunities of seeing her in the active discharge of duties, in which she rather resembled a descended angel than an earthly being, you will excuse my saying so much about my own feelings on an occasion where sorrow has been universal. But I will drop the subject. The survivor has displayed a strength and firmness of mind seldom equalled, where the affection has been so strong and mutual, and amidst the very high station and commanding fortune which so often render self-control more difficult, because so far from being habitual. I trust, for his own sake, as well as for that of thousands to whom his life is directly essential, and hundreds of thousands to whom his example is important, that God, as he has given him fortitude to bear this inexpressible shock, will add strength of constitution to support him in the struggle. He has written to me on the occasion, in a style becoming a man and a Christian, submissive to the will of God, and willing to avail himself of the consolations which remain among his family and friends. I am going to see him, and how we shall meet, God knows; but though 'an iron man of iron mould,' upon many of the occasions of life in which I see people most affected, and a peculiar contemner of the commonplace sorrow which I see paid to the departed, this is a case in which my stoicism will not serve me. They both gave me reason to think they loved me, and I returned their regard with the most sincere attachment—the distinction of rank being, I think, set apart on all sides. But God's will be done. I will dwell no longer upon this subject. It is much to learn that Mrs. Morritt is so much better, and that if I have sustained a severe wound from a quarter so little expected, I may promise myself the happiness of your dear wife's recovery.

"I will shortly mention the train of our voyage, reserving particulars till another day. We sailed from Leith, and skirted the Scottish coast, visiting the Buller of Buchan, and other remarkable objects—went to Shetland—thence to Orkney—from thence round Cape Wrath to the Hebrides, making descents every where, where there was any thing to be seen—thence to Lewis and the Long Island—to Skye—to Iona—and so forth, lingering among the Hebrides as long as we could. Then we stood over to the coast of Ireland, and visited the Giant's Causeway and Port Rush, where Dr. Richardson, the inventor (discoverer I would say) of the celebrated fiorin grass, resides. By the way, he is a chattering charlatan, and his

* Lord Byron writes to Mr. Moore, August 3, 1814:—"Oh! I have had the most amusing letter from Hogg, the Ettrick Minstrel and Shepherd. I think very highly of him as a poet, but he and half of these Scotch and Lake troubadours are spoilt by living in little circles and petty coteries. London and the world is the only place to take the conceit out of a man—in the milling phrase. Scott, he says, is gone to the Orkneys in a gale of wind, during which wind, he affirms, the said Scott he is sure is not at his ease, to say the least of it. Lord! Lord! if these home-keeping minstrels had crossed your Atlantic, or my Mediterranean, and tasted a little open boating in a white squall—or a gale in 'the Gut,'—or the Bay of Biscay, with no gale at all—how it would enliven and introduce them to a few of the sensations!—to say nothing of an illicit amour or two upon shore, in the way of Essay upon the Passions, beginning with simple adultery, and compounding it as they went along." *Life and Works, vol. iii., p. 102.* Lord Byron, by the way, had written on July 24th to Mr. Murray, "Waverley is the best and most interesting novel I have redde since—I don't know when," &c. *Ibid, p. 88.*

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florin a mere humbug. But if he were Cicero, and his invention were potatoes, or any thing equally useful, I should detest the recollection of the place and the man, for it was there I learned the death of my friend. Adieu, my dear Morritt; kind compliments to your lady; fike poor Tom, 'I cannot daub it farther.' When I hear where you are, and what you are doing, I will write you a more cheerful epistle. Poor Mackenzie, too, is gone—the brother of our friend Lady Hood—and another Mackenzie, son to the Man of Feeling. So short a time have I been absent, and such has been the harvest of mortality among those whom I regarded.

"I will attend to your corrections in Waverley. My principal employment for the autumn will be reducing the knowledge I have acquired of the localities of the islands into scenery and stage-room for the 'Lord of the Isles,' of which renowned romance I think I have repeated some portions to you. It was elder born than Rokeby, though it gave place to it in publishing.

"After all, scribbling is an old propensity. I don't believe there is any ointment, even that of the Edinburgh Review, which can cure the infected. Once more yours entirely, WALTER SCOTT."

Before I pass from the event which made August, 1814, so black a month in Scott's calendar, I may be excused for once more noticing the kind interest which the Duchess of Buccleuch had always taken in the fortunes of the Ettrick Shepherd, and introducing a most characteristic epistle which she received from him a few months before her death. The Duchess—"fearful" (as she said) "of seeing herself in print"—did not answer the Shepherd, but forwarded his letter to Scott, begging him to explain that circumstances did not allow the Duke to concede what he requested, but to assure him that they both retained a strong wish to serve him whenever a suitable opportunity should present itself. Hogg's letter was as follows:—

*To her Grace the Duchess of Buccleuch, Dalkeith Palace. Favoured by Messrs. Grieve and Scott, hatters, Edinburgh.**

"Ettrickbank, March 17, 1814.

"May it please your Grace,

"I have often grieved you by my applications for this and that. I am sensible of this, for I have had many instances of your wishes to be of service to me, could you have known what to do for that purpose. But there are some eccentric characters in the world, of whom no person can judge or know what will prove beneficial, or what may prove their bane. I have again and again received of your Grace's private bounty, and though it made me love and respect you the more, I was nevertheless grieved at it. It was never your Grace's money that I wanted, but the honour of your countenance; indeed my heart could never yield to the hope of being patronised by any house save that of Buccleuch, whom I deemed bound to cherish every plant that indicated any thing out of the common way on the Braes of Ettrick and Yarrow.

"I know you will be thinking that this long prelude is to end with a request. No, Madam! I have taken the resolution of never making another request. I will, however, tell you a story which is, I believe, founded on a fact:—

"There is a small farm at the head of a water, called * * * *, possessed by a mean fellow named * * *. A third of it has been taken off and laid into another farm—the remainder is as yet unappropriated. Now, there is a certain poor bard, who has two old parents, each of them upwards of eighty-four years of age; and that bard has no house nor home to shelter those poor parents in, or cheer the evening of their lives. A single line, from a certain very great and very beautiful lady, to a certain Mr. Riddell,† would insure that small pendicle to the bard at once. But she will grant no such thing! I appeal to your grace if she is not a very bad lady that? I am your Grace's ever obliged and grateful

JAMES HOGG,
THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD."

Though the Duke of Buccleuch would not dismiss a poor tenant, merely because Hogg called him "a mean fellow," he had told Scott that if he could find an unappropriated "pendicle," such as this letter referred to, he would most willingly bestow it on the Shepherd. It so happened, that when Scott paid his first visit at Bowhill after the death of the Duchess, the Ettrick Shepherd was mentioned: "My friend," said the Duke, "I must now consider this poor man's case as her legacy;" and to this feeling Hogg owed, very soon afterwards, his establishment at Altrive, on his favourite Braes of Yarrow.

As Scott passed through Edinburgh, on his return from his voyage, the negotiation as to the Lord of the Isles, which had been protracted through several months, was completed—Constable agreeing to give fifteen hundred guineas for one half of the copyright, while the other moiety was retained by the author. The sum mentioned had been offered by Constable at an early stage of the affair, but it was not until now accepted, in consequence of the earnest wish of Scott and Ballantyne to saddle the publisher of the new poem with part of their old "quire stock,"—which, however, Constable ultimately persisted in refusing. It may easily be believed, that John Ballantyne's management of money matters during Scott's six weeks' absence, had been such as to render it doubly convenient for the poet to have this matter settled on his arrival in Edinburgh—and it may also be supposed, that the progress of Waverley during that interval had tended to put the chief parties in good humour with each other.

In returning to Waverley, I must observe most distinctly, that nothing can be more unfounded than the statement which has of late years been frequently repeated in Memoirs of Scott's Life, that the sale of the first edition of this immortal Tale was slow. It appeared on the 7th of July, and the whole impression (1000 copies) had disappeared within five weeks; an occurrence then unprecedented in the case of an anonymous novel, put forth, at what is called among publishers, *the dead season*. A second edition, of 2000 copies, was at least projected by the 24th of the same month,*—that appeared before the end of August, and it, too, had gone off so rapidly, that when Scott passed through Edinburgh, on his way from the Hebrides, he found Constable eager to treat, on the same terms as before, for a third of 1000 copies. This third edition was published in October, and when a fourth of the like extent was called for in November, I find Scott writing to John Ballantyne:—"I suppose Constable won't quarrel with a work on which he has netted £612 in four months, with a certainty of making it £1000 before the year is out:" and, in fact, owing to the diminished expense of advertising, the profits of this fourth edition were to each party £440. To avoid recurring to these details, I may as well state at once that a fifth edition of 1000 copies appeared in January, 1815; a sixth of 1500 in June, 1816; a seventh of 2000 in October, 1817; an eighth of 2000 in April, 1821; that in the collective editions, prior to 1829, 11,000 copies were disposed of; and that the sale of the current edition, with notes, begun in 1829, has already reached 40,000 copies. Well might Constable regret that he had not ventured to offer £1000 for the whole copyright of Waverley!

I must now look back for a moment to the history of the composition.—The letter of September, 1810, was not the only piece of discouragement which Scott had received, during the progress of Waverley, from his first confidant. My good friend, James Ballantyne, in his death-bed *memorandum*, says,—"When Mr. Scott first questioned me as to my hopes of him as a novelist, it somehow or other did chance that they were not very high. He saw this, and said—'Well, I don't see why I should not succeed as well as other people. At all events, faint heart never won fair lady—'tis only trying.' When the first volume was completed, I still could not get myself to think much of the Waverley-Honour scenes; and in this I afterwards found that I sympathized with many. But, to my utter shame be it spoken, when I reached the exquisite descriptions of scenes and manners at Tully-Veolan, what did I do but pronounce them at once to be utterly vulgar! When the success of the work so entirely knocked me down as a man of taste, all that the good-natured author said, was—'Well, I really thought you were wrong about the Scotch. Why, Burns, by his

* Mr. Grieve was a man of cultivated mind and generous disposition, and a most kind and zealous friend of the Shepherd.

† Major Riddell, the Duke's Chamberlain at Branksome Castle.

* See letter to Mr. Morritt, *ante*, p. 200.

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poetry, had already attracted universal attention to every thing Scottish, and I confess I couldn't see why I should not be able to keep the flame alive, merely because I wrote Scotch in prose, and he in rhyme.' "—It is, I think, very agreeable to have this manly avowal to compare with the delicate allusion which Scott makes to the affair in his Preface to the Novel.

The only other friends originally intrusted with his secret, appear to have been Mr. Erskine and Mr. Morritt. I know not at what stage the former altered the opinion which he formed on seeing the tiny fragment of 1805. The latter did not, as we have seen, receive the book until it was completed; but he anticipated, before he closed the first volume, the station which public opinion would ultimately assign to Waverley. "How the story may continue," Mr. Morritt then wrote, "I am not able to divine; but, as far as I have read, pray let us thank you for the Castle of Tully-Veolan, and the delightful drinking-bout at Lucky Mac-Leary's, for the characters of the Laird of Balmawhapple and the Baron of Bradwardine: and no less for David Gellatly, whom I take to be a transcript of William Rose's motley follower, commonly yclept Caliban.* If the completion be equal to what we have just devoured, it deserves a place among our standard works far better than its modest appearance and anonymous titlepage will at first gain it in these days of prolific story-telling. Your manner of narrating is so different from the slipshod sauntering verbiage of common novels, and from the stiff, precise, and prim sententiousness of some of our female moralists, that I think it can't fail to strike any body who knows what style means; but amongst the gentle class, who swallow every blue-backed book in a circulating library for the sake of the story, I should fear half the knowledge of nature it contains, and all the real humour, may be thrown away. Sir Everard, Mrs. Rachael, and the Baron, are, I think, in the first rank of portraits for nature and character; and I could depone to their likeness in any court of taste. The ballad of St. Swithin, and scraps of *old songs*, were measures of danger, if you meant to continue your concealment; but, in truth, you wear your disguise something after the manner of Bottom, the weaver; and in spite of you the truth will soon peep out." And the next day he resumes,—"We have finished Waverley, and were I to tell you all my admiration, you would accuse me of complimenting. You have quite attained the point which your *postscript-preface* mentions as your object—the discrimination of Scottish character, which had hitherto been slurred over with clumsy national daubing." He adds, a week or later,—"After all, I need not much thank you for your confidence. How could you have hoped that I should not discover you? I had heard you tell half the anecdotes before—some turns you owe to myself; and no doubt most of your friends must have the same sort of thing to say."

Monk Lewis's letter on the subject is so short, that I must give it as it stands:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Abbotsford.

"The Albany, Aug. 17, 1814.

"My dear Scott,

"I return some books of yours which you lent me '*sixty years since*'—and I hope they will reach you safe. I write in great haste; and yet I must mention, that hearing 'Waverley' ascribed to you, I bought it, and read it with all impatience. I am now told that it is not yours, but William Erskine's. If this is so, pray tell him from me that I think it excellent in every respect, and that I believe every word of it. Ever yours,

M. G. Lewis."

Another friend, (and he had, I think, none more dear,) the late Margaret Maclean Clephane, of Torloisk, afterwards Marchioness of Northampton, writes thus from Kirkness, in Inverness-shire, on the 11th October:—

"In this place, I feel a sort of pleasure, not unallied to pain, from the many recollections that every venerable tree, and every sunny bank, and every honeysuckle bower occasions; and I have found something here that speaks to me in the voice of a valued friend—*Waverley*. The question that rises, it is perhaps improper to give utterance to. If so, let it pass as an exclamation.—Is it possible that Mr. Erskine can have written it? The poetry, I think, would prove a different descent in any court in Christendom. The turn of the phrases in many places is so peculiarly yours, that I fancy I hear your voice repeating them; and there wants but verse to make all Waverley an enchanting poem—varying, to be sure, from grave to gay, but with so deepening an interest, as to leave an impression on the mind that few—very few poems—could awaken. But, why did not the author allow me to be his Gaelic Dragoman? Oh, Mr. ——, whoever you are, you might have safely trusted—M. M. C."

There was one person with whom it would, of course, have been more than vain to affect any concealment. On the publication of the third edition, I find him writing thus to his brother Thomas, who had by this time gone to Canada as paymaster of the 70th regiment:—

"Dear Tom, a novel here, called Waverley, has had enormous success. I sent you a copy, and will send you another, with the Lord of the Isles, which will be out at Christmas. The success which it has had, with some other circumstances, has induced people

'To lay the bantling at a certain door,
Where laying store of faults, they'd fain heap more.'

You will guess for yourself how far such a report has credibility; but by no means give the weight of your opinion to the transatlantic public; for you must know there is also a counter-report, that *you* have written the said Waverley. Send me a novel intermixing your exuberant and natural humour, with any incidents and descriptions of scenery you may see—particularly with characters and traits of manners. I will give it all the cobbling that is necessary, and, if you do but exert yourself, I have not the least doubt it will be worth £500; and, to encourage you, you may, when you send the MS., draw on me for £100, at fifty days' sight—so that your labours will at any rate not be quite thrown away. You have more fun and descriptive talent than most people; and all that you want—*i. e.* the mere practice of composition—I can supply, or the devil's in it. Keep this matter a dead secret, and look knowing when Waverley is spoken of. If you are not Sir John Falstaff, you are as good a man as he, and may therefore face Colville of the Dale. You may believe I don't want to make you the author of a book you have never seen; but if people will, upon their own judgment, suppose so, and also on their own judgment give you £500 to try your hand on a novel, I don't see that you are a pin's-point the worse. Mind that your MS. attends the draft. I am perfectly serious and confident, that in two or three months you might clear the cobs. I beg my compliments to the hero who is afraid of Jeffrey's scalping-knife."

In truth, no one of Scott's intimate friends ever had, or could have had, the slightest doubt as to the parentage of Waverley; nor, although he abstained from communicating the fact formally to most of them, did he ever affect any real concealment in the case of such persons; nor, when any circumstance arose which rendered the withholding of direct confidence on the subject incompatible with perfect freedom of feeling on both sides, did he hesitate to make the avowal.

Nor do I believe that the mystification ever answered much purpose among literary men of eminence, beyond the circle of his personal acquaintance. But it would be difficult to suppose that he had ever wished that to be otherwise; it was sufficient for him to set the mob of readers at gaze, and above all, to escape the annoyance of having productions, actually known to be his, made the daily and hourly topics of discussion in his presence.

Mr. Jeffrey had known Scott from his youth—and, in reviewing Waverley, he was at no pains to conceal his conviction of its authorship. He quarrelled, as usual, with carelessness of style, and some inartificialities of plot, but rendered justice to the substantial merits of the work, in language which I shall not mar by abridgment. The Quarterly was far less favourable in its verdict. Indeed, the articles

* Of Mr. David Howes, Mr. Rose's faithful and affectionate attendant, here alluded to, the reader will find some notices hereafter; for when he appeared at Abbotsford, in my time, he seemed to be considered by Scott, not in the light of an ordinary servant, but as the friend of his master, and consequently as his own friend, too.

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on Waverley, and afterwards on Guy Mannering, which appeared in that journal, will bear the test of ultimate opinion as badly as any critical pieces which our time has produced. They are written in a captious, cavilling strain of quibble, which shows as complete blindness to the essential interest of the narrative, as the critic betrays on the subject of the Scottish dialogue, which forms its liveliest ornament, when he pronounces that to be "a dark dialogue of Anglified Erse." With this remarkable exception, the professional critics were, on the whole, not slow to confess their belief that, under the hackneyed name and trivial form, there had at last appeared a work of original creative genius, worthy of being placed by the side of the very few real masterpieces of prose fiction. Loftier romance was never blended with easier, quainter humour, by Cervantes himself. In his familiar delineations, he had combined the strength of Smollett with the native elegance and unaffected pathos of Goldsmith; in his darker scenes, he had revived that real tragedy which appeared to have left our stage with the age of Shakspeare; and elements of interest so diverse had been blended and interwoven with that nameless grace which, more surely, perhaps, than even the highest perfection in the command of any one strain of sentiment, marks the master-mind, cast in Nature's most felicitous mould.

Scott, with the consciousness avowed long afterwards in his General Preface, that he should never in all likelihood have thought of a Scotch novel, had he not read Maria Edgeworth's exquisite pieces of Irish character, desired James Ballantyne to send her a copy of Waverley on its first appearance, inscribed "from the author." Miss Edgeworth, whom Scott had never then seen, though some literary correspondence had passed between them, thanked the nameless novelist, under cover to Ballantyne, with the cordial generosity of kindred genius; and the following answer, not from Scott, but from Ballantyne—(who had kept a copy, now before me) —is not to be omitted:—

To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown, Ireland.

"Edinburgh, 11th November, 1814.

"Madam,

"I am desired by the Author of Waverley to acknowledge, in his name, the honour you have done him by your most flattering approbation of his work—a distinction which he receives as one of the highest that could be paid him, and which he would have been proud to have himself stated his sense of, only that being *impersonal*, he thought it more respectful to require my assistance, than to write an anonymous letter.

"There are very few who have had the opportunities that have been presented to me, of knowing how very elevated is the admiration entertained by the Author of Waverley for the genius of Miss Edgeworth. From the intercourse that took place betwixt us, while the work was going through my press, *I know* that the exquisite truth and power of your characters operated on his mind at once to excite and subdue it. He felt that the success of his book was to depend upon the characters, much more than upon the story; and he entertained so just and so high an opinion of your eminence in the management of both, as to have strong apprehensions of any comparison which might be instituted betwixt his picture and story and yours; besides, that there is a richness and *naiveté* in Irish character and humour, in which the Scotch are certainly defective, and which could hardly fail, as he thought, to render his delineations cold and tame by the contrast. 'If I could but hit Miss Edgeworth's wonderful power of vivifying all her persons, and making them live as *beings* in your mind, I should not be afraid:'—Often has the Author of Waverley used such language to me; and I knew that I gratified him most when I could say,—'Positively, that *is* equal to Miss Edgeworth.' You will thus judge, Madam, how deeply he must feel such praise as you have bestowed upon his efforts. I believe he himself thinks the Baron the best drawn character in his book—I mean the Bailie—honest Bailie Macwheeble. He protests it is the most *true*, though from many causes he did not expect it to be the most popular. It appears to me, that amongst so many splendid portraits, all drawn with such strength and truth, it is more easy to say which is your favourite than which is best. Mr. Henry Mackenzie agrees with you in your objection to the resemblance to Fielding. He says, you should never be forced to recollect, *maugre* all his internal evidence to the contrary, that such a work is a work of fiction, and all its fine creations but of air. The character of Rose is less finished than the author had at one period intended; but I believe the characters of humour grew upon his liking, to the prejudice, in some degree, of those of a more elevated and sentimental kind. Yet what can surpass Flora and her gallant brother?

"I am not authorized to say—but I will not resist my impulse to say to Miss Edgeworth, that another novel, descriptive of more ancient manners still, may be expected ere long from the Author of Waverley. But I request her to observe, that I say this in strict confidence—not certainly meaning to exclude from the knowledge of what will give them pleasure, her respectable family.

"Mr. Scott's poem, the Lord of the Isles, promises fully to equal the most admired of his productions. It is, I think, equally powerful, and certainly more uniformly polished and sustained. I have seen three Cantos. It will consist of six.

"I have the honour to be, Madam, with the utmost admiration and respect,

Your most obedient
and most humble servant,
JAMES BALLANTYNE."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

PROGRESS OF THE LORD OF THE ISLES—CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. JOSEPH TRAIN—RAPID COMPLETION OF THE LORD OF THE ISLES—"SIX WEEKS AT CHRISTMAS"—"REFRESHING THE MACHINE"—PUBLICATION OF THE POEM—AND OF GUY MANNERING—LETTERS TO MORRITT—TERRY—AND JOHN BALLANTYNE—ANECDOTES BY JAMES BALLANTYNE—VISIT TO LONDON—MEETING WITH LORD BYRON—DINNERS AT CARLTON HOUSE.—1814—1815.

By the 11th of November, then, the Lord of the Isles had made great progress, and Scott had also authorized Ballantyne to negotiate among the booksellers for the publication of a second novel. But before I go further into these transactions, I must introduce the circumstances of Scott's connexion with an able an amiable man, whose services were of high importance to him, at this time, and ever after, in the prosecution of his literary labours. Calling at Ballantyne's printing-office while Waverley was in the press, he happened to take up a proof-sheet of a volume, entitled, "POEMS, *with notes illustrative of traditions in Galloway and Ayrshire*, by Joseph Train, Supervisor of Excise at Newton Stewart." The sheet contained a ballad on the Ayrshire tradition, about a certain "Witch of Carrick," whose skill in the black art was, it seems, instrumental in the destruction of one of the scattered vessels of the Spanish Armada. The ballad begins:—

"Why gallops the palfrey with Lady Dunore?
Who drives away Turnberry's kine from the shore?
Go tell it in Carrick, and tell it in Kyle—
Although the proud Dons are now passing the Moil.*
On this magic clew,
That in fairyland grew,
Old Elcine de Aggart has taken in hand
To wind up their lives ere they win to our strand."

Scott immediately wrote to the author, begging to be included in his list of subscribers for a dozen copies, and suggesting, at the same time, a verbal alteration in one of the stanzas of this ballad. Mr. Train acknowledged his letter with gratitude, and the little book reached him just as he was about to embark in the Lighthouse yacht. He took it with him on his voyage, and on returning home again, wrote to Mr. Train, expressing the gratification he had received from several of his metrical pieces, but still more from his notes, and requesting him, as he seemed to be enthusiastic about traditions and legends, to communicate any matters of that order connected with Galloway, which he might not himself think of turning to account; "for," said Scott, "nothing interests me so much as local anecdotes; and, as the applications for charity usually conclude, the smallest donation will be thankfully accepted."

Mr. Train, in a little narrative with which he has favoured me, says, "that for some years before this

* The Mull of Cantyre.

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time he had been engaged, in alliance with a friend of his, Mr. Denniston, in collecting materials for a History of Galloway; they had circulated lists of queries among the clergy and parish schoolmasters, and had thus, and by their own personal researches, accumulated a great variety of the most excellent materials for that purpose;" but that, from the hour of his correspondence with Walter Scott, he "renounced every idea of authorship for himself," resolving, "that thenceforth his chief pursuit should be collecting whatever he thought would be most interesting to *him*;" and that Mr. Denniston was easily persuaded to acquiesce in the abandonment of their original design. "Upon receiving Mr. Scott's letter," (says Mr. Train,) "I became still more zealous in the pursuit of ancient lore, and being the first person who had attempted to collect old stories in that quarter, with any view to publication, I became so noted, that even beggars, in the hope of reward, came frequently from afar to Newton-Stewart, to recite old ballads and relate old stories to me." Ere long, Mr. Train visited Scott both at Edinburgh and at Abbotsford; a true affection continued ever afterwards to be maintained between them; and this generous ally was, as the prefaces to the Waverley Novels signify, one of the earliest confidants of that series of works, and certainly the most efficient of all the author's friends in furnishing him with materials for their composition. Nor did he confine himself to literary services; whatever portable object of antiquarian curiosity met his eye, this good man secured and treasured up with the same destination; and if ever a catalogue of the museum at Abbotsford shall appear, no single contributor, most assuredly, will fill so large a space in it as Mr. Train.

His first considerable communication, after he had formed the unselfish determination above-mentioned, consisted of a collection of anecdotes concerning the Galloway gypsies, and "a local story of an astrologer, who calling at a farm-house at the moment when the goodwife was in travail, had, it was said, predicted the future fortune of the child, almost in the words placed in the mouth of John M'Kinlay, in the Introduction to Guy Mannering." Scott told him, in reply, that the story of the astrologer reminded him of "one he had heard in his youth;" that is to say, as the Introduction explains, from this M'Kinlay; but Mr. Train has, since his friend's death, recovered a rude *Durham* ballad, which, in fact, contains a great deal more of the main fable of Guy Mannering, than either his own written, or M'Kinlay's oral edition of the *Gallovidian* anecdote, had conveyed; and—possessing, as I do, numberless evidences of the haste with which Scott drew up his beautiful Prefaces and Introductions of 1829, 1830, and 1831—I am strongly inclined to think, that he must in his boyhood have read the Durham Broadside or Chapbook itself—as well as heard the old serving-man's Scottish version of it.

However this may have been, Scott's answer to Mr. Train proceeded in these words:—

"I am now to solicit a favour, which I think your interest in Scottish antiquities will induce you readily to comply with. I am very desirous to have some account of the present state of *Turnberry Castle*—whether any vestiges of it remain—what is the appearance of the ground—the names of the neighbouring places—and, above all, what are the traditions of the place (if any) concerning its memorable surprise by Bruce, upon his return from the coast of Ireland, in the commencement of the brilliant part of his career. The purpose of this is to furnish some hints for notes to a work in which I am now engaged, and I need not say I will have great pleasure in mentioning the source from which I derive my information. I have only to add, with the modest importunity of a lazy correspondent, that the sooner you oblige me with an answer (if you can assist me on the subject) the greater will the obligation be on me, who am already your obliged humble servant, W. Scott."

The recurrence of the word *Turnberry*, in the ballad of Elcine de Aggart, had of course suggested this application, which was dated on the 7th of November. "I had often," says Mr. Train, "when a boy, climbed the brown hills, and traversed the shores of Carrick, but I could not sufficiently remember the exact places and distances as to which Mr. Scott inquired; so, immediately on receipt of his letter, I made a journey into Ayrshire to collect all the information I possibly could, and forwarded it to him on the 18th of the same month." Among the particulars thus communicated, was the local superstition, that on the anniversary of the night when Bruce landed at Turnberry from Arran, the same meteoric gleam which had attended his voyage reappeared, unfailingly, in the same quarter of the heavens. With this circumstance Scott was much struck. "Your information," he writes, on the 22d of November, "was particularly interesting and acceptable, especially that which relates to the supposed preternatural appearance of the fire, &c., which I hope to make some use of." What use he did make of it, if any reader has forgotten, will be seen by reference to stanzas 7—17 of the 5th Canto of the Poem; and the notes to the same Canto embody, with due acknowledgment, the more authentic results of Mr. Train's pilgrimage to Carrick.

I shall recur presently to this communication from Mr. Train; but must pause for a moment to introduce two letters, both written in the same week with Scott's request as to the localities of Turnberry. They both give us amusing sketches of his buoyant spirits at this period of gigantic exertion; and the first of them, which relates chiefly to Maturin's Tragedy of Bertram, shows how he could still continue to steal time for attention to the affairs of brother authors less energetic than himself.

To Daniel Terry, Esq.

"Abbotsford, November 10, 1814.

"My dear Terry,

"I should have long since answered your kind letter by our friend Young, but he would tell you of my departure with our trusty and well-beloved Erskine, on a sort of voyage to Nova Zembla. Since my return, I have fallen under the tyrannical dominion of a certain Lord of the Isles. Those lords were famous for oppression in the days of yore, and if I can judge by the posthumous despotism exercised over me, they have not improved by their demise. The *peine forte et dure* is, you know, nothing in comparison to being obliged to grind verses; and so devilish repulsive is my disposition, that I can never put my wheel into constant and regular motion, till Ballantyne's devil claps in his proofs, like the hot cinder which you Bath folks used to clap in beside an inexperienced turnspit, as a hint to be expeditious in his duty. O, long life to the old hermit of Prague, who never saw pen and ink—much happier in that negative circumstance, than in his alliance with the niece of King Gorboduc.

"To talk upon a blither subject, I wish you saw Abbotsford, which begins this season to look the whimsical, gay, odd cabin, that we had chalked out. I have been obliged to relinquish Stark's plan, which was greatly too expensive. So I have made the old farmhouse my *corps de logis*, with some outlying places for kitchen, laundry, and two spare bed-rooms, which run along the east wall of the farm-court, not without some picturesque effect. A perforated cross, the spoils of the old kirk of Galashiels, decorates an advanced door, and looks very well. This little sly bit of sacrilege has given our spare rooms the name of *the chapel*. I earnestly invite you to a *pot* there, which you will find as commodious for the purpose of a nap, as you ever experienced when, under the guidance of old Mrs. Smollett, you were led to St. George's, Edinburgh.

"I have been recommending to John Kemble (I dare say without any chance of success) to peruse a MS. Tragedy of Maturin's, author of Montorio: it is one of those things which will either succeed greatly or be damned gloriously, for its merits are marked, deep, and striking, and its faults of a nature obnoxious to ridicule. He has all our old friend Satan (none of your sneaking St. John Street devils, but the archfiend himself) brought on the stage bodily. I believe I have exorcised the foul fiend—for, though in reading he was a most terrible fellow, I feared for his reception in public. The last act is ill contrived. He piddles (so to speak) through a cullender, and divides the whole horrors of the catastrophe (though God wot there are enough of them) into a kind of drippy-droppity of four or five scenes, instead of inundating the audience with them at once in the finale, with a grand '*gardez l'eau*.' With all this, which I should say, had I written the thing myself, it is grand and powerful; the language most animated and poetical; and the characters sketched with a masterly enthusiasm. Many thanks for

Captain Richard Falconer.* To your kindness I owe the two books in the world I most longed to see, not so much for their intrinsic merit, as because they bring back with vivid associations the sentiments of my childhood—I might almost say infancy. Nothing ever disturbed my feelings more than when, sitting by the old oak table, my aunt, Lady Raeburn, used to read the lamentable catastrophe of the ship's departing without Captain Falconer, in consequence of the whole party making free with lime-punch on the eve of its being launched. This and Captain Bingfield,† I much wished to read once more, and I owe the possession of both to your kindness. Every body that I see talks highly of your steady interest with the public, wherewith, as I never doubted of it, I am pleased, but not surprised. We are just now leaving this for the winter: the children went yesterday. Tom Purdie, Finella, and the greyhounds, all in excellent health; the latter have not been hunted this season!!! Can add nothing more to excite your admiration. Mrs. Scott sends her kind compliments.

W. SCOTT."

The following, dated a day after, refers to some lines which Mr. Morritt had sent him from Worthing.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M. P., Worthing.

"Abbotsford, Nov. 11, 1817.

"My dear Morritt,

"I had your kind letter with the beautiful verses. May the muse meet you often on the verge of the sea, or among your own woods of Rokeby! May you have spirits to profit by her visits, (and that implies all good wishes for the continuance of Mrs. M.'s convalescence,) and may I often, by the fruits of your inspiration, have my share of pleasure! My muse is a Tyrannness, and not a Christian queen, and compels me to attend to longs and shorts, and I know not what, when, God wot, I had rather be planting evergreens by my new old fountain. You must know that, like the complaint of a fine young boy, who was complimented by a stranger on his being a smart fellow, 'I am sair halded down by *the bubbly jock*.' In other words, the turkey cock, at the head of a family of some forty or fifty infidels, lays waste all my shrubs. In vain I remonstrate with Charlotte upon these occasions; she is in league with the hen-wife, the natural protectress of these pirates; and I have only the inhuman consolation, that I may one day, like a cannibal, eat up my enemies. This is but dull fun, but what else have I to tell you about? It would be worse if, like Justice Shallow's Davy, I should consult you upon sowing down the headland with wheat. My literary tormentor is a certain Lord of the Isles, famed for his tyranny of yore, and not unjustly. I am bothering some tale of him I have had long by me into a sort of romance. I think you will like it: it is Scottified up to the teeth, and somehow I feel myself like the liberated chiefs of the Rolliad, 'who boast of their native philabeg restored.' I believe the frolics one can cut in this loose garb are all set down by you Sassenachs to the real agility of the wearer, and not the brave, free, and independent character of his clothing. It is, in sword, the real Highland fling, and no one is supposed able to dance it but a native. I always thought that epithet of Gallia *Braccata* implied subjugation, and was never surprised at Cæsar's easy conquests, considering that his Lablenus and all his merry men wore, as we say bottomless breeks. Ever yours,

W. S.".

* "The Voyages, Dangerous Adventures, and Imminent Escapes of Capt. Rich. Falconer. Containing the Laws, Customs, and Manners of the Indians in America; his shipwrecks; his marrying an Indian wife; his narrow escape from the Island of Dominico, &c. Interwirted with the Voyages and Adventures of Thomas Randal, of Cork, Pilot; with his Shipwreck in the Baltick, being the only man that escaped. His being taken by the Indians in Virginia, &c. And an account of his Death. *The Fourth Edition.* London. Printed for J. Marshall, at the Bible in Gracechurch Street. 1734."

On the fly-leaf is the following note, in Scott's handwriting:—"This book I read in early youth. I am ignorant whether it is altogether fictitious, and written upon De Foe's plan, which it greatly resembles, or whether it is only an exaggerated account of the adventures of some real person. It is very scarce, for, endeavouring to add it to the other favourites of my infancy, I think I looked for it ten years to no purpose, and at last owed it to the active kindness of Mr. Terry. Yet Richard Falconer's adventures seem to have passed through several editions."

† "The Travels and Adventures of William Bingfield, Esq., containing as surprising a Fluctuation of Circumstances, both by Sea and Land, as ever befel one man. With an Accurate Account of the Shape, Nature, and Properties of that most furious and amazing Animal, the Dog Bird. Printed from his own Manuscript. With a beautiful Frontispiece. 2 Vols. 12mo. London:—Printed for S. Withers, at the Seven Stars, in Fleet Street. 1733." On the fly-leaf of the first volume, Scott has written as follows:—"I read this scarce little *Voyage Imaginaire* when I was about ten years old, and long after sought for a copy without being able to find a person who would so much as acknowledge having heard of William Bingfield or his Dog-Birds, until the indefatigable kindness of my friend, Mr. Terry, of the Hay Market, made me master of this copy. I am therefore induced to think the book is of very rare occurrence."

Well might he describe himself as being hard at work with his Lord of the Isles. The date of Ballantyne's letter to Miss Edgeworth, (November 11,) in which he mentions the third Canto as completed; that of the communication from Mr. Train, (November 18,) on which so much of Canto fifth was grounded; and that of a note from Scott to Ballantyne (December 16, 1814,) announcing that he had sent the last stanza of the poem; these dates, taken together, afford conclusive evidence of the fiery rapidity with which the three last Cantos of the Lord of the Isles were composed.

He writes, on the 25th December, to Constable, that he "had corrected the last proofs, and was setting out for Abbotsford to refresh the machine." And in what did his refreshment of the machine consist? Besides having written within this year the greater part (almost I believe the whole)—of the Life of Swift—Waverley—and the Lord of the Isles—he had given two essays to the Encyclopædia Supplement, and published, with an Introduction and notes, one of the most curious pieces of family history even produced to the world, on which he laboured with more than usual zeal and diligence, from his warm affection for the noble representative of its author. This inimitable "*Memorie of the Somervilles*" came out in October; and it was speedily followed by an annotated reprint of the strange old treatise, entitled, "Rowland's letting off the humours of the blood in the head vein, 1611." He had also kept up his private correspondence on a scale which I believe never to have been exemplified in the case of any other person who wrote continually for the press—except, perhaps, Voltaire; and, to say nothing of strictly professional duties, he had, as a vast heap of documents now before me proves, superintended from day to day, except during his Hebridean voyage, the still perplexed concerns of the Ballantynes, with a watchful assiduity that might have done credit to the most diligent of tradesmen. The "machine" might truly require "refreshment."

It was, as has been seen, on the 7th of November that Scott acknowledged the receipt of that communication from Mr. Train which included the story of the Galloway astrologer. There can be no doubt that this story recalled to his mind, if not the Durham ballad, the similar but more detailed corruption of it which he had heard told by his father's servant, John M'Kinlay, in the days of George's Square, and Green Breeks, and which he has preserved in the introduction to Guy Mannering, as the groundwork of that tale. It has been shown that the three last Cantos of the Lord of the Isles were written between the 11th of November and the 25th of December; and it is therefore scarcely to be supposed that any part of this novel had been penned before he thus talked of "refreshing the machine." It is quite certain that when James Ballantyne wrote to Miss Edgeworth on the 11th November, he could not have seen one page of Guy Mannering, since he in that letter announces that the new novel of his nameless friend would depict manners *more ancient* than those of 1745. And yet it is equally certain that before the Lord of the Isles was *published*, which took place on the 18th January, 1815, two volumes of Guy Mannering had been not only written and copied by an amanuensis, but printed.

Scott thus writes to Morritt, in sending him his copy of the Lord of the Isles.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M. P. Worthing.

"Edinburgh, 19th January, 1815.

"My dear Morritt,

"I have been very foolishly putting off my writing until I should have time for a good long epistle: and it is astonishing what a number of trifles have interfered to prevent my commencing on a great scale. The last of these has been rather of an extraordinary kind, for your little friend Walter has chose to make himself the town-talk, by taking what seemed to be the small-pox, despite of vaccination in infancy, and inoculation with the variolous matter, thereafter, which last I resorted to by way of

making assurance double sure. The medical gentleman who attended him is of opinion that he *has* had the real small-pox, but it shall never be averred by me—for the catastrophe of Tom Thumb is enough to deter any thinking person from entering into a feud with the cows. Walter is quite well again, which was the principal matter I was interested in. We had very nearly been in a bad scrape, for I had fixed the Monday on which he sickened, to take him with me for the Christmas vacation to Abbotsford. It is probable that he would not have pleaded headach when there was such a party in view, especially as we were to shoot wildducks one day together at Cauldshiels Loch; and what the consequence of such a journey might have been, God alone knows.

"I am clear of the Lord of the Isles, and I trust you have your copy. It closes my poetic labours upon an extended scale: but I daresay I shall always be dabbling in rhyme until the *solve senescentem*. I have directed the copy to be sent to Portland Place. I want to shake myself free of Waverley, and accordingly have made a considerable exertion to finish an odd little tale within such time as will mistify the public. I trust—unless they suppose me to be Briareus. Two volumes are already printed, and the only persons in my confidence, W. Erskine, and Ballantyne, are of opinion that it is much more interesting than Waverley. It is a tale of private life, and only varied by the perilous exploits of smugglers and excisemen. The success of Waverley has given me a spare hundred or two, which I have resolved to spend in London this spring, bringing up Charlotte and Sophia with me. I do not forget my English friends—but I fear they will forget me, unless I show face now and then. My correspondence gradually drops, as must happen when people do not meet; and I long to see Ellis, Heber, Gifford, and one or two more. I do not include Mrs. Morritt and you, because we are much nearer neighbours, and within a whoop and a holla in comparison. I think we should come up by sea, if I were not a little afraid of Charlotte being startled by the March winds—for our vacation begins 12th March.

"You will have heard of poor Caberfae's death? What a pity it is he should have outlived his promising young representative. His state was truly pitiable—all his fine faculties lost in paralytic imbecility, and yet not so entirely so, but that he perceived his deprivation as in a glass darkly. Sometimes he was fretful and anxious because he did not see his son; sometimes he expostulated and complained that his boy had been allowed to die without his seeing him; and sometimes, in a less clouded state of intellect, he was sensible of, and lamented his loss in its full extent. These, indeed, are the 'fears of the brave and follies of the wise,' which sadden and humiliate the lingering hours of prolonged existence. Our friend Lady Hood will now be Caberfae herself. She has the spirit of a chieftainess in every drop of her blood, but there are few situations in which the cleverest women are so apt to be imposed upon as in the management of landed property, more especially of an Highland estate. I do fear the accomplishment of the prophecy, that when there should be a deaf Caberfae, the house was to fall.*

"I am delighted to find Mrs. Morritt is recovering health and strength—better walking on the beach at Worthing than on the *plainstanes* of Prince's Street, for the weather is very severe here indeed. I trust Mrs. M. will, in her milder climate, lay in such a stock of health and strength as may enable you to face the north in Autumn. I have got the nicest crib for you possible, just about twelve feet square, and in the harmonious vicinity of a piggery. You never saw so minute an establishment,—but it has all that we wish for, and all our friends will care about; and we long to see you there. Charlotte sends the kindest remembrances to Mrs. Morritt.

"As for politics, I have thought little about them lately; the high and exciting interest is so completely subsided, that the wine is upon the lees. As for America, we have so managed as to give her the appearance of triumph, and what is worse, encouragement to resume the war upon a more favourable opportunity. It was our business to have given them a fearful memento that the babe unborn should have remembered; but, having missed this opportunity, I believe that this country would submit with great reluctance to continue a war, for which there is really no specific object. As for the continental monarchs, there is no guessing what the folly of Kings and Ministers may do; but, God knows! would any of them look at home, enough is to be done which might strengthen and improve their dominions in a different manner than by mere extension. I trust Ministers will go out rather than be engaged in war again, upon any account. If France is wise, (I have no fear that any superfluous feeling of humanity will stand in the way,) she will send 10,000 of her most refractory troops to fight with Christophe and the yellow fever in the Island of St. Domingo, and then I presume they may sit down in quiet at home.

"But my sheet grows to an end, and so does the pleading of the learned counsel, who is thumping the poor bar as I write. He hems twice. Forward, sweet Orator Higgins!—at least till I sign myself, dear Morritt, yours most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

Guy Mannering was published on the 24th of February—that is, exactly two months after the Lord of the Isles was dismissed from the author's desk; and—making but a narrow allowance for the operations of the transcriber, printer, bookseller, &c., I think the dates I have gathered together, confirm the accuracy of what I have often heard Scott say, that his second novel "was the work of six weeks at a Christmas." Such was his recipe "for refreshing the machine."

I am sorry to have to add, that this seventy of labour, like the repetition of it which had such deplorable effects at a later period of his life, was the result of his anxiety to acquit himself of obligations arising out of his connexion with the commercial speculations of the Ballantynes. The approach of Christmas, 1814, brought with it the prospect of such a recurrence of difficulties about the discount of John's bills, as to render it absolutely necessary that Scott should either apply again for assistance to his private friends, or task his literary powers with some such extravagant effort as has now been recorded. The great object, which was still to get rid of the heavy stock that had been accumulated before the storm of May, 1813, at length determined the chief partner to break up, as soon as possible, the concern which his own sanguine rashness, and the gross irregularities of his mercurial lieutenant, had so lamentably perplexed; but Constable, having already enabled the firm to avoid public exposure more than once, was not now, any more than when he made his contract for the Lord of the Isles, disposed to burden himself with an additional load of Weber's "Beaumont and Fletcher," and other almost as unsaleable books. While they were still in hopes of overcoming his scruples, it happened that a worthy friend of Scott's, the late Mr. Charles Erskine, his sheriff-substitute in Selkirkshire, had immediate occasion for a sum of money which he had some time before advanced, at Scott's personal request, to the firm of John Ballantyne and Company; and, on receiving his application, Scott wrote as follows:

To Mr. John Ballantyne, Bookseller, Edinburgh.

"Abbotsford, Oct. 14, 1814.

"Dear John,

"Charles Erskine wishes his money, as he has made a purchase of land. This is a new perplexity—for paid he must be forthwith—as this advance was friendly and confidential. I do not at this moment see how it is to be raised, but believe I shall find means. In the mean while, it will be necessary to propitiate the Leviathans of Paternoster-row. My idea is, that you or James should write to them to the following effect:—That a novel is offered you by the Author of Waverley; that the author is desirous it should be out before Mr. Scott's poem, or as soon thereafter as possible; and that having resolved, as they are aware, to relinquish publishing, you only wish to avail yourselves of this offer to the extent of helping off some of your stock. I leave it to you to consider whether you should condescend on any particular work to offer them as bread to their butter—or on any particular amount—as

* Francis Lord Seaforth died 11th January, 1815, in his 60th year, having outlived four sons, all of high promise. His title died with him, and he was succeeded in his estates by his daughter, Lady Hood, now the Hon. Mrs. Stewart Mackenzie of Seaforth. See some verses on Lord Seaforth's death, in Scott's Poetical Works, vol. viii. p. 392, Edit. 1834. The Celtic designation of the chief of the clan MacKenzie, *Caberfae*, means *Staghead*, the bearing of the family. The prophecy which Scott alludes to in this letter, is also mentioned by Sir Humphry Davy in one of his Journals: (see his Life, by Dr. Davy, vol. ii., p. 72)—and it was, if the account be correct, a most extraordinary one, for it connected the fall of the house of Seaforth not only with the appearance of a deaf *Caberfae*, but with the contemporaneous appearance of various different physical misfortunes in several of the other great Highland chiefs; all of which are said—and were certainly believed both by Scott and Davy—to have actually occurred within the memory of the generation that has not yet passed away. Mr. Morritt can testify thus far—that he "heard the prophecy quoted in the Highlands at a time when Lord Seaforth had two sons both alive and in good health—so that it certainly was not made *après coup*."

1808. One thing must be provided, that Constable shares to the extent of the Scottish sale—they, however, managing. My reason for letting them have this scent of roast meat is, in case it should be necessary for us to apply to them to renew bills in December. Yours,

W. S."

Upon receiving this letter, John Ballantyne suggested to Scott that he should be allowed to offer, not only the new novel, but the next edition of Waverley, to Longman, Murray, or Blackwood—in the hope that the prospect of being let in to the profits of the already established favourite, would overcome effectually the hesitation of one or other of these houses about venturing on the encumbrance which Constable seemed to shrink from with such pertinacity; but upon this ingenious proposition Scott at once set his *veto*. "Dear John," he writes, (Oct. 17, 1814,) "your expedients are all wretched, as far as regards me. I never will give Constable, or any one, room to say I have broken my word with him in the slightest degree. If I lose every thing else, I will at least keep my honour unblemished; and I do hold myself bound in honour to offer him a Waverley, while he shall continue to comply with the conditions annexed. I intend the new novel to operate as something more permanent than a mere accommodation; and if I can but be permitted to do so, I will print it before it is sold to any one, and then propose, first, to Constable and Longman, second, to Murray and Blackwood, to take the whole at such a rate as will give them one half of the fair profits; granting acceptances which, upon an edition of 3000, which we shall be quite authorized to print, will amount to an immediate command of £1600; and to this we may couple the condition, that they must take £500 or £600 of the old stock. I own I am not solicitous to deal with Constable alone, nor am I at all bound to offer him the new novel on any terms; but he, knowing of the intention, may expect to be treated with at least, although it is possible we may not deal. However, if Murray and Blackwood were to come forward with any handsome proposal as to the stock, I should certainly have no objection to James's giving the pledge of the Author of W. for his next work. You are like the crane in the fable, when you boast of not having got any thing from the business; you may thank God that it did not bite your head off. Would to God I were at let-a-be for let-a-be;—but you have done your best, and so must I. Yours truly,

W. S."

Both Mr. Murray, and Longman's partner, Mr. Rees, were in Scotland about this time; and the former at least paid Scott a visit at Abbotsford. Of course, however, whatever propositions they may have made, were received by one or other of the Ballantynes. The result was that the house of Longman undertook Guy Mannering on the terms dictated by Scott—namely, granting bills for £1500, and relieving John Ballantyne and Company of stock to the extent of £500 more; and Constable's first information of the transaction was from Messrs. Longman themselves, when they, in compliance with Scott's wish as signified in the letter last quoted, offered him a share in the edition which they had purchased. With one or two exceptions, originating in circumstances nearly similar, the house of Constable published all the subsequent series of the Waverley Novels.

I must not, however, forget that *The Lord of the Isles* was published a month before *Guy Mannering*. The poem was received with an interest much heightened by the recent and growing success of the mysterious Waverley. Its appearance, so rapidly following that novel, and accompanied with the announcement of another prose tale, just about to be published, by the same hand, puzzled and confounded the mob of dulness.* The more sagacious few said to themselves—Scott is making one serious effort more in his old line, and by this it will be determined whether he does or does not altogether renounce that for his new one.

The Edinburgh Review on the Lord of the Isles begins with—

"Here is another genuine Lay of the Great Minstrel, with all his characteristic faults, beauties, and irregularities. The same glow of colouring—the same energy of narration—the same amplitude of description are conspicuous—with the same still more characteristic disdain of puny graces and small originalities—the true poetical hardihood, in the strength of which he urges on his Pegasus fearlessly through dense and rare, and aiming gallantly at the great ends of truth and effect, stoops but rarely to study the means by which they are to be attained; avails himself without scruple of common sentiments and common images wherever they seem fitted for his purpose; and is original by the very boldness of his borrowing, and impressive by his disregard of epigram and emphasis."

The conclusion of the contemporaneous article in the Quarterly Review, is as follows:

"The many beautiful passages which we have extracted from the poem, combined with the brief remarks subjoined to each canto, will sufficiently show, that although the Lord of the Isles is not likely to add very much to the reputation of Mr. Scott, yet this must be imputed rather to the greatness of his previous reputation, than to the absolute inferiority of the poem itself. Unfortunately, its merits are merely incidental, while its defects are mixed up with the very elements of the poem. But it is not in the power of Mr. Scott to write with tameness; be the subject what it will, (and he could not easily have chosen one more impracticable,) he impresses upon whatever scenes he describes so much movement and activity,—he infuses into his narrative such a flow of life, and, if we may so express ourselves, of animal spirits, that without satisfying the judgment, or moving the feelings, or elevating the mind, or even very greatly interesting the curiosity, he is able to seize upon, and, as it were, exhilarate the imagination of his readers, in a manner which is often truly unaccountable. This quality Mr. Scott possesses in an admirable degree; and supposing that he had no other object in view than to convince the world of the great poetical powers with which he is gifted, the poem before us would be quite sufficient for his purpose. But this is of very inferior importance to the public; what they want is a good poem, and, as experience has shown, this can only be constructed upon a solid foundation of taste, and judgment, and meditation."

These passage appear to me to condense the result of deliberate and candid reflection, and I have therefore quoted them. The most important remarks of either Essayist on the details of the plot and execution are annexed to the last edition of the poem; and show such an exact coincidence of judgment in two masters of their calling, as had not hitherto been exemplified in the professional criticism of his metrical romances. The defects which both point out, are, I presume, but too completely explained by the preceding statement of the rapidity with which this, the last of those great performances, had been thrown off; nor do I see that either Reviewer has failed to do sufficient justice to the beauties which redeem the imperfections of the Lord of the Isles—except as regards the whole character of Bruce, its real hero, and the picture of the Battle of Bannockburn, which, now that one can compare these works from something like the same point of view, does not appear to me in the slightest particular inferior to the Flodden of Marmion.

This poem is now, I believe, about as popular as Rokeby; but it has never reached the same station in general favour with the Lay, Marmion, or the Lady of the Lake. The first edition of 1800 copies in quarto, was, however, rapidly disposed of, and the separate editions in 8vo, which ensued before his poetical works were collected, amounted together to 12,250 copies. This, in the case of almost any other author, would have been splendid success; but as compared with what he had previously experienced, even in his Rokeby, and still more so, as compared with the enormous circulation at once attained by Lord Byron's early tales, which were then following each other in almost breathless succession, the falling off was decided. One evening, some days after the poem had been published, Scott requested James

* John Ballantyne put forth the following paragraph in the Scots Magazine of December, 1814:—
"Mr. Scott's poem of the Lord of the Isles will appear early in January. The Author of Waverley is about to amuse the public with a new novel, in three volumes, entitled Guy Mannering."

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Ballantyne to call on him, and the Printer found him alone in his library, working at the third volume of Guy Mannering. I give what follows, from Ballantyne's *Memoranda*:—"'Well, James,' he said, 'I have given you a week—what are people saying about the Lord of the Isles?' I hesitated a little after the fashion of Gil Blas, but he speedily brought the matter to a point. 'Come,' he said, 'speak out, my good fellow; what has put it into your head so be on so much ceremony *with me* all of a sudden? But, I see how it is, the result is given in one word —*Disappointment*.' My silence admitted his inference to the fullest extent. His countenance certainly did look rather blank for a few seconds; in truth, he had been wholly unprepared for the event; for it is a singular fact, that before the public, or rather the booksellers, had given their decision, he no more knew whether he had written well or ill, than whether a die thrown out of a box was to turn up a size or an ace. However, he instantly resumed his spirits, and expressed his wonder rather that his poetical popularity should have lasted so long, than that it should have now at last given way. At length, he said, with perfect cheerfulness, 'Well, well, James, so be it—but you know we must not droop, for we can't afford to give over. Since one line has failed, we must just stick to something else:' —and so he dismissed me, and resumed his novel."

Ballantyne concludes the anecdote in these words: —"He spoke thus, probably unaware of the undiscovered wonders then slumbering in his mind. Yet still he could not but have felt that the production of a few poems was nothing in comparison of what must be in reserve for him, for he was at this time scarcely more than forty.* An evening or two after, I called again on him, and found on the table a copy of the Giaour, which he seemed to have been reading. Having an enthusiastic young lady in my house, I asked him if I might carry the book home with me, but chancing to glance on the autograph blazon, '*To the Monarch of Parnassus, from one of his subjects*, instantly retracted my request, and said I had not observed Lord Byron's inscription before. 'What inscription?' said he; 'O yes, I had forgot, but inscription or no inscription, you are equally welcome.' I again took it up, and he continued, 'James, Byron hits the mark where I don't even pretend to fledge my arrow.' At this time he had never seen Byron, but I knew he meant soon to be in London, when, no doubt, the mighty consummation of the meeting of the two bards would be accomplished; and I ventured to say that he must be looking forward to it with some interest. His countenance became fixed, and he answered impressively, 'O, of course.' In a minute or two afterwards he rose from his chair, paced the room at a very rapid rate, which was his practice in certain moods of mind, then made a dead halt, and bursting into an extravaganza of laughter, 'James,' cried he, 'I'll tell you what Byron should say to me when we are about to accost each other—

'Art thou the man whom men famed Grizzle call?'

'And then how germane would be my answer—

"Art thou the still more famed Tom Thumb the small?"

"This," says the printer, "is a specimen of his peculiar humour: it kept him full of mirth for the rest of the evening."

The whole of the scene strikes me as equally and delightfully characteristic; I may add, hardly more so of Scott than of his printer; for Ballantyne, with all his profound worship of his friend and benefactor, was in truth, even more than he, an undoubting acquiescer in "the decision of the public, or rather of the booksellers;" and among the many absurdities into which his reverence for the popedom of Paternoster Row led him, I never could but consider, with special astonishment, the facility with which he seemed to have adopted the notion that the Byron of 1814 was really entitled to supplant Scott as a popular poet. Appreciating, as a man of his talents could hardly fail to do, the splendidly original glow and depth of Childe Harold, he always appeared to me quite blind to the fact that in the Giaour, in the Bride of Abydos, in Parisina, and, indeed, in all his early serious narratives, Byron owed at least half his success to clever, though perhaps unconscious imitation of Scott, and no trivial share of the rest to the lavish use of materials which Scott never employed, only because his genius was, from the beginning to the end of his career, under the guidance of high and chivalrous feelings of moral rectitude. All this Lord Byron himself seems to have felt most completely—as witness the whole sequence of his letters and diaries;† and I think I see many symptoms that both the decision of the million, and its index, "the decision of the booksellers," tend the same way at present; but my business is to record, as far as my means may permit, the growth and structure of one great mind, and the effect which it produced upon the actual witnesses of its manifestations, not to obtrude the conjectures of a partial individual as to what rank posterity may assign it amongst or above contemporary rivals.

The following letter was addressed to Lord Byron on the receipt of that copy of the Giaour to which Mr. Ballantyne's Memorandum refers: I believe the inscription to Scott first appeared on the ninth edition of the poem.

To the Right Hon. Lord Byron, London.

"My Lord,

"I have long owed you my best thanks for the uncommon pleasure I had in perusing your high-spirited Turkish fragment. But I should hardly have ventured to offer them, well-knowing how you must be overwhelmed by volunteer intrusions of approbation—(which always look as if the writer valued his opinion at fully more than it may be worth)—unless I had to-day learned that I have an apology for entering upon the subject, from your having so kindly sent me a copy of the poem. I did not receive it sooner, owing to my absence from Edinburgh, where it had been lying quietly at my house in Castle Street; so that I must have seemed ungrateful, when, in truth, I was only modest. The last offence may be forgiven, as not common in a lawyer and poet; the first is said to be equal to the crime of witchcraft, but many an act of my life has shown that I am no conjurer. If I were, however, ten times more modest than twenty years' attendance at the bar renders probable, your flattering inscription would cure me of so unfashionable a malady. I might, indeed, lately have had a legal title to as much supremacy on Parnassus as can be conferred by a sign-manual, for I had a very flattering offer of the laurel, but as I felt obliged, for a great many reasons, to decline it, I am altogether unconscious of any other title to sit high upon the forked hill.

"To return to the Giaour; I had lent my first edition, but the whole being imprinted in my memory, I had no difficulty in tracing the additions, which are great improvements, as I should have conjectured aforehand merely from their being additions. I hope your lordship intends to proceed with this fascinating style of composition. You have access to a stream of sentiments, imagery, and manners, which are so little known to us as to convey all the interest of novelty, yet so endeared to us by the early perusal of Eastern tales, that we are not embarrassed with utter ignorance upon the subject. Vathek, bating some passages, would have made a charming subject for a tale. The conclusion is truly grand. I would give a great deal to know the originals from which it was drawn. Excuse this hasty scrawl, and believe me, my lord, your lordship's much obliged, very humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

If January brought the writer of this letter "disappointment," there was abundant consolation in store for February, 1815. Guy Mannering was received with eager curiosity, and pronounced by acclamation fully worthy to share the honours of Waverley. The easy transparent flow of its style; the beautiful simplicity, and here and there the wild solemn mag-

* He was not forty-four till August, 1815.

† E. G. "If they want to depose Scott, I only wish they would not set me up as a competitor. I like the man—and admire his works to what Mr. Braham calls *Entusymusy*. All such stuff can only vex him, and do me no good."—BYRON, (1813,) vol. ii. p. 259.

"Scott is certainly the most wonderful writer of the day. His novels are a new literature in themselves, and his poetry as good as any—if not better—(only on an erroneous system)—and only ceased to be popular, because the vulgar learned were tired of hearing 'Aristides called the Just' and Scott the Best, and ostracised him."—BYRON, (1821,) vol. v. p. 72.

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nificence of its sketches of scenery; the rapid, ever-heightening interest of the narrative; the unaffected kindliness of feeling, the manly purity of thought, every where mingled with a gentle humour and a homely sagacity; but above all, the rich variety and skilful contrast of characters and manners, at once fresh in fiction and stamped with the unforgeable seal of truth and nature: these were charms that spoke to every heart and mind; and the few murmurs of pedantic criticism were lost in the voice of general delight, which never fails to welcome the invention that introduces to the sympathy of imagination a new group of immortal realities.

The earlier chapters of the present narrative have anticipated much of what I might, perhaps with better judgment, have reserved for this page. Taken together with the author's introduction and notes, those anecdotes of his days of youthful wandering must, however, have enabled the reader to trace almost as minutely as he could wish, the sources from which the novelist drew his materials, both of scenery and character; and Mr. Train's *Durham Garland*, which I insert at the close of this chapter, exhausts my information concerning the humble groundwork on which fancy reared this delicious romance.

The first edition was, like that of Waverley, in three little volumes, with a humility of paper and printing which the meanest novelist would now disdain to imitate; the price a guinea. The 2008 copies of which it consisted were sold the day after the publication; and within three months came a second and a third impression, making together 5000 copies more. The sale, before those novels began to be collected, had reached nearly 10,000; and since then (to say nothing of foreign reprints of the text, and myriads of translations into every tongue of Europe) the domestic sale has amounted to 50,000.

On the rising of the Court of Session in March, Mr. and Mrs. Scott went by sea to London with their eldest girl, whom, being yet too young for general society, they again deposited with Joanna Baillie at Hampstead, while they themselves resumed, for two months, their usual quarters at kind Miss Dumergue's, in Piccadilly. Six years had elapsed since Scott last appeared in the metropolis; and brilliant as his reception had then been, it was still more so on the present occasion. Scotland had been visited in the interim, chiefly from the interest excited by his writings, by crowds of the English nobility, most of whom had found introduction to his personal acquaintance—not a few had partaken of his hospitality at Ashestiel or Abbotsford. The generation among whom, I presume, a genius of this order feels his own influence with the proudest and sweetest confidence—on whose fresh minds and ears he has himself made the first indelible impressions—the generation with whose earliest romance of the heart and fancy his idea had been blended, was now grown to the full stature; the success of these recent novels, seen on every table, the subject of every conversation, had, with those who did not doubt their parentage, far more than counterweighed his declination, dubious after all, in the poetical balance; while the mystery that hung over them quickened the curiosity of the hesitating and conjecturing many—and the name on which ever and anon some new circumstance accumulated stronger suspicion, loomed larger through the haze in which he had thought fit to envelope it. Moreover, this was a period of high national pride and excitement.

> "O who, that shared them, ever shall forget
> The emotions of the spirit-rousing time,
> When breathless in the mart the couriers met,
> Early and late, at evening and at prime;
> When the loud cannon and the merry chime
> Hail'd news on news, as field on field was won,
> When Hope, long doubtful, soared at length sublime,
> And our glad eyes, awake as day begun,
> Watch'd Joy's broad banner rise, to meet the rising sun?
>
> "O these were hours, when thrilling joy repaid
> A long, long course of darkness, doubts, and fears!
> The heart-sick faintness of the hope delayed,
> The waste, the wo, the bloodshed, and the tears,
> That tracked with terror twenty rolling years—
> All was forgot in that blithe jubilee.
> Her downcast eye even pale Affliction rears,
> To sigh a thankful prayer, amid the glee
> That hailed the Despot's fall, and peace and liberty!"[a]

At such a time, Prince and people were well prepared to hail him who, more perhaps than any other master of the pen, had contributed to sustain the spirit of England throughout the struggle, which was as yet supposed to have been terminated on the field of Thoulouse. "Thank Heaven you are coming at last"—Joanna Baillie had written a month or two before—"Make up your mind to be stared at only a little less than the Czar of Muscovy, or old Blucher."

And now took place James Ballantyne's "mighty consummation of the meeting of the two bards." Scott's own account of it, in a letter to Mr. Moore, must be in the hands of most of my readers; yet I think it ought also to find a place here. "It was" (says Scott) "in the spring of 1815 that, chancing to be in London, I had the advantage of a personal introduction to Lord Byron. Report had prepared me to meet a man of peculiar habits and a quick temper, and I had some doubts whether we were likely to suit each other in society. I was most agreeably disappointed in this respect. I found Lord Byron in the highest degree courteous, and even kind. We met for an hour or two almost daily, in Mr. Murray's drawing-room, and found a great deal to say to each other. We also met frequently in parties and evening society, so that for about two months I had the advantage of a considerable intimacy with this distinguished individual. Our sentiments agreed a good deal, except upon the subject of religion and politics, upon neither of which I was inclined to believe that Lord Byron entertained very fixed opinions. I remember saying to him, that I really thought that if he lived a few years he would alter his sentiments. He answered, rather sharply, 'I suppose you are one of those who prophesy I shall turn Methodist.' I replied. 'No—I don't expect your conversion to be of such an ordinary kind. I would rather look to see you retreat upon the Catholic faith, and distinguish yourself by the austerity of your penances. The species of religion to which you must, or may, one day attach yourself, must exercise a strong power on the imagination.' He smiled gravely, and seemed to allow I might be right.

"On politics, he used sometimes to express a high strain of what is now called Liberalism; but it appeared to me that the pleasure it afforded him, as a vehicle for displaying his wit and satire against individuals in office, was at the bottom of this habit of thinking, rather than any real conviction of the political principles on which he talked. He was certainly proud of his rank and ancient family, and, in that respect, as much an aristocrat as was consistent with good sense and good breeding. Some disgusts, how adopted I know not, seemed to me to have given this peculiar (and, as it appeared to me) contradictory cast of mind; but, at heart, I would have termed Byron a patrician on principle.

"Lord Byron's reading did not seem to me to have been very extensive either in poetry or history. Having the advantage of him in that respect, and possessing a good competent share of such reading as is little read, I was sometimes able to put under his eye objects which had for him the interest of novelty. I remember particularly repeating to him the fine poem of Hardyknute, an imitation of the old Scottish ballad, with which he was so much affected, that some one who was in the same apartment asked me what I could possibly have been telling Byron by which he was so much agitated.

"I saw Byron for the last time in 1815, after I returned from France. He dined, or lunched, with me at Long's, in Bond Street. I never saw him so full of gayety and good-humour, to which the presence of Mr. Mathews, the comedian, added not a little. Poor Terry was also present. After one of the gayest parties I ever was present at, my fellow-

[a] Lord of the Isles, Canto vi. I.

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traveller, Mr. Scott of Gala, and I, set off for Scotland, and I never saw Lord Byron again. Several letters passed between us—one perhaps every half year. Like the old heroes in Homer, we exchanged gifts. I gave Byron a beautiful dagger mounted with gold, which had been the property of the redoubted Elfi Bey. But I was to play the part of Diomed in the Iliad, for Byron sent me, some time after, a large sepulchral vase of silver. It was full of dead men's bones, and had inscriptions on two sides of the base. One ran thus:—'The bones contained in this urn were found in certain ancient sepulchres within the long walls of Athens, in the month of February, 1811.' The other face bears the lines of Juvenal—'*Expende—quot libras in duce summo invenies?—Mors sola fatetur quantula sint hominum corpuscula.*'

"To these I have added a third inscription, in these words—'The gift of Lord Byron to Walter Scott.'* There was a letter with this vase, more valuable to me than the gift itself, from the kindness with which the donor expressed himself towards me. I left it naturally in the urn with the bones; but it is now missing. As the theft was not of a nature to be practised by a mere domestic, I am compelled to suspect the inhospitality of some individual of higher station, most gratuitously exercised certainly, since, after what I have here said, no one will probably choose to boast of possessing this literary curiosity.

"We had a good deal of laughing, I remember, on what the public might be supposed to thing, or say, concerning the gloomy and ominous nature of our mutual gifts.

"I think I can add little more to my recollections of Byron. He was often melancholy—almost gloomy. When I observed him in this humour, I used either to wait till it went off of its own accord, or till some natural and easy mode occurred of leading him into conversation, when the shadows almost always left his countenance, like the mist rising from a landscape. In conversation he was very animated.

"I met with him very frequently in society; our mutual acquaintances doing me the honour to think that he liked to meet with me. Some very agreeable parties I can recollect—particularly one at Sir George Beaumont's—where the amiable landlord had assembled some persons distinguished for talent. Of these I need only mention the late Sir Humphry Davy, whose talents for literature were as remarkable as his empire over science. Mr. Richard Sharpe and Mr. Rogers were also present.

"I think I also remarked in Byron's temper starts of suspicion, when he seemed to pause and consider whether there had not been a secret, and perhaps offensive, meaning in something casually said to him. In this case, I also judged it best to let his mind, like a troubled spring, work itself clear, which it did in a minute or two. I was considerably older, you will recollect, than my noble friend, and had no reason to fear his misconstruing my sentiments towards him, nor had I ever the slightest reason to doubt that they were kindly returned on his part. If I had occasion to be mortified by the display of genius which threw into the shade such pretensions as I was then supposed to possess, I might console myself that, in my own case, the materials of mental happiness had been mingled in a greater proportion.

"I rummage my brains in vain for what often rushes into my head unbidden—little traits and sayings which recall his looks, manner, tone, and gestures; and I have always continued to think that a crisis of life was arrived in which a new career of fame was opened to him, and that had he been permitted to start upon it, he would have obliterated the memory of such parts of his life as friends would wish to forget."

I have nothing to add to this interesting passage, except that Joanna Baillie's tragedy of The Family Legend being performed at one of the theatres during Scott's stay in town, Lord Byron accompanied the authoress and Mr. and Mrs. Scott to witness the representation; and that the vase with the Attic bones appears to have been sent to Scott very soon after his arrival in London, not, as Mr. Moore had gathered from the hasty diction of his "Reminiscences," at some "subsequent period of their acquaintance." This is sufficiently proved by the following note:—

To the Right Honourable Lord Byron, &c. &c.

"Piccadilly, Monday.

"My dear Lord,

"I am not a little ashamed of the value of the shrine in which your Lordship has enclosed the Attic relics; but were it yet more costly, the circumstance could not add value to it in my estimation, when considered as a pledge of your Lordship's regard and friendship. The principal pleasure which I have derived from my connexion with literature, has been the access which it has given me to those who are distinguished by talents and accomplishments; and, standing so high as your Lordship justly does in that rank, my satisfaction in making your acquaintance has been proportionally great. It is one of those wishes which, after having been long and earnestly entertained, I have found completely gratified upon becoming personally known to you; and I trust you will permit me to profit by it frequently, during my stay in town. I am, my dear Lord, your truly obliged and faithful

WALTER SCOTT."

It was also in the spring of 1815 that Scott had, for the first time, the honour of being presented to the Prince Regent. His Royal Highness had (as has been seen from a letter to Joanna Baillie, already quoted) signified, more than a year before this time, his wish that the poet should revisit London—and, on reading his Edinburgh Address in particular, he said to Mr. Dundas, that "Walter Scott's charming behaviour about the laureateship had made him doubly desirous of seeing him at Carlton-House." More lately, on receiving a copy of the Lord of the Isles, his Royal Highness's librarian had been commanded to write to him in these terms:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.

"Carlton House, January 19, 1815.

"My dear Sir,

"You are deservedly so great a favourite with the Prince Regent, that his librarian is not only directed to return you the thanks of his Royal Highness for your valuable present, but to inform you that the Prince Regent particularly wishes to see you whenever you come to London; and desires you will always, when you are there, come into his library whenever you please. Believe me always, with sincerity, one of your warmest admirers and most obliged friends,

J. S. CLARKE."

On hearing from Mr. Croker (then Secretary to the Admiralty) that Scott was to be in town by the middle of March, the Prince said—"Let me know when he comes, and I'll get up a snug little dinner that will suit him;" and, after he had been presented and graciously received at the *levee*, he was invited to dinner accordingly, through his excellent friend Mr. Adam, (now Lord Chief Commissioner of the Jury Court in Scotland,) who at that time held a confidential office in the royal household. The Regent had consulted with Mr. Adam also as to the composition of the party. "Let us have," said he, "just a few friends of his own—and the more Scotch the better;" and both the Chief Commissioner and Mr. Croker assure me that the party was the most interesting and agreeable one in their recollection. It comprised, I believe, the Duke of York—the late Duke of Gordon (then Marquess of Huntly)—the Marquess of Hertford (then Lord Yarmouth)—the Earl of Fife—and Scott's early friend Lord Melville. "The Prince and Scott," says Mr. Croker, "were the two most brilliant story-tellers in their several ways, that I have ever happened to meet; they were both aware of their *forte*, and both exerted them-

* Mr. Murray had, at the time of giving the vase, suggested to Lord Byron, that it would increase the value of the gift to add some such inscription; but the noble poet answered modestly:—

"April 9, 1815.

"Dear Murray—I have a great objection to your proposition about inscribing the vase—which is, that it would appear *ostentatious* on my part; and of course I must send it as it is, without any alteration. Yours ever, BYRON."

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selves that evening with delightful effect. On going home, I really could not decide which of them had shone the most. The Regent was enchanted with Scott, as Scott with him; and on all his subsequent visits to London, he was a frequent guest at the royal table." The Lord Chief Commissioner remembers that the Prince was particularly delighted with the poet's anecdotes of the old Scotch judges and lawyers, which his Royal Highness sometimes *capped* by ludicrous traits of certain ermined sages of his own acquaintance. Scott told, among others, a story, which he was fond of telling, of his old friend the Lord Justice-Clerk Braxfield; and the commentary of his Royal Highness on hearing it amused Scott, who often mentioned it afterwards. The anecdote is this:—Braxfield, whenever he went on a particular circuit, was in the habit of visiting a gentleman of good fortune in the neighbourhood of one of the assize towns, and staying at least one night, which, being both of them ardent chess-players, they usually concluded with their favourite game. One Spring circuit the battle was not decided at daybreak, so the Justice-Clerk said,—"Weel, Donald, I must e'en come back this gate in the harvest, and let the game lie ower for the present;" and back he came in October, but not to his old friend's hospitable house; for that gentleman had, in the interim, been apprehended on a capital charge, (of forgery,) and his name stood on the *Porteous Roll*, or list of those who were about to be tried under his former guest's auspices. The laird was indicted and tried accordingly, and the jury returned a verdict of *guilty*. Braxfield forthwith put on his cocked hat, (which answers to the black cap in England,) and pronounced the sentence of the law in the usual terms—"To be hanged by the neck until you be dead: and may the Lord have mercy upon your unhappy soul!" Having concluded this awful formula in his most sonorous cadence, Braxfield, dismounting his formidable beaver, gave a familiar nod to his unfortunate acquaintance, and said to him, in a sort of chuckling whisper—"And now, Donald, my man, I think I've checkmated you for ance." The Regent laughed heartily at this specimen of Macqueen's brutal humour; and "I'faith, Walter," said he, "this old big-wig seems to have taken things as coolly as my tyrannical self. Don't you remember Tom Moore's description of me at breakfast—

> 'The table spread with tea and toast,
> Death-warrants and the Morning Post!'"

Towards midnight, the Prince called for "a bumper, with all the honours, to the Author of Waverley," and looked significantly, as he was charging his own glass, to Scott. Scott seemed somewhat puzzled for a moment, but instantly recovering himself, and filling his glass to the brim, said, "Your royal highness looks as if you thought I had some claim to the honours of this toast. I have no such pretensions, but shall take good care that the real Simon Pure hears of the high compliment that has now been paid him." He then drank off his claret, and joined with a stentorian voice in the cheering, which the Prince himself timed. But before the company could resume their seats, his Royal Highness exclaimed, "Another of the same, if you please, to the Author of Marmion—and now, Walter, my man, I have checkmated you for *ance*." The second bumper was followed by cheers still more prolonged: and Scott then rose and returned thanks in a short address, which struck the Lord Chief Commissioner as "alike grave and graceful." This story has been circulated in a very perverted shape. I now give it on the authority of my venerated friend, who was—unlike, perhaps, some others of the company at that hour—able to hear accurately, and content to *see single*.—He adds, that having occasion, the day after, to call on the Duke of York, his Royal Highness said to him—"upon my word, Adam, my brother went rather too near the wind about Waverley—but nobody could have turned the thing more prettily than Walter Scott did—and upon the whole I never had better fun."

The Regent, as was his custom with those he most delighted to honour, uniformly addressed the poet, even at their first dinner, by his Christian name, "Walter."

Before he left town he again dined at Carlton House, when the party was a still smaller one than before, and the merriment, if possible, still more free. That nothing might be wanting, the Prince sung several capital songs in the course of that evening—as witness the lines in *Sultan Serendib*—

> "I love a Prince will bid the bottle pass,
> Exchanging with his subjects glance and glass,
> In fiting time can, gayest of the gay,
> Keep up the jest and mingle in the lay.
> Such Monarchs best our freeborn humour suit,
> But despots must be stately, stern, and mute."

Before he returned to Edinburgh, on the 22d of May, the Regent sent him a gold snuff-box, set in brilliants, with a medallion of his Royal Highness's head on the lid, "as a testimony" (writes Mr. Adam, in transmitting it) "of the high opinion his Royal Highness entertains of your genius and merit."

I transcribe what follows, from James Ballantyne's *Memoranda*:—"After Mr. Scott's first interview with his Sovereign, one or two intimate friends took the liberty of inquiring, what judgment he had formed of the Regent's talents? He declined giving any definite answer—but repeated, that 'he was the first gentleman he had seen—certainly the first *English* gentleman of his day;—there was something about him which, independently of the *prestige*, the "divinity," which hedges a King, marked him as standing entirely by himself; but as to his abilities, spoken of as distinct from his charming manners, how could any one form a fair judgment of that man who introduced whatever subject he chose, discussed it just as long as he chose, and dismissed it when he chose?'"

Ballantyne adds, "What I have now to say is more important, not only in itself, but as it will enable you to give a final contradiction to an injurious report which has been in circulation; viz. that the Regent asked him as to the authorship of Waverley, and received a distinct and solemn denial. I took the bold freedom of requesting to know *from him* whether his Royal Highness had questioned him on that subject, and what had been his answer. He glanced at me with a look of wild surprise, and said, 'What answer I might have made to such a question, put to me by my sovereign, perhaps I do not, or rather perhaps I do know; but I was never put to the test. He is far too well-bred a man ever to put so ill-bred a question.'"

The account I have already given of the convivial scene alluded to would probably have been sufficient; but it can do no harm to place Ballantyne's, or rather Scott's own testimony, also on record.

I ought not to have omitted, that during Scott's residence in London in April, 1815, he lost one of the English friends, to a meeting with whom he had looked forward with the highest pleasure. Mr. George Ellis died on the 15th of that month, at his seat of Sunninghill. This threw a cloud over what would otherwise have been a period of unmixed enjoyment. Mr. Canning penned the epitaph for that dearest of his friends; but he submitted it to Scott's consideration before it was engraved.

The ballad of the Durham Garland, referred to in a previous part of this chapter, was taken down from the recitation of Mrs. Young of Castle-Douglas, who, as her family informed Mr. Train, had long been in the habit of repeating it over to them once in the year, in order that it might not escape from her memory. No copy of the printed broadside has as yet been recovered.

THE DURHAM GARLAND.—IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.

1. A worthy Lord of birth and state,
Who did in Durham live of late—
But I will not declare his name,
By reason of his birth and fame.

2. This Lord he did a hunting go,
If you the truth of all would know,

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He had indeed a noble train,
Of Lords and Knights and Gentlemen.

3. This noble Lord he left the train
Of Lords and Knights and Gentlemen;
And hearing not the horn to blow,
He could not tell which way to go.

4. But he did wander to and fro,
Being weary, likewise full of wo:
At last Dame Fortune was so kind,
That he the Keeper's house did find.

5. He went and knocked at the door,
He thought it was so late an hour.
The Forester did let him in,
And kindly entertained him.

6. About the middle of the night,
When as the stars did shine most bright,
This Lord was in a sad surprise,
Being wakened by a fearful noise.

7. Then he did rise and call with speed,
To know the reason then, indeed,
Of all that shrieking and those cries,
Which did disturb his weary eyes.

8. "I'm sorry, Sir," the Keeper said—
"That you should be so much afraid;
But I do hope all will be well,
For my Wife she is in travail."

9. The noble Lord was learned and wise,
To know the Planets in the skies.
He saw one evil Planet reign,
He called the Forester again.

10. He gave him then to understand,
He'd have the Midwife hold her hand;
But he was answered by the maid,
"My Mistress is delivered."

11. At one o'clock that very morn,
A lovely infant there was born;
It was indeed a charming boy,
Which brought the man and wife much joy.

12. The Lord was generous, kind, and free,
And proffered Godfather to be;
The Goodman thanked him heartily
For his good-will and courtesy.

13. A Parson was sent for with speed,
For to baptize the child indeed;
And after that, as I heard say,
In mirth and joy they spent the day.

14. This Lord did noble presents give,
Which all the servants did receive.
They prayed God to enrich his store,
For they never had so much before.

15. And likewise to the child he gave
A present noble, rich, and brave;
It was a charming cabinet,
That was with pearls and jewels set.

16. And within it was a chain of gold,
Would dazzle eyes for to behold;
A richer gift, as I may say,
Was not beheld this many a day.

17. He charged his father faithfully,
That he himself would keep the key,
Until the child could write and read—
And then to give him it indeed;—

18. "Pray do not open it at all,
Whatever should on you befall;
For it may do my godson good,
If it be rightly understood."

19. This Lord did not declare his name,
Nor yet the place from whence he came,
But secretly he did depart,
And left them grieved to the heart.

Part II.

1. The second part I now unfold,
As true a story as e'er was told,
Concerning of a lovely child,
Who was obedient, sweet, and mild.

2. This child did take his learning so,
If you the truth of all would know,
At eleven years of age indeed,
Both Greek and Latin he could read.

3. Then thinking of his cabinet,
That was with pearls and jewels set,
He asked his father for the key,
Which he gave him right speedily;

4. And when he did the same unlock,
He was with great amazement struck
When he the riches did behold,
And likewise saw the chain of gold.

5. But searching farther he did find
A paper which disturbed his mind,
That was within the cabinet,
In Greek and Latin it was writ.

6. *My child, serve God that is on high,*
And pray to him incessantly;
Obey your parents, love your king,
That nothing may your conscience sting.

7. *At seven years hence your fate will be,*
You must be hanged upon a tree;
Then pray to God both night and day,
To let that hour pass away.

8. When he these woful lines did read,
He with a sigh did say indeed,
"If hanging be my destiny,
My parents shall not see me die;

9. "For I will wander to and fro,
I'll go where I no one do know;
But first I'll ask my parents' leave,
In hopes their blessing to receive."

10. Then locking up his cabinet
He went from his own chamber straight
Unto his only parents dear,
Beseeching them with many a tear

11. That they would grant what he would have—
"But first your blessing I do crave,
And beg you'll let me go away,
'Twill do me good another day."

12. . . . . .
. . . . . .

"And if I live I will return,
When seven years are past and gone."

13. Both man and wife did then reply,
"I fear, my son, that we shall die,
If we should yield to let you go,
Our aged hearts would break with wo."

14. But he entreated eagerly,
While they were forced to comply,
And give consent to let him go,
But where, alas! they did not know.

15. In the third part you soon shall find,
That fortune was to him most kind,
And after many dangers past,
He came to Durham at the last.

Part III.

1. He went by chance, as I heard say,
To that same house that very day,
In which his Godfather did dwell;
But mind what luck to him befel:

2. This child did crave a service there,
On which came out his Godfather,
And seeing him a pretty youth,
He took him for his Page in truth.

3. Then in this place he pleased so well,
That 'bove the rest he bore the bell;
This child so well the Lord did please,
He raised him higher by degrees.

4. He made him Butler sure indeed,
And then his Steward with all speed,
Which made the other servants spite,
And envy him both day and night.

5. He was never false unto his trust,
But proved ever true and just;
And to the Lord did hourly pray
To guide him still both night and day.

6. In this place, plainly it appears,
He lived the space of seven years;
His parents then he thought upon,
And of his promise to return.

7. Then humbly of his Lord did crave,
That he his free consent might have
To go and see his parents dear,
He had not seen this many a year.

8. Then having leave away he went,
Not dreaming of the false intent
That was contrived against him then
By wicked, false, deceitful men.

9. They had in his portmanteau put
This noble Lord's fine golden cup;
That when the Lord at dinner was,
The cup was missed as come to pass.

10. "Where can it be?" this Lord did say,
"We had it here but yesterday."—

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The Butler then replied with speed,
"If you will hear the truth indeed,

11. "Your darling Steward which is gone,
With feathered nest away is flown;
I'll warrant you he has that, and more
That doth belong unto your store."

12. "No," says this Lord, "that cannot be,
For I have tried his honesty;"
"Then," said the Cook, "my Lord, I die
Upon a tree full ten feet high."

13. Then hearing what these men did say,
He sent a messenger that day,
To take him with a hue and cry,
And bring him back immediately.

14. They searched his portmanteau with speed.
In which they found the cup indeed;
Then was he struck with sad surprise,
He could not well believe his eyes.

15. The assizes then were drawing nigh,
And he was tried and doomed to die;
And his injured innocence
Could nothing say in his defence.

16. But going to the gallows tree,
On which he thought to hanged be,
He clapped his hands upon his breast,
And thus in tears these words exprest:—

17. "Blind Fortune will be Fortune still
I see, let man do what he will;
For though this day I needs must die.
I am not guilty—no, not I."

18. This noble Lord was in amaze,
He stood and did with wonder gaze;
Then he spoke out with words so mild,—
"What mean you by that saying, Child?"

19. "Will that your Lordship," then said he,
"Grant one day's full reprieve for me,
A dismal story I'll relate,
Concerning of my wretched fate."

20. "Speak up, my child," this Lord did say,
"I say you shall not die this day—
And if I find you innocent,
I'll crown your days with sweet content."

21. He told him all his dangers past,
He had gone through from first to last,
He fetched the chain and cabinet,
Likewise the paper that was writ.

22. When that this noble Lord did see,
He ran to him most eagerly,
And in his arms did him embrace,
Repeating of those words in haste—

23. "My Child, my Child, how blessed am I,
Thou art innocent, and shall not die;
For I'm indeed thy Godfather,
And thou was't born in fair Yorkshire.

24. "I have indeed one daughter dear,
Which is indeed my only heir;
And I will give her unto thee,
And crown you with felicity."

25. So then the Butler and the Cook
('Twas them that stole the golden cup)
Confessed their faults immediately,
And for it died deservedly.

26. This goodly youth, as I do hear,
Thus raised, sent for his parents dear,
Who did rejoice their Child to see—
And so I end my Tragedy.

CHAPTER XXXV.

BATTLE OF WATERLOO—LETTER OF SIR CHARLES BELL—VISIT TO THE CONTINENT—WATERLOO—LETTERS FROM BRUSSELS AND PARIS—ANECDOTES OF SCOTT AT PARIS—THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON—THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER—BLUCHER—PLATOFF—PARTY AT ERMENONVILLE, ETC. — LONDON — PARTING WITH LORD BYRON—SCOTT'S BIRMINGHAM KNIFE—RETURN TO ABBOTSFORD—ANECDOTES BY MR. SKENE AND JAMES BALLANTYNE.—1815.

GOETHE expressed, I fancy, a very general sentiment, when he said, that to him the great charm and value of my friend's Life of Buonaparte seemed quite independent of the question of its accuracy as to small details; that he turned eagerly to the book, not to find dates sifted, and countermarches analyzed, but to contemplate what could not but be a true record of the broad impressions made on the mind of Scott by the marvellous revolutions of his own time in their progress. Feeling how justly in the main that work has preserved those impressions, though gracefully softened and sobered in the retrospect of peaceful and more advanced years, I the less regret that I have it not in my power to quote any letters of his touching the reappearance of Napoleon on the soil of France—the immortal march from Cannes—the reign of the Hundred Days, and the preparations for another struggle, which fixed the gaze of Europe in May, 1815.

That he should have been among the first civilians who hurried over to see the field of Waterloo, and hear English bugles sound about the walls of Paris, could have surprised none who knew the lively concern he had always taken in the military efforts of his countrymen, and the career of the illustrious captain, who had taught them to re-establish the renown of Agincourt and Blenheim,—

"Victor of Assaye's Eastern plain,
Victor of all the fields of Spain."

I had often heard him say, however, that his determination was, if not fixed, much quickened, by a letter of an old acquaintance of his, who had on the arrival of the news of the 18th of June, instantly repaired to Brussels, to tender his professional skill in aid of the overburdened medical staff of the conqueror's army. When, therefore, I found the letter in question preserved among Scott's papers, I perused it with a peculiar interest; and I now venture, with the writer's permission, to present it to the reader. It was addressed by Sir Charles Bell to his brother, an eminent barrister in Edinburgh, who transmitted it to Scott. "When I read it," said he, "it set me on fire." The marriage of Miss Maclean Clephane of Torloisk with the Earl of Compton, (now Marquis of Northampton,) which took place on the 24th of July, was in fact the only cause why he did not leave Scotland instantly; for that dear young friend had chosen Scott for her guardian, and on him accordingly devolved the chief care of the arrangements on this occasion. The extract sent to him by Mr. George Joseph Bell is as follows:—

"Brussels, 2d July, 1815.

"This country, the finest in the world, has been of late quite out of our minds. I did not, in any degree, anticipate the pleasure I should enjoy, the admiration forced from me, on coming into one of these antique towns, or in journeying through this rich garden. Can you recollect the time when there were gentlemen meeting at the Cross of Edinburgh, or those whom we thought such? They are all collected here. You see the very men, with their scraggy necks sticking out of the collars of their old-fashioned square-skirted coats—their canes—their cocked-hats; and, when they meet, the formal bow, the hat off to the ground, and the powder flying in the wind. I could divert you with the odd resemblances of the Scottish faces among the peasants, too—but I noted *them* at the time with my pencil, and I write to you only of things that you won't find in my pocket-book.

"I have just returned from seeing the French wounded received in their hospital; and could you see them laid out naked, or almost so—100 in a row of low beds on the ground—though wounded, exhausted, beaten, you would still conclude with me that these were men capable of marching unopposed from the west of Europe to the east of Asia. Strong, thickset, hardy veterans, brave spirits and unsubdued, as they cast their wild glance upon you,—their black eyes and brown cheeks finely contrasted with the fresh sheets,—you would much admire their capacity of adaptation. These fellows are brought from the field after lying many days on the grouud; many dying—many in the agony—many miserably racked with pain and spasms; and the next mimicks his fellow, and gives it a tune,—*Aha, vous chantez bien!* How they are wounded you will see in my notes. But I must not have you to lose the present impression on me of the formidable nature of these fellows as exemplars of the breed in France. It is a forced praise; for, from all I have seen, and all I have heard of their fierceness, cruelty, and bloodthirstiness, I cannot convey to you my detestation of this race of trained banditti. By what means they are to be kept in subjection until other habits come upon

them, I know not; but I am convinced that these men cannot be left to the bent of their propensities.

"This superb city is now ornamented with the finest groupes of armed men that the most romantic fancy could dream of. I was struck with the words of a friend—E.: 'I saw,' said he, '*that* man returning from the field on the 16th.'—(This was a Brunswicker of the Black or Death Hussars.)—'He was wounded, and had had his arm amputated on the field. He was among the first that came in. He rode straight and stark upon his horse—the bloody clouts about his stump—pale as death, but upright, with a stern, fixed expression of feature, as if loth to lose his revenge.' These troops are very remarkable in their fine military appearance; their dark and ominous dress sets off to advantage their strong, manly, northern features and white mustachios; and there is something more than commonly impressive about the whole effect.

"This is the second Sunday after the battle, and many are not yet dressed. There are 20,000 wounded in this town, besides those in the hospitals, and the many in the other towns;—only 3000 prisoners; 80,000, they say, killed and wounded on both sides."

I think it not wonderful that this extract should have set Scott's imagination effectually on fire; that he should have grasped at the idea of seeing probably the last shadows of real warfare that his own age would afford; or that some parts of the great surgeon's simple phraseology are reproduced, almost verbatim, in the first of "Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk." No sooner was Scott's purpose known, than some of his young neighbours in the country proposed to join his excursion; and, in company with three of them, namely, his kinsman, John Scott of Gala—Alexander Pringle, the younger, of Whytbank, (now M.P. for Selkirkshire)—and Robert Bruce, advocate, (now Sheriff of Argyle)—he left Edinburgh for the south, at 5 A. M., on the 27th of July.

They travelled by the stage-coach, and took the route of Hull and Lincoln to Cambridge; for *Gala* and *Whytbank*, being both members of that university, were anxious to seize this opportunity of revisiting it themselves, and showing its beautiful architecture to their friend. After this wish had been gratified, they proceeded to Harwich, and thence, on the 3d of August, took ship for Helvoetsluys.

"The weather was beautiful," says Gala, "so we all went outside the coach from Cambridge to Harwich. At starting, there was a general complaint of thirst, the consequence of some experiments overnight on the celebrated *bishop* of my *Alma Mater*; our friend, however, was in great glee, and never was a merrier *basket* than he made it all the morning. He had cautioned us, on leaving Edinburgh, never to *name names* in such situations, and our adherence to this rule was rewarded by some amusing incidents. For example, as we entered the town where we were to dine, a heavy-looking man, who was to stop there, took occasion to thank Scott for the pleasure his anecdotes had afforded him: 'You have a good memory, sir,' said he; 'mayhap, now, you sometimes write down what you hear or be a-reading about?' He answered very gravely, that he did occasionally put down a *few* notes, if any thing struck him particularly. In the afternoon, it happened that he sat on the box, while the rest of us were behind him. Here, by degrees, he became quite absorbed in his own reflections. He frequently repeated to himself, or *composed* perhaps, for a good while, and often smiled or raised his hand, seeming completely occupied and amused. His neighbour, a vastly scientific and rather grave professor, in a smooth drab Benjamin and broad-brimmed beaver, cast many a curious sidelong glance at him, evidently suspecting that all was not right with the upper story, but preserved perfect politeness. The poet was, however, discovered by the captain of the vessel in which we crossed the Channel, and a perilous passage it was, chiefly in consequence of the unceasing tumblers in which this worthy kept drinking his health."

Before leaving Edinburgh, Scott had settled in his mind the plan of "Paul's Letters;" for on that same day, his agent, John Ballantyne, addressed the following letter, from his marine villa near Newhaven—

To Messrs. Constable and Co.

"Trinity, 27th July, 1815.

"Dear Sirs,

"Mr. Scott left town to-day for the Continent. He proposes writing from thence a series of letters on a peculiar plan, varied in matter and style, and to different supposititious correspondents.

"The work is to form a demy 8vo volume of twenty-two sheets, to sell at 12s. It is to be begun immediately on his arrival in France, and to be published, if possible, the second week of September, when he proposes to return.

"We print 3000 of this, and I am empowered to offer you one third of the edition, Messrs. Longman and Co. and Mr. Murray having each the same share: the terms, twelve months' acceptance for paper and print, and half profits at six months, granted now, as under. The over copies will pay the charge for advertising. I am, &c.

JOHN BALLANTYNE.

"Charge.						
22 sheets printing,—	£3	15	0		£32	10	0
145 reams, demy,—	1	10	0		217	10	0
					£300	0	0
3000 at 8s.	£1200	0	0				
Cost,	300	0	0				

£900 0 0 Profit—one half is £450."

Before Scott reached Harwich, he knew that this offer had been accepted without hesitation; and thenceforth, accordingly, he threw his daily letters to his wife into the form of communications meant for an imaginary group, consisting of a spinster sister, a statistical laird, a rural clergyman of the Presbyterian Kirk, and a brother, a veteran officer on half-pay. The rank of this last personage corresponded, however, exactly with that of his own elder brother, John Scott, who also, like the Major of the book, had served in the Duke of York's unfortunate campaign of 1797; the sister is only a slender disguise for his aunt Christian Rutherford, already often mentioned; Lord Somerville, long President of the Board of Agriculture, was Paul's laird; and the shrewd and unbigoted Dr. Douglas of Galashiels was his "minister of the gospel." These epistles, after having been devoured by the little circle at Abbotsford, were transmitted to Major John Scott, his mother, and Miss Rutherford, in Edinburgh; from their hands they passed to those of James Ballantyne and Mr. Erskine, both of whom assured me that the copy ultimately sent to the press consisted, in great part, of the identical sheets that had successively reached Melrose through the post. The rest had of course been, as Ballantyne expresses it, "somewhat cobbled;" but, on the whole, Paul's Letters are to be considered as a true and faithful journal of this expedition; insomuch, that I might perhaps content myself, in this place, with a simple reference to that delightful volume. He found time, however, to write letters during his absence from Britain, to some others of his friends; and a specimen or two of these may interest the reader. I have also gathered, from the companions of the journey, a few more particulars, which Scott's modesty withheld him from recording; and some trivial circumstances which occur to me, from recollection of his own conversation, may also be acceptable.

But I hope that, if the reader has not perused Paul's Letters recently, he will refresh his memory, before he proceeds further, by bestowing an hour on that genuine fragment of the author's autobiography. He is now, unless he had the advantage of Scott's personal familiarity, much better acquainted with the man than he could have been before he took up this compilation of his private correspondence—and especially before he perused the full diary of the lighthouse yacht in 1814; and a thousand little turns and circumstances, which may have, when he originally read the book, passed lightly before his eye, will now, I venture to say, possess a warm and vivid interest, as inimitably characteristic of a departed friend. The kindest of husbands and fathers never portrayed himself with more unaffected truth than in this vain effort, if such he really fancied he was making, to sustain the cha-

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master of "a cross old bachelor." The whole man, just as he was, breathes in every line, with all his compassionate and benevolent sympathy of heart, all his sharpness of observation, and sober shrewdness of reflection; all his enthusiasm for nature, for country life, for simple manners and simple pleasures, mixed up with an equally glowing enthusiasm, at which many may smile, for the tiniest relics of feudal antiquity—and last, not least, a pulse of physical rapture for the "circumstance of war," which bears witness to the blood of *Boltfoot* and *Fire the Brae*.

At Brussels, Scott found the small English garrison left there in command of Major-General Sir Frederick Adam, the son of his highly valued friend, the present Lord Chief Commissioner of the Jury Court in Scotland. Sir Frederick had been wounded at Waterloo, and could not as yet mount on horseback; but one of his aides-de-camp, Captain Campbell, escorted Scott and his party to the field of battle, on which occasion they were also accompanied by another old acquaintance of his, Major Pryse Gordon, who being then on half-pay, happened to be domesticated with his family at Brussels. Major Gordon has since published two lively volumes of "Personal Memoirs;" and *Gala* bears witness to the fidelity of certain reminiscences of Scott at Brussels and Waterloo, which occupy one of the chapters of this work. I shall, therefore, extract the passage.

"Sir Walter Scott accepted my services to conduct him to Waterloo: the General's aide-de-camp was also of the party. He made no secret of his having undertaken to write something on the battle; and perhaps he took the greater interest on this account in every thing that he saw. Besides, he had never seen the field of such a conflict; and never having been before on the Continent, it was all new to his comprehensive mind. The day was beautiful; and I had the precaution to send out a couple of saddle-horses, that he might not be fatigued in walking over the fields, which had been recently ploughed up. In our rounds we fell in with Monsieur de Costar, with whom he got into conversation. This man had attracted so much notice by his pretended story of being about the person of Napoleon, that he was of too much importance to be passed by: I did not, indeed, know as much of this fellow's charlatanism at that time as afterwards, when I saw him confronted with a blacksmith of La Belle Alliance, who had been his companion in a hiding-place ten miles from the field during the whole day; a fact which he could not deny. But he had got up a tale so plausible and so profitable, that he could afford to bestow hush-money on the companion of his flight, so that the imposition was but little known; and strangers continued to be gulled. He had picked up a good deal of information about the positions and details of the battle; and being naturally a sagacious Wallon, and speaking French pretty fluently, he became the favourite *cicerone*, and every lie he told was taken for gospel. Year after year, until his death in 1821, he continued his popularity, and raised the price of his rounds from a couple of francs to five; besides as much for the hire of a horse, his own property; for he pretended that the fatigue of walking so many hours was beyond his powers. It has been said that in this way he realized every summer a couple of hundred Napoleons.

"When Sir Walter had examined every point of defence and attack, we adjourned to the 'Original Duke of Wellington' at Waterloo, to lunch after the fatigues of the ride. Here he had a crowded levee of peasants, and collected a great many trophies, from cuirasses down to buttons and bullets. He picked up himself many little relics, and was fortunate in purchasing a grand cross of the legion of honour. But the most precious memorial was presented to him by my wife—a French soldier's book, well stained with blood, and containing some songs popular in the French army, which he found so interesting that he introduced versions of them in his 'Paul's Letters;' of which he did me the honour to send me a copy, with a letter, saying, 'that he considered my wife's gift as the most valuable of all his Waterloo relics.'

"On our return from the field, he kindly passed the evening with us, and a few friends whom we invited to meet him. He charmed us with his delightful conversation, and was in great spirits from the agreeable day he had passed; and with great good-humour promised to write a stanza in my wife's album. On the following morning he fulfilled his promise by contributing some beautiful verses on Hougoumont. I put him into my little library to prevent interruption, as a great many persons had paraded in the *Parc* opposite my window to get a peep of the celebrated man, many having dogged him from his hotel.

"Brussels affords but little worthy of the notice of such a traveller as the Author of 'Waverley;' but he greatly admired the splendid tower of the Maison de Ville, and the ancient sculpture and style of architecture of the buildings which surround the Grand Place.

"He told us, with great humour, a laughable incident which had occurred to him at Antwerp. The morning after his arrival at that city from Holland, he started at an early hour to visit the tomb of Rubens in the Church of St. Jacques, before his party were up. After wandering about for some time, without finding the object he had in view, he determined to make inquiry, and observing a person stalking about, he addressed him in his best French; but the stranger, pulling off his hat, very respectfully replied in the pure Highland accent, 'I'm vary sorry, Sir, but I canna speak ony thing besides English.' —'This is very unlucky indeed, Donald,' said Sir Walter, 'but we must help one another; for to tell you the truth, I'm not good at any other tongue but the English, or rather, the Scotch.'—'Oh, sir, maybe,' replied the Highlander, 'you are a countryman, and ken my maister Captain Cameron of the 79th, and could tell me whare he lodges. I'm just cum in, sir, frae a place they ca' *Machlin*,* and ha' forgotten the name of the captain's quarters; it was something like the *Laaborer*.'—'I can, I think, help you with this, my friend,' rejoined Sir Walter. 'There is an inn just opposite to you, (pointing to the *Hotel du Grand Laboureur*;) I dare say that will be the captain's quarters;' and it was so. I cannot do justice to the humour with which Sir Walter recounted this dialogue."†

The following is the letter which Scott addressed to the Duke of Buccleuch, immediately after seeing the field of Waterloo; and it may amuse the reader to compare it with Major Gordon's chapter, and with the writer's own fuller, and of course, "cobbled" detail, in the pages of Paul:—

To his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c.

"My dear Lord Duke,

"I promised to let you hear of my wanderings, however unimportant; and have now the pleasure of informing your Grace, that I am at this present time an inhabitant of the Premier Hotel de Cambrai, after having been about a week upon the Continent. We landed at Helvoet, and proceeded to Brussels, by Bergen-op-Zoom and Antwerp, both of which are very strongly fortified. The ravages of war are little remarked in a country so rich by nature; but every thing seems at present stationary, or rather retrograde, where capital is required. The chateaux are deserted, and going to decay; no new houses are built, and those of older date are passing rapidly into the possession of a class inferior to those for whom we must suppose them to have been built. Even the old gentlewoman of Babylon has lost much of her splendour, and her robes and pomp are of a description far subordinate to the costume of her more magnificent days. The dresses of the priests were worn and shabby, both at Antwerp and Brussels, and reminded me of the decayed wardrobe of a bankrupt theatre: yet, though the gentry and priesthood have suffered, the eternal bounty of nature has protected the lower ranks against much distress. The unexampled fertility of the soil gives them all, and more than they want; and could they but sell the grain which they raise in the Netherlands, nothing else would be wanting to render them the richest people (common people, that is to say) in the world.

"On Wednesday last, I rode over the field of Waterloo, now for ever consecrated to immortality. The more ghastly tokens of the carnage are now removed, the bodies both of men and horses being either burned or buried; but all the ground is still torn with the shot and shells, and covered with cartridges, old hats, and shoes, and various relics of the fray which the peasants have not thought worth removing. Besides, at Waterloo and all the hamlets in the vicinage, there is a mart established for cuirasses; for the eagles worn by the imperial guard on their caps; for casques, swords, carabines, and similar articles. I have bought two handsome cuirasses, and intend them, one for Bowhill, and one for Abbotsford, if I can get them safe over, which Major Pryse Gordon has promised to manage for me. I have also, for your Grace, one of the little memorandum-books, which I picked up on the

* Mechlin—the Highlander gave it the familiar pronunciation of a Scotch village, Mauchline, celebrated in many of Burns's poems.

† See Major Gordon's Personal Memoirs, (1830,) vol. ii. pp. 325-338.

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field, in which every French soldier was obliged to enter his receipts and expenditure, his services, and even his punishments. The field was covered with fragments of these records. I also got a good MS. collection of French songs, probably the work of some young officer, and a croix of the Legion of Honour. I enclose, under another cover, a sketch of the battle, made at Brussels. It is not, I understand, strictly accurate; but sufficiently so to give a good notion of what took place. In fact, it would require twenty separate plans to give an idea of the battle at its various stages. The front, upon which the armies engaged, does not exceed a long mile. Our line, indeed, originally extended half a-mile farther towards the village of Brain-la-Leude; but as the French indicated no disposition to attack in that direction, the troops which occupied this space were gradually concentrated by Lord Wellington, and made to advance till they had reached Hougoumont—a sort of chateau, with a garden and wood attached to it, which was powerfully and effectually maintained by the Guards during the action. This place was particularly interesting. It was a quiet-looking gentleman's house, which had been burnt by the French shells. The defenders, burnt out of the house itself, betook themselves to the little garden, where, breaking loop-holes through the brick walls, they kept up a most destructive fire on the assailants, who had possessed themselves of a little wood which surrounds the villa on one side. In this spot vast numbers had fallen; and, being hastily buried, the smell is most offensive at this moment. Indeed, I felt the same annoyance in many parts of the field; and, did I live near the spot, I should be anxious about the diseases which this steaming carnage might occasion. The rest of the ground, excepting this chateau, and a farmhouse called La Hay Sainte, early taken, and long held, by the French, because it was too close under the brow of the descent on which our artillery was placed to admit of the pieces being depressed so as to play into it,—the rest of the ground, I say, is quite open, and lies between two ridges, one of which (Mont St. Jean) was constantly occupied by the English; the other, upon which is the farm of La Belle Alliance, was the position of the French. The slopes between are gentle and varied; the ground every where practicable for cavalry, as was well experienced on that memorable day. The cuirassiers, despite their arms of proof, were quite inferior to our heavy dragoons. The meeting of the two bodies occasioned a noise, not unaptly compared to the tinkering and hammering of a smith's shop Generally the cuirassiers came on stooping their heads very low, and giving point; the British frequently struck away their casques while they were in this position, and then laid at the bare head. Officers and soldiers all fought, hand to hand, without distinction; and many of the former owed their life to dexterity at their weapon, and personal strength of body. Shaw, the milling Life-Guards' man, whom your Grace may remember among the champions of The Fancy, maintained the honour of the fist, and killed or disabled upwards of twenty Frenchmen with his single arm, until he was killed by the assault of numbers. At one place, where there is a precipitous sand or gravel pit, the heavy English cavalry drove many of the cuirassiers over pell-mell, and followed over themselves like fox-hunters. The conduct of the infantry and artillery was equally, or, if possible, more distinguished, and it was all fully necessary; for, besides that our army was much outnumbered, a great part of the sum-total were foreigners. Of these, the Brunswickers and Hanoverians behaved very well; the Belgians but sorrily enough. On one occasion, when a Belgic regiment fairly ran off, Lord Wellington rode up to them, and said, 'My lads, you much be a little blown; come, do take your breath for a moment, and then we'll go back, and try if we can do a little better;' and he actually carried them back to the charge. He was, indeed, upon that day, every where, and the soul of every thing; nor could less than his personal endeavours have supported the spirits of the men through a contest so long, so desperate, and so unequal. At his last attack, Buonaparte brought up 15,000 of his Guard, who had never drawn trigger during the day. It was upon their failure that his hopes abandoned him.

"I spoke long with a shrewd Flemish peasant, called John De Costar, whom he had seized upon as his guide, and who remained beside him the whole day, and afterwards accompanied him in his flight as far as Charleroi. Your Grace may be sure that I interrogated Mynheer very closely about what he heard and saw. He guided me to the spot where Buonaparte remained during the latter part of the action. It was in the highway from Brussels to Charleroi, where it runs between two high banks, on each of which was a French battery. He was pretty well sheltered from the English fire; and, though many bullets flew over his head, neither he nor any of his suite were touched. His other stations, during that day, were still more remote from all danger. The story of his having an observatory erected for him is a mistake. There is such a thing, and he repaired to it during the action; but it was built or erected some months before, for the purpose of a trigonometrical survey of the country, by the King of the Netherlands. Bony's last position was nearly fronting a tree, where the Duke of Wellington was stationed; there was not more than a quarter of a mile between them; but Bony was well sheltered, and the Duke so much exposed, that the tree is barked in several places by the cannon-balls levelled at him. As for Bony, De Costar says he was very cool during the whole day, and even gay. As the cannon-balls flew over them, De Costar ducked; at which the Emperor laughed, and told him they would hit him all the same. At length, about the time he made his grand and last effort, the fire of the Prussian artillery was heard upon his right, and the heads of their columns became visible pressing out of the woods. Aid-de-camp after aid-de-camp came with the tidings of their advance, to which Bony only replied, *attendez, attendez un instant*, until he saw his troops, *fantassins et cavaliers*, return in disorder from the attack. He then observed hastily to a general beside him, *je crois qu'ils sont meles*. The person to whom he spoke, hastily raised the spyglass to his eye; but Bony, whom the first glance had satisfied of their total discomfiture, bent his face on the ground, and shook his head twice, his complexion being then as pale as death. The general then said something, to which Buonaparte answered, *c'est trop tard—sauvons nous*. Just at that moment, the allied troops, cavalry and infantry, appeared in full advance on all hands; and the Prussians operating upon the right flank of the French, were rapidly gaining their rear. Bony, therefore, was compelled to abandon the high-road, which, besides, was choked with dead, with baggage, and with cannon; and, gaining the open country, kept at full gallop, until he gained, like Johnnie Cope, the van of the flying army. The marshals followed his example; and it was the most complete *sauve qui peut* that can well be imagined. Nevertheless, the prisoners who were brought into Brussels maintained their national impudence, and boldly avowed their intention of sacking the city with every sort of severity. At the same time they had friends there. One man of rank and wealth went over to Bony during the action, and I saw his hotel converted into an hospital for wounded soldiers. It occupied one half of one of the sides of the Place Royale, a noble square, which your Grace has probably seen. But, in general, the inhabitants of Brussels were very differently disposed; and their benevolence to our poor wounded fellows was unbounded. The difficulty was to prevent them from killing their guests with kindness, by giving them butcher's meat and wine during their fever. As I cannot put my letter into post until we get to Paris, I shall continue it as we get along.

"*12th August, Roye, in Picardy.*—I imagine your Grace about this time to be tolerably well fagged with a hard day on the moors. If the weather has been as propitious as with us, it must be delightful. The country through which we have travelled is most uncommonly fertile, and skirted with beautiful woods; but its present political situation is so very uncommon, that I would give the world your Grace had come over for a fortnight. France may be considered as neither at peace or war. Valenciennes, for example, is in a state of blockade; we passed through the posts of the allies, all in the utmost state of vigilance, with patroles of cavalry, and videttes of infantry, up to the very gates, and two or three batteries were manned and mounted. The French troops were equally vigilant at the gates, yet made no objection to our passing through the town. Most of them had the white cockade, but looked very sulky, and were in obvious disorder and confusion. They had not yet made their terms with the King, nor accepted a commander appointed by him; but as they obviously feel their party desperate, the soldiers are running from the officers, and the officers from the soldiers. In fact, the multiplied hosts which pour into this country, exhibiting all the various dresses and forms of war which can be imagined, must necessarily render resistance impracticable. Yet, like Satan, these fellows retain the unconquered propensity to defiance, even in the midst of defeat and despair. This morning we passed a great number of the disbanded garrison of Conde, and they were the most horrid-looking cut-throats I ever saw, extremely disposed to be very insolent, and only repressed by the consciousness that all the villages and towns around are occupied by the allies. They began by crying to us, in an ironical tone, *Vive le Roi;* then followed, *sotto voce, Sacre B———, Mille diables*, and other graces of French eloquence. I felt very well pleased that we were armed, and four in number; and still more so that it was daylight, for they seemed most mischievous ruffians. As for the appearance of the country, it is, notwithstanding a fine harvest, most melancholy. The windows of all the detached houses on the road are uniformly shut up; and

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you see few people, excepting the peasants who are employed in driving the contributions to maintain the armies. The towns are little better, having for the most part been partially injured by shells or by storm, as was the case both of Cambrai and Peronne. The men looked very sulky; and if you speak three words to a woman, she is sure to fall a-crying. In short, the *politesse* and good humour of this people have fled with the annihilation of their self-conceit; and they look on you as if they thought you were laughing at them, or come to enjoy the triumph of our arms over theirs. Postmasters and landlords are all the same, and hardly to be propitiated even by English money, although they charge us about three times as much as they durst do to their country folks. As for the Prussians, a party of cavalry dined at our hotel at Mons, eat and drank of the best the poor devils had left to give, called for their horses, and laughed in the face of the landlord when he offered his bill, telling him they should pay as they came back. The English, they say, have always paid honourably, and upon these they indemnify themselves. It is impossible to *marchander*, for if you object, the poor landlady begins to cry, and tells you she will accept whatever *your lordship* pleases, but that she is almost ruined and bankrupt, &c., &c., &c.

"This is a long stupid letter, but I will endeavour to send a better from Paris. Ever your Grace's truly obliged,

W. Scott."

The only letter which Scott addressed to Joanna Baillie, while in Paris, goes over partly the same ground:—I transcribe the rest.

"Paris, 6th Sept. 1815.

"My dear Friend,

"I owe you a long letter, but my late travels and the date of this epistle will be a tolerable plea for your indulgence. The truth is, I became very restless after the battle of Waterloo, and was only detained by the necessity of attending a friend's marriage from setting off instantly for the Continent. At length, however, I got away to Brussels, and was on the memorable field of battle about five weeks after it had been fought.

"If our army had been all British, the day would have been soon decided; but the Duke, or, as they call him here, from his detestation of all manner of foppery, the *Beau*, had not above 35,000 British. All this was to be supplied by treble exertion on the part of our troops. The Duke was every where during the battle; and it was the mercy of heaven that protected him, when all his staff had been killed or wounded round him. I asked, among many other questions, if he had seen Buonaparte; he said, 'No; but at one time, from the repeated shouts of *Vive l'Empereur*, I thought he must be near.' This was when John De Costar placed him in the hollow way. I think, so near as I can judge, there may at that time have been a quarter of a mile between these two great generals.

"The fate of the French, after this day of decisive appeal, has been severe enough. There were never people more mortified, more subdued, and apparently more broken in spirit. They submit with sad civility to the extortions of the Prussians and the Russians, and avenge themselves at the expense of the English, whom they charge three prices for every thing, because they are the only people who pay at all. They are in the right, however to enforce discipline and good order, which not only maintains the national character in the mean time, but will prevent the army from suffering by habits of indulgence. I question if the Prussians will soon regain their discipline and habits of hardihood. At present, their powers of eating and drinking, which are really something preternatural, are exerted to the very utmost. A thin Prussian boy, whom I sometimes see, eats in one day as much as three English ploughmen. At daybreak, he roars for chocolate and eggs; about nine, he breakfasts more solemnly *à la fourchette*, when, besides all the usual apparatus of an English *déjeuner*, he eats a world of cutlets, oysters, fruit, &c., and drinks a glass of brandy and a bottle of champagne. His dinner might serve Garagantua, at which he *gets himself* about three parts drunk—a circumstance which does not prevent the charge upon cold meat, with tea and chocolate, about six o'clock; and concluding the whole with an immense supper. Positively, the appetite of this lad reminds one of the Eastern tale of a man taken out of the sea by a ship's crew, who, in return, ate up all the provisions of the vessel. He was, I think, flown away with by a roc; but from what quarter of the heavens the French are to look for deliverance from these devourers, I cannot presume to guess.

"The needless wreck and ruin which they make in the houses, adds much to the inconvenience of their presence. Most of the châteaux, where the Prussians are quartered, are what is technically called *rumped*, that is to say, plundered out and out. In the fine château of Montmorency, for instance, the most splendid apartments, highly ornamented with gilding and carving, were converted into barracks for the dirtiest and most savage-looking hussars I have yet seen. Imagine the work these fellows make with velvet hangings and embroidery. I saw one hag boiling her camp-kettle with part of a picture frame; the picture itself has probably gone to Prussia. With all this greediness and love of mischief, the Prussians are not blood-thirsty; and their utmost violence seldom exceeds a blow or two with the flat of the sabre. They are also very civil to the women, and, in both respects, behave much better than the French did in their country; but they follow the bad example quite close enough for the sake of humanity and of discipline. As for our people, they live in a most orderly and regular manner. All the young men pique themselves on imitating the Duke of Wellington in *non chalance* and coolness of manner; so they wander about every where, with their hands in the pockets of their long waistcoats, or cantering upon Cossack ponies, staring and whistling, and trotting to and fro, as if all Paris was theirs. The French hate them sufficiently for the *hauteur* of their manner and pretensions, but the grounds of dislike against us are drowned in the actual detestation afforded by the other powers.

"This morning I saw a grand military spectacle,—about 20,000 Russians pass in review before all the Kings and Dominations who are now resident at Paris. The Emperor, King of Prussia, Duke of Wellington, with their numerous and brilliant attendance of generals, staff-officers, &c., were in the centre of what is called the Place Louis Quinze, almost on the very spot where Louis XVI. was beheaded. A very long avenue, which faces the station where they were placed, was like a glowing furnace, so fiercely were the sunbeams reflected from the arms of the host by which it was filled. A body of Cossacks kept the ground with their pikes, and by their wild appearance, added to the singularity of the scene. On one hand was the extended line of the Tuileries, seen through the gardens and the rows of orange trees; on the other, the long column of troops advancing to the music. Behind was a long colonnade, forming the front to the palace, where the Chamber of Representatives are to hold their sittings; and in front of the monarchs was a superb row of buildings, on which you distinguish the bronze pillar erected by Napoleon to commemorate his victories over Russia, Prussia, and Austria, whose princes were now reviewing their victorious armies in what was so lately his capital. Your fancy, my dear friend, will anticipate, better than I can express, the thousand sentiments which arose in my mind from witnessing such a splendid scene, in a spot connected with such various associations. It may give you some idea of the feelings of the French—once so fond of *spectacles*—to know that, I think, there were not a hundred of that nation looking on. Yet this country will soon recover the actual losses she has sustained, for never was there a soil so blessed by nature, or so rich in corn, wine, and oil, and in the animated industry of its inhabitants. France is at present the fabled giant, struggling, or rather lying supine, under the load of mountains which have been precipitated on her; but she is not, and cannot be crushed. Remove the incumbent weight of 600,000 or 700,000 foreigners, and she will soon stand upright—happy, if experience shall have taught her to be contented to exert her natural strength only for her own protection, and not for the annoyance of her neighbours. I am cut short in my lucubrations, by an opportunity to send this letter with Lord Castlereagh's despatches; which is of less consequence, as I will endeavour to see you in passing through London. I leave this city for Dieppe on Saturday, but I intend to go round by Harfleur, if possible. Ever your truly obliged and affectionate

Walter Scott."

"Paul" modestly acknowledges, in his last letter, the personal attentions which he received while in Paris, from Lords Cathcart, Aberdeen, and Castlereagh; and hints that, through their intervention, he had witnessed several of the splendid *fêtes* given by the Duke of Wellington, where he saw half the crowned heads of Europe grouped among the gallant soldiers who had cut a way for them to the guilty capital of France. Scott's reception, however, had been distinguished to a degree of which Paul's language gives no notion. The noble lords above-named, welcomed him with cordial satisfaction; and the Duke of Wellington, to whom he was first presented by Sir John Malcolm, treated him then, and ever afterwards, with a kindness and confidence, which, I have often heard him say, he considered as "the highest distinction of his life." He used to tell, with great effect, the circumstances of his introduction to the Emperor Alexander, at a

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dinner given by the Earl of Cathcart. Scott appeared, on that occasion, in the blue and red dress of the Selkirkshire Lieutenancy; and the Czar's first question, glancing at his lameness, was, "In what affair were you wounded?" Scott signified that he suffered from a natural infirmity; upon which the Emperor said, "I thought Lord Cathcart mentioned that you had served." Scott observed that the Earl looked a little embarrassed at this, and promptly answered, "O, yes; in a certain sense I have served—that is, in the yeomanry cavalry; a home force resembling the Landwehr, or Landsturm."—"Under what commander?"—"Sous M. le Chevalier Rae."—"Were you ever engaged?"—"In some slight actions—such as the battle of the Cross Causeway, and the affair of Moredun-Mill."—"This," says Mr. Pringle of Whytbank, "was, as he saw in Lord Cathcart's face, quite sufficient, so he managed to turn the conversation to some other subject." It was at the same dinner that he first met Platoff,* who seemed to take a great fancy to him, though, adds my friend, "I really don't think they had any common language to converse in." Next day, however, when Pringle and Scott were walking together in the Rue de la Paix, the Hetman happened to come up, cantering with some of his Cossacks; as soon as he saw Scott, he jumped off his horse, leaving it to the Pulk, and, running up to him, kissed him on each side of the cheek with extraordinary demonstrations of affection—and then made him understand, through an aid-de-camp, that he wished him to join his staff at the next great review, when he would take care to mount him on the gentlest of his Ukraine horses. So mounted, accordingly, he witnessed the great closing *spectacle* on the *Champ de Mars*.

It will seem less surprising that Scott should have been honoured with much attention by the leading soldiers and statesmen of Germany then in Paris. The fame of his poetry had already been established for some years in that country. Yet it may be doubted whether Blücher had heard of Marmion any more than Platoff; and old Blücher struck Scott's fellow travellers as taking more interest in him than any foreign general, except only the Hetman.

A striking passage in Paul's tenth letter indicates the high notion which Scott had formed of the personal qualities of the Prince of Orange. After depicting, with almost prophetic accuracy, the dangers to which the then recent union of Holland and Belgium must be exposed, he concludes with expressing his hope that the firmness and sagacity of the King of the Netherlands, and the admiration which his heir's character and bearing excited among all, even Belgian observers, might ultimately prove effective in redeeming this difficult experiment from the usual failure of "*arrondissements*, indemnities, and all the other terms of modern date, under sanction of which cities and districts, and even kingdoms, have been passed from one government to another, as the property of lands or stock is transferred by a bargain between private parties."

It is not less curious to compare, with the subsequent course of affairs in France, the following brief hint in Paul's sixteenth letter:—"The general rallying point of the *Liberalistes* is an avowed dislike to the present monarch, and his immediate connexions. They will sacrifice, they pretend, so much to the general inclinations of Europe, as to select a king from the Bourbon race; but he must be one of their own choosing, and the Duke of Orleans is most familiar in their mouths." Thus, in its very bud, had his eye detected the *conjuration de quinze ans!*

Among the gay parties of this festive period, Scott mentioned with special pleasure one fine day given to an excursion to Ermenonville, under the auspices of Lady Castlereagh. The company was a large one, including most of the distinguished personages whom I have been naming, and they dined *al fresco* among the scenes of Rousseau's retirement, but in a fashion less accordant with the spirit of his *reveries d'un promeneur solitaire*, than with the song which commemorates some earlier tenants of that delicious valley—

> "La belle Gabrielle
> Etoit dans ces lieux—
> Et le souvenir d'elle
> Nous rend heureux," &c.

At some stage of this merry day's proceedings, the ladies got tired of walking, and one of Lord Castlereagh's young diplomatists was despatched into a village in quest of donkeys for their accommodation. The *attaché* returned by and by with a face of disappointment, complaining that the charge the people made was so extravagant, he could not think of yielding to the extortion. "*Marshal Forwards*" said nothing, but nodded to an aid-de-camp. They had passed a Prussian picket a little while before;—three times the requisite number of donkeys appeared presently, driven before half a dozen hussars, who were followed by the screaming population of the refractory hamlet; and "an angry man was Blücher," said Scott, "when Lord Castlereagh condescended to go among them, all smiles, and sent them back with more Napoleons than perhaps the fee-simple of the whole stud was worth."

Another evening of more peaceful enjoyment has left a better record. But I need not quote here the "Lines on St. Cloud."* They were sent, on the 16th of August, to the late Lady Alvanley, with whom and her daughters he spent much of his time while in Paris.

As yet, the literary reputation of Scott had made but little way among the French nation; but some few of their eminent men vied even with the enthusiastic Germans in their courteous and unwearied attentions to him. The venerable *Cheralier*, in particular seemed anxious to embrace every opportunity of acting as his Cicerone; and many mornings were spent in exploring, under his guidance, the most remarkable scenes and objects of historical and antiquarian interest, both in Paris and its neighbourhood. He several times also entertained Scott and his young companions at dinner; but the last of those dinners was thoroughly poisoned by a preliminary circumstance. The poet, on entering the saloon, was presented to a stranger, whose physiognomy struck him as the most hideous he had ever seen; nor was his disgust lessened, when he found, a few minutes afterwards, that he had undergone the *accollade* of David "of the blood-stained brush."

From Paris, Mr. Bruce and Mr. Pringle went on to Switzerland, leaving the poet and Gala to return home together, which they did by way of Dieppe, Brighton, and London. It was here, on the 14th of September, that Scott had that last meeting with Lord Byron, alluded to in his communication to Mr. Moore, already quoted. He carried his young friend in the morning to call on Lord Byron, who agreed to dine with them at their hotel, where he met also Charles Matthews and Daniel Terry. The only survivor of the party has recorded it in his note-book as the most interesting day he ever spent. "How I did stare," he says, "at Byron's beautiful pale face, like a spirit's—good or evil. But he was *bitter*—what a contrast to Scott! Among other anecdotes of British prowess and spirit, Scott mentioned that a young gentleman ——— ——— had been awfully shot in the head while conveying an order from the Duke, and yet staggered on, and delivered his message when at the point of death. 'Ha!' said Byron, 'I dare say he could do as well as most people without his head—it was never of much use to him.' Waterloo did not delight him, probably—and Scott could talk or think of scarcely any thing else."

Matthews accompanied them as far as Warwick and Kenilworth, both of which castles the poet had

* Scott acknowledges, in a note to St. Ronan's Well, (vol. i., p. 252.) that he took from Platoff this portrait of Mr. Touchwood:—"His face, which at the distance of a yard or two, seemed hale and smooth, appeared, when closely examined, to be seamed with a million of wrinkles, crossing each other in every direction possible, but as fine as if drawn by the point of a very fine needle." Thus did every little peculiarity remain treasured in his memory, to be used in due time for giving the air of minute reality to some imaginary personage.

* See Poetical Works, vol. xi. p. 295.

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seen before, but now re-examined with particular curiosity. They spent a night on this occasion at Birmingham; and early next morning Scott sallied forth to provide himself with a planter's knife of the most complex contrivance and finished workmanship. Having secured one to his mind, and which for many years after was his constant pocket-companion, he wrote his name on a card, "Walter Scott, Abbotsford," and directed it to be engraved on the handle. On his mentioning this acquisition at breakfast, young Gala expressed his desire to equip himself in like fashion, and was directed to the shop accordingly. When he had purchased a similar knife, and produced his name in turn for the engraver, the master cutler eyed the signature for a moment, and exclaimed—"John Scott of Gala! Well, I hope your ticket may serve me in as good stead as another Mr. Scott's has just done. Upon my word, one of my best men, an honest fellow from the North, went out of his senses when he saw it—he offered me a week's work if I would let him keep it to himself—and I took *Saunders* at his word." Scott used to talk of this as one of the most gratifying compliments he ever received in his literary capacity.

Their next halt was at Rokeby; but since Scott had heard from thence, Mrs. Morritt's illness had made such alarming progress, that the travellers regretted having obtruded themselves on the scene of affliction, and resumed their journey early next morning.

Reaching Abbotsford, Scott found with his family his old friend Mr. Skene of Rubislaw, who had expected him to come home sooner, and James Ballantyne, who had arrived with a copious budget of bills, calendars, booksellers' letters, and proof-sheets. From each of these visiters' *memoranda* I now extract an anecdote. Mr. Skene's is of a small enough matter, but still it places the man so completely before myself, that I am glad he thought it worth setting down. "During Scott's absence," says his friend, "his wife had had the tiny drawing-room of the cottage fitted up with new chintz furniture—every thing had been set out in the best style—and she and her girls had been looking forward to the pleasure which they supposed the little surprise of the arrangements would give him. He was received in the spruce fresh room, set himself comfortably down in the chair prepared for him, and remained in the full enjoyment of his own fireside, and a return to his family circle, without the least consciousness that any change had taken place—until, at length, Mrs. Scott's patience could hold out no longer, and his attention was expressly called to it. The vexation he showed at having caused such a disappointment, struck me as amiably characteristic—and in the course of the evening, he every now and then threw out some word of admiration, to reconsole *mamma*."

Ballantyne's note of their next morning's conference is in these terms. "He had just been reviewing a pageant of emperors and kings, which seemed, like another Field of the Cloth of Gold, to have been got up to realize before his eyes some of his own splendid descriptions. I begged him to tell me what was the general impressions left on his mind. He answered, that he might now say he had seen and conversed with all classes of society, from the palace to the cottage, and including every conceivable shade of science and ignorance—but that he had never felt awed or abashed except in the presence of one man—the Duke of Wellington. I expressed some surprise. He said I ought not, for that the Duke of Wellington possessed every one mighty quality of the mind in a higher degree than any other man did, or had ever done. He said he beheld in him a great soldier and a great statesman—the greatest of each. When it was suggested that the Duke, on his part, saw before him a great poet and novelist, he smiled, and said, 'What would the Duke of Wellington think of a few *bits of novels*, which perhaps he had never read, and for which the strong probability is that he would not care a sixpence if he had?' You are not" (adds Ballantyne) "to suppose that he looked either sheepish or embarrassed in the presence of the Duke—indeed you well know that he did not, and could not do so; but the feeling, qualified and modified as I have described it, unquestionably did exist to a certain extent. Its origin forms a curious moral problem; and may probably be traced to a secret consciousness, which he might not himself advert to, that the Duke, however great as a soldier and statesman, was so defective in imagination as to be in capable of appreciating that which had formed the charm of his own life, as well as of his works."

It is proper to add to Mr. Ballantyne's solution of his "curious moral problem," that he was, in his latter days, a strenuous opponent of the Duke of Wellington's politics; to which circumstances he ascribes, in these same *memoranda*, the only coolness that ever occurred between him and Scott. I need hardly repeat, what has been already distinctly stated more than once, that Scott never considered any amount of literary distinction as entitled to be spoken of in the same breath with mastery in the higher departments of practical life—least of all, with the glory of a first-rate captain. To have done things worthy to be written, was in his eyes a dignity to which no man made any approach, who had only written things worthy to be read. He on two occasions, which I can never forget, betrayed painful uneasiness when his works were alluded to as reflecting honour on the age that had produced Watt's improvement of the steam-engine, and the safety-lamp of Sir Humphry Davy. Such was his modest creed—but from all I ever saw or heard of his intercourse with the Duke of Wellington, I am not disposed to believe that he partook it with the only man in whose presence he ever felt awe and abashment.*

A charming page in Mr. Washington Irving's "Abbotsford and Newstead," affords us another anecdote connected with this return from Paris. Two years after this time, when the amiable American visited Scott, he walked with him to a quarry, where his people were at work. "The face of the humblest dependant" (he says) "brightened at his approach—all paused from their labour, to have a pleasant 'crack wi' the laird.' Among the rest was a tall straight old fellow, with a healthful complexion and silver hairs, and a small round-crowned white hat. He had been about to shoulder a hod, but paused, and stood looking at Scott with a slight sparkling of his blue eye, as if waiting his turn; for the old fellow knew he was a favourite. Scott accosted him in an affable tone, and asked for a pinch of snuff. The old man drew forth a horn snuff-box. 'Hoot, man,' said Scott, 'not that old mull. Where's the bonnie French one that I brought you from Paris?' —'Troth, your honour,' replied the old fellow, 'sic a mull as that is nae for week-days.' On leaving the quarry, Scott informed me, that, when absent at Paris, he had purchased several trifling articles as presents for his dependants, and, among others, the gay snuff-box in question, which was so carefully reserved for Sundays by the veteran. 'It was not so much the value of the gifts,' said he, 'that pleased them, as the idea that the laird should think of them when so far away.'"

One more incident of this return—it was told to me by himself, some years afterwards, with gravity, and even sadness. "The last of my chargers," he said, "was a high-spirited and very handsome one, by name Daisy, all over white, without a speck, and with such a mane as Rubens delighted to paint. He had, among other good qualities, one always par-

* I think it very probable that Scott had his own first interview with the Duke of Wellington in his mind when he described the introduction of Roland Graham to the Regent Murray, in the novel of The Abbot:—"Such was the personage before whom Roland Graham now presented himself with a feeling of breathless awe, very different from the usual boldness and vivacity of his temper. In fact he was, from education and nature, much more easily controlled by the moral superiority arising from the elevated talents and renown of those with whom he conversed, than by protensions founded only on rank or external show. He might have braved with indifference the presence of an Earl merely distinguished by his belt and coronet; but he felt overawed in that of the eminent soldier and statesman, the wielder of a nation's power, and the leader of her armies."—*Waverley Novels, vol. xx. p. 292.*

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ticularly valuable in my case, that of standing like a rock to be mounted. When he was brought to the door, after I came home from the Continent, instead of signifying, by the usual tokens, that he was pleased to see his master, he looked askant at me like a devil; and when I put my foot in the stirrup, he reared bolt upright, and I fell to the ground rather awkwardly. The experiment was repeated twice or thrice, always with the same result. It occurred to me that he might have taken some capricious dislike to my dress; and Tom Purdie, who always falls heir to the white hat and green jacket, and so forth, when Mrs. Scott has made me discard a set of garments, was sent for, to try whether these habiliments would produce him a similar reception from his old friend Daisy: but Daisy allowed Tom to back him with all manner of gentleness. The thing was inexplicable—but he had certainly taken some part of my conduct in high dudgeon and disgust; and after trying him again, at the interval of a week, I was obliged to part with Daisy—and wars and rumours of wars being over, I resolved thenceforth to have done with such dainty blood. I now stick to a good sober cob." Somebody suggested, that Daisy might have considered himself as ill-used, by being left at home when *the Laird* went on his journey. "Ay," said he, "these creatures have many thoughts of their own, no doubt, that we can never penetrate." Then, laughing, "Troth," said he, "maybe some bird had whispered Daisy that I had been to see the grand reviews at Paris on a little scrag of a Cossack, while my own gallant trooper was left behind bearing Peter and the post-bag to Melrose."

A few letters, written shortly after this return to Abbotsford, will, among other things, show with what zeal he at once resumed his literary industry, if indeed that can be said to have been at all interrupted by a journey, in the course of which a great part of Paul's narrative, and also of the poem of "the Field of Waterloo," must have been composed.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M. P. Rokeby Park.

"Abbotsford, 2d Oct. 1815.

"My dear Morritt,

"Few things could have given me more real pain, than to see Mrs. Morritt under such severe suffering, and the misery you sustain in witnessing it. Yet let us trust in the goodness of Providence, which restored the health so deservedly dear to you from as great a state of depression upon a former occasion. Our visit was indeed a melancholy one, and, I fear, added to your distress, when, God knows, it required no addition. The contrast of this quiet bird's nest of a place, with the late scene of confusion and military splendour which I have witnessed, is something of a stunning nature, and, for the first five or six days, I have been content to fold my hands, and saunter up and down in a sort of indolent and stupified tranquillity, my only attempt at occupation having gone no farther than pruning a young tree now and then. Yesterday, however, and to-day, I began, from necessity, to prune verses, and have been correcting proofs of my little attempt at a poem on Waterloo. It will be out this week, and you shall have a copy by the Carlisle coach, which pray judge favourably, and remember it is not always the grandest actions which are best adapted for the arts of poetry and painting. I believe I shall give offence to my old friends the Whigs, by not condoling with Buonaparte. Since his sentence of transportation, he has begun to look wonderfully comely in their eyes. I would they had hanged him, that he might have died a perfect Adonis. Every reasonable creature must think the Ministers would have deserved the cord themselves, if they had left him in a condition again to cost us the loss of 10,000 of our best and bravest, besides thirty millions of good money. The very threats and frights which he has given the well-meaning people of this realm, (myself included,) deserved no less a punishment than banishment, since the 'putting in bodily fear' makes so material a part of every criminal indictment. But, no doubt, we shall see Ministers attacked for their want of generosity to a fallen enemy, by the same party who last year, with better grounds, assailed them for having left him in a situation again to disturb the tranquillity of Europe. My young friend Gala has left me, after a short visit to Abbotsford. He is my nearest (conversable) neighbour, and I promise myself much comfort in him, as he has a turn both for the sciences and for the arts, rather uncommon among our young Scotch lairds. He was delighted with Rokeby and its lord, though he saw both at so melancholy a period, and endured, not only with good humour but with sympathy, the stupidity of his fellow-traveller, who was not by any means *dans son brillant* for some time after leaving you.

"We visited Corby Castle on our return to Scotland, which remains, in point of situation, as beautiful as when its walks were celebrated by David Hume, in the only rhymes he was ever known to be guilty of. Here they are, from a pane of glass in an inn at Carlisle:—

'Here chicks in eggs for breakfast sprawl,
Here godless boys God's glories squall,
Here Scotchmen's heads do guard the wall.
But Corby's walks alone for all.'

Would in not be a good quiz to advertise *The Poetical Works of David Hume*, with notes, critical, historical, and so forth—with an historical inquiry into the use of eggs for breakfast; a physical discussion on the causes of their being addled; a history of the English church music, and of the choir of Carlisle in particular; a full account of the affair of 1745, with the trials, last speeches, and so forth, of the poor *plaids* who were strapped up at Carlisle; and, lastly, a full and particular description of Corby, with the genealogy of every family who ever possessed it? I think, even without more than the usual waste of margin, the Poems of David would make a decent twelve shilling touch. I shall think about it, when I have exhausted mine own *century of inventions*.

"I do not know whether it is perverseness of taste, or old associations, but an excellent and very handsome modern house, which Mr. Howard has lately built at Corby, does not, in my mind, assimilate so well with the scenery as the old irregular monastic hall, with its weatherbeaten and antique appearance, which I remember there some years ago.

"Out of my Field of Waterloo has sprung an odd wild sort of thing, which I intend to finish separately, and call it the Dance of Death.' These matters take up my time so much, that I must bid you adieu for the present. Besides, I am summoned to attend a grand *chasse*, and I see the children are all mounted upon the ponies. By the way, Walter promises to be a gallant horseman. Ever most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

I shall close this chapter with a transcript of some *Notes* on the proof sheets of the "Field of Waterloo." John Ballantyne being, at Abbotsford on the 3d of October, his brother the printer addressed the packet containing the sheets to him. John appears to have considered James's observations on the margin before Scott saw them; and the record of the style in which the Poet repelled, or yielded to, his critics, will at all events illustrate his habitual good-nature.

John Ballantyne writes on the fly-leaf of the proofs to his confidential clerk:—"Mr. Hodgson, I beg these sheets and all the MS. may be carefully preserved just as they stand, and put in my father's desk. J. B."

James prefaces his animadversions with this quotation:—

"Cut deep and spare not.—*Penruddock.*"*

The *Notes* are these:—

STANZA I.—"Fair Brussels, thou art far behind."

James Ballantyne.—I do not like this line. It is tame, and the phrase "far behind," has, to my feeling, some associated vulgarity.

Scott.—Stet.

STANZA II.—"Let not *the* stranger with disdain
The architecture view."

James.—These two words are cacophonous. Would not *its* do?

Scott.—Th. is a bad sound. Ts. a much worse. Read *their*.

STANZA IV.—"A stranger might reply."

James.—My objection to this is probably fantastical, and I state it only, because from the first moment to the last, it has always made me boggle. I don't like *stranger*—Query, "The questioned"—The "spectator"—"gazer," &c.

Scott.—Stranger is appropriate—it means stranger to the circumstances.

STANZA VI.—*James.*—You had changed "garner-house profound," which I think quite admirable, to "garner

* This was published in the Edinburgh Annual Register in 1815—See Poetical Works, Ed. 1834, vol. xi. p. 197.

under ground," which I think quite otherways. I have presumed not to make the change—must I?

Scott.—I acquiesce, but with doubts; *profound* sounds affected.

STANZA VIII.—" The deadly tug of war at length
Must limits find in human strength,
And *cease* when these are passed.
Vain hope! &c."

James.—I must needs repeat, that the deadly tug *did* cease in the case supposed. It lasted long—very long; but, when the limits of resistance, of human strength, were past—that is, after they had fought for ten hours, then the deadly tug *did* cease. Therefore the "hope" was not "vain."

Scott.—I answer it did *not*,—because the observation relates to the strength of those actually engaged, and when *their* strength was exhausted other squadrons were brought up. Suppose you saw two lawyers scolding at the bar, you might say this must have an end—human lungs cannot hold out—but, if the debate were continued by the senior counsel, your well-grounded expectations would be disappointed—"Cousin, thou wert not wont to be so dull!"—

IBID.—" Nor ceased the *intermitted* shot."

James.—Mr. Erskine contends that "intermitted" is redundant.

Scott.—" Nor ceased the *storm of shell and shot*."

STANZA X.—" ——Never shall our country say
We gave one inch of ground away,
When battling for her right."

James.—*In conflict?*

John B.—*Warring?* I am afraid *battling* must stand.

Scott.—All worse than the text.

STANZA XI.—" Peal'd wildly the imperial name."

James.—I submit with diffidence whether this be not a somewhat tame conclusion to so very animated a stanza? And, at any rate, you will observe, that as it stands, you have no rhyme whatever to "The Cohort eagles *fly*."—You have no rhyme to *fly*. *Flew* and *fly*, also, are perhaps too near, considering that each word closes a line of the same sort. I don't well like "*Thus* in a torrent," either. If it were, "In one broad torrent," &c., it strikes me that it would be more spirited.

Scott.—Granted as to most of these observations—Read, "in one *dark* torrent broad and strong," &c.—The "imperial name" is *true*, therefore must stand.

STANZA XII.—" Nor was one forward footstep *stopped*."

James.—This staggering word was intended, I presume, but I don't like it.

Scott.—Granted. Read *staid*, &c.

IBID.—" Down were the eagle banners sent,
Down, down the horse and horsemen went."

James.—This is very spirited and very fine; but it is unquestionably liable to the charge of being very nearly a direct repetition of yourself. See Lord of the Isles, Canto vi. St. 24:—

" *Down! down!* in headlong overthrow,
Horseman and horse, the foremost go," &c.

This passage is at once so striking and so recent, that its close similarity to the present, if not indeed its identity, must strike every reader; and really, to borrow from one's self, is hardly much better than to borrow from one's neighbours. And yet again, a few lines lower:—

" As hammers on the *anvils* reel,
Against the cuirass *clangs* the steel."

See Lady of the Lake, Canto vi., Stanza 18:—

" I heard the broadswords' deadly *clang*,
As if an hundred *anvils* rang."

Here is precisely the same image, in very nearly the same words.

Scott.—I have altered the expression, but made a note, which, I think, will vindicate my retaining the simile.

STANZA XIII.—" As their own Ocean-rocks hold *stance*."

John.—I do not know such an English word as *stance*.

Scott.—Then we'll make it one for the *nance*.

IBID.—" And *newer* standards fly."

James.—I don't like *newer*.

Scott.—" And *other* standards fly."

IBID.—" Or can thy memory fail to *quote*,
Heard to thy cost the vengeful note."

James.—Would to God you would alter this *quote!*

John.—Would to God *I* could!—I certainly should.—

Scott.—" Or can thy memory fail to know,
Heard oft before in hour of wo."

" Or dwells not in thy memory *still*,
Heard frequent in thine hour of ill."

STANZA XV.—" Wrung forth by pride, *regret*, and shame."

James.—I have ventured to submit to your choice—
" Wrung forth by pride, *and rage*, and shame."
Regret appearing a faint epithet amidst such a combination of bitter feelings

Scott.—Granted.

IBID.—" So mingle banner, wain, and gun,
Where in one tide of horror run
The warriors," &c.

James.—In the first place, warriors *running* in a tide, is a clashing metaphor; in the second, the warriors *running* at all is a little homely. It is true, no doubt; but really running is little better than scampering. For these causes, one or both, I think the lines should be altered.

Scott.—You are wrong in one respect. A tide is always said to *run*,—but I thought of the tide without attending to the equivoque, which must be altered. Read,—

" Where the tumultuous flight rolls on."

STANZA. XVI.—" ——found *gallant* grave."

James.—This is surely a singular epithet to a grave. I think the whole of this stanza eminently fine; and, in particular, the conclusion.

Scott.—" —— found *soldier's* grave."——

STANZA XXI.—" *Redoubted* Picton's soul of fire."

James.—From long association, this epithet strikes me as conveying a semi-ludicrous idea.

Scott.—It is here appropriate, and your objection seems merely personal to your own association.

IBID.—" Through his friend's heart to *wound* his own."

James.—Quære—*Pierce*, or rather *stab—wound* is faint.

Scott.——" Pierce."

STANZA XXI.—" Forgive, *brave fallen*, the imperfect lay."

James.—Don't like "brave fallen" at all; nor "appropriate praise," three lines after.—The latter in particular is prosaic.

Scott.—" Forgive, *brave dead*."
——" *The dear earned praise*."

CHAPTER XXXV.

POEM OF THE FIELD OF WATERLOO PUBLISHED—REVISION OF PAUL'S LETTERS, ETC.—QUARREL AND RECONCILIATION WITH HOGG—FOOTBALL MATCH AT CARTERHAUGH—SONGS ON THE BANNER OF BUCCLEUCH—DINNER AT BOWHILL—DESIGN FOR A PIECE OF PLATE TO THE GUTORS OF SELKIRK—LETTERS TO THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—JOANNA BAILLIE—AND MR. MORRITT.—1815.

THE poem of "the Field of Waterloo" was published before the end of October; the profits of the first edition being the author's contribution to the fund raised for the relief of the widows and children of the soldiers slain in the battle. This piece appears to have disappointed those most disposed to sympathize with the author's views and feelings. The descent is indeed heavy from his Bannockburn to his Waterloo: the presence, or all but visible reality of what his dreams cherished, seems to have overawed his imagination, and tamed it into a weak pomposity of movement. The burst of pure native enthusiasm upon the *Scottish* heroes that fell around the Duke of Wellington's person, bears, however, the broadest marks of "the mighty Minstrel."—

——" Saw gallant Miller's fading eye
Still bent where Albyn's standards fly,
And Cameron, in the shock of steel,
Die like the offspring of Lochiel," &c.;—

and this is far from being the only redeeming passage. There is one, indeed, in which he illustrates what he then thought Buonaparte's poorness of spirit in adversity, which always struck me as pre-eminently characteristic of Scott's manner of interweaving, both in prose and verse, the moral energies with analogous natural description, and combining thought with imagery—

" Or is thy soul like mountain tide,
That swelled by winter storm and shower,
Rolls down in turbulence of power,
A torrent fierce and wide;
Reft of these aids, a rill obscure,
Shrinking unnoticed, mean and poor,
Whose channel shows displayed

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The wrecks of its impetuous course,
But not one symptom of the force
By which these wrecks were made!"

The poem was the first upon a subject likely to be sufficiently hackneyed; and, having the advantage of coming out in a small cheap form—(prudently imitated from Murray's innovation with the tales of Byron, which was the death-blow to the system of verse in quarto)—it attained rapidly a measure of circulation above what had been reached either by Rokeby or the Lord of the Isles.

Meanwhile the revision of Paul's Letters was proceeding; and Scott had almost immediately on his return to Abbotsford concluded his bargain for the first edition of a third novel—The Antiquary—to be published also in the approaching winter. Harold the Dauntless, too, was from time to time taken up as the amusement of *horæ subsecivæ*. As for Scott's out of doors occupations of that autumn, sufficient light will be thrown on them by the following letter; from which it is seen that he had now completed a rather tedious negotiation with another bonnet-laird, and definitively added the lands of *Kaeside* to the original estate of Abbotsford.

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"November 12, 1815, Abotsford.

"I have been long in acknowledging your letter, my dear friend, and yet you have not only been frequent in my thoughts, as must always be the case, but your name has been of late familiar in my mouth as a household word. You must know that the pinasters you had the goodness to send me some time since, which are now fit to be set out of the nursery, have occupied my mind as to the mode of disposing of them. Now, mark the event; there is in the middle of what will soon be a bank of fine young wood, a certain old gravel-pit, which is the present scene of my operations. I have caused it to be covered with better earth, and gently altered with the spade, so as, if possible, to give it the air of one of those accidental hollows which the surface of a hill frequently presents. Having arranged my ground, I intend to plant it all round with the pinasters, and other varieties of the pine species, and in the interior I will have a rustic seat, surrounded by all kinds of evergreen shrubs, (laurels in particular,) and all varieties of the holly and cedar, and so forth, and this is to be called and entitled *Joanna's Bower*. We are determined in the choice of our ornaments by necessity, for our ground fronts (in poetic phrase) the rising sun, or, in common language, looks to the east; and being also on the north side of the hill—(don't you shiver at the thought?)—why, to say truth, George Wynnos and I are both of opinion that nothing but evergreens will flourish there; but I trust I shall convert a present deformity into a very pretty little hobby-horsical sort of thing. It will not bear looking at for years, and that is a pity: but it will so far resemble the person from whom it takes name, that it is planted, as she has written, for the benefit as well of posterity as for the passing generation. Time and I, says the Spaniard, against any two; and, fully confiding in the proverb, I have just undertaken another grand task. You must know, I have purchased a large lump of wild land, lying adjoining to this little property, which greatly more than doubles my domains. The land is said to be reasonably bought, and I am almost certain I can turn it to advantage by a little judicious expenditure; for this place is already allowed to be worth twice what it cost me; and our people here think so little of planting, and do it so carelessly, that they stare with astonishment at the alteration which well planted woods make on the face of a country. There is, besides, a very great temptation, from the land running to within a quarter of a mile of a very sweet wild sheet of water, of which (that is, one side of it) I have every chance to become proprietor: this is a poetical circumstance not to be lost sight of, and accordingly I keep it full in my view. Amid these various avocations, past, present, and to come, I have not thought much about Waterloo, only that I am truly glad you like it. I might, no doubt, have added many curious anecdotes, but I think the pamphlet long enough as it stands, and never had any design of writing copious notes.

"I do most devoutly hope Lord Byron will succeed in his proposal of bringing out one of your dramas; that he is your sincere admirer is only synonymous with his being a man of genius; and he has, I am convinced, both the power and inclination to serve the public, by availing himself of the treasures you have laid before them. Yet I long for 'some untasted spring,' and heartily wish you would take Lord B. into your counsels, and adjust, from your yet unpublished materials, some drama for the public. In such a case, I would, in your place, conceal my name till the issue of the adventure. It is a sickening thing to think how many angry and evil passions the mere name of admitted excellence brings into full activity. I wish you would consider this hint, and I am sure the result would be great gratification to the public, and to yourself that sort of satisfaction which arises from receiving proofs of having attained the mark at which you aimed. Of this last, indeed, you cannot doubt, if you consult only the voices of the intelligent and the accomplished; but the object of the dramatist is professedly to delight the public at large, and therefore I think you should make the experiment fairly.

"Little Sophia is much obliged by your kind and continued recollection: she is an excellent good child, sufficiently sensible, very affectionate, not without perception of character; but the gods have not made her poetical, and I hope she will never attempt to act a part which nature has not called her to. I am myself a poet, writing to a poetess, and therefore cannot be suspected of a wish to degrade a talent, to which, in whatever degree I may have possessed it, I am indebted for much happiness; but this depends only on the rare coincidence of some talent falling in with a novelty in style and diction and conduct of story, which suited the popular taste; and were my children to be better poets than me, they would not be such in general estimation, simply because the second cannot be the first, and the first (I mean in point of date) is every thing, while others are nothing, even with more intrinsic merit. I am therefore particularly anxious to store the heads of my young damsels with something better than the tags of rhymes; and I hope Sophia is old enough (young though she be) to view her little incidents of celebrity, such as they are, in the right point of view. Mrs. Scott and she are at present in Edinburgh: the rest of the children are with me in this place; my eldest boy is already a bold horseman and a fine shot, though only about fourteen years old. I assure you I was prouder of the first black cock he killed, than I have been of any thing whatever since I first killed one myself, and that is twenty years ago. This is all stupid gossip; but, as Master Corporal Nym says, 'things must be as they may:' you cannot expect grapes from thorns, or much amusement from a brain bewildered with thorn hedges at Kaeside, for such is the sonorous title of my new possession, in virtue of which I subscribe myself,

ABBOTSFORD & KAESIDE."

There is now to be mentioned a little pageant of December, 1815, which perhaps interested *Abbotsford and Kaeside*, not very much less than the "Field of the Cloth of Gold," as James Ballantyne calls it, of the preceding autumn. This was no other than a football match got up under the auspices of the Duke of Buccleuch, between the men of the Vale of Yarrow and the Burghers of Selkirk, the particulars of which will be sufficiently explained by an extract from Ballantyne's newspaper, written, I can have no doubt, by the Sheriff of the Forest. But the part taken in this solemnity by the Ettrick Shepherd reminds me of an extraordinary epistle which Scott had received from him some months before this time, and of the account given by Hogg himself in one of his autobiographies, of the manner in which Scott's kindness terminated the alienation it refers to.

The Shepherd, being as usual in pecuniary straits, had projected a work, to be called "The Poetic Mirror," in which should appear some piece by each popular poet of the time, the whole to be edited by himself, and published for his benefit; and he addressed, accordingly, to his brother bards, a circular petition for their best assistance. Scott—like Byron and most of the persons thus applied to—declined the proposition. The letter in which he signified his refusal has not been preserved;—indeed it is sufficiently remarkable, that of all the many letters which Hogg must have received from his distinguished contemporaries, he appears to have kept not one; but Scott's decided aversion to joint-stock adventures in authorship must have been well known ere now to Hogg—and at all events nobody can suspect that his note of refusal was meant to be an unfriendly communication. The Shepherd, however, took some phrase in high dudgeon, and penned an answer virulently insolent in spirit and in language, accusing him of base jealousy of his own superior natural genius. I am not sure whether it was on this or another occasion of the like sort, that James varied the usual formulas of epistolary

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composition, by beginning with "Damned Sir," and [illegible] "I deserve me, sir, yours with disgust, &c.;" but certainly the performance was such that no intercourse took place between the parties for some weeks, or perhaps months, afterwards. The letter in which Hogg at length solicits a renewal of kindliness, says nothing, it may be observed, of the circumstance which, according to his autobiography, confirmed by the recollection of two friends, whom he names in the letter itself, (Mr. John Grieve and Mr. William Laidlaw,) had really caused him to repent of his suspicions, and their outrageous expression. The fact was, that hearing, shortly after the receipt of the offensive epistle, that Hogg was confined to his lodgings, in an obscure alley of Edinburgh called Gabriel's Road, by a dangerous illness, Scott called on Mr. Grieve to make inquiries about him, and to offer to take on himself the expenses of the best medical attendance. He had, however, cautioned the worthy hatter that no hint of this offer must reach Hogg; and in consequence, it might perhaps be the Shepherd's feeling at the time that he should not, in addressing his life-long benefactor, betray any acquaintance with this recent interference on his behalf. There can be no doubt, however, that he obeyed the genuine dictates of his better nature when he penned this apologetic effusion:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Castle Street.

"Gabriel's Road, February 28, 1815.

"Mr. Scott,

"I think it is great nonsense for two men who are *friends* at heart, and who ever must be so—indeed it is not in the nature of things that they can be otherwise—should be professed enemies.

"Mr. Grieve and Mr. Laidlaw, who were very severe *on me*, and to whom I was obliged to show your letter, have long ago convinced me that I mistook part of it, and that it was not me you held in such contempt, but the opinion of the public. The idea that you might mean that (though I still think the reading will bear either construction) has given me much pain; for I know I answered yours intemperately, and in a mortal rage. I meant to have enclosed yours, and begged of you to return mine, but I cannot find it, and am sure that some one to whom I have been induced to show it, has taken it away. However, as my troubles on that subject were never like to wear to an end, I could no longer resist telling you that I am extremely vexed about it. I desire not a renewal of our former intimacy, for haply, after what I have written, your family would not suffer it; but I wish it might be understood that, when we meet *by chance*, we might shake hands, and speak to one another as old acquaintances, and likewise, that we may exchange a letter occasionally, for I find there are many things which I yearn to communicate to you, and the tears rush to my eyes when I consider that I may not.

"If you allow of this, pray let me know, and if you do not, let me know. Indeed, I am anxious to hear from you, for 'as the day of trouble is with me, so shall my strength be.' To be friends *from the teeth forwards* is common enough; but it strikes me that there is something still more ludicrous in the reverse of the picture, and so to be enemies—and why should I be, *from the teeth forwards*,

Yours sincerely,

JAMES HOGG?"

Scott's reply was, as Hogg says, "a brief note, *telling* him to think no more of the business, and come to breakfast the next morning." The misunderstanding being thus closed, they appear to have counselled and co-operated together in the most cordial fashion, in disciplining their rural allies for the muster of Carterhaugh—the Duke of Buccleuch's brother-in-law, the Earl of Home, having appointed the Shepherd his Lieutenant over the Yarrow Band, while the Sheriff took under his special cognizance the *Sutors*, *i. e. Shoemakers*, of Selkirk—for so the burgesses of that town have for ages styled themselves, and under that denomination their warlike prowess in the days of yore has been celebrated in many an old ballad, besides the well-known one which begins with

"'Tis up wi' the Sutors o' Selkirk,
And 'tis down wi' the Earl of Home!"

In order to understand all the allusions in the newspaper record of this important day, one must be familiar with the notes to the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border; but I shall not burden it with further comment here.

"FOOTBALL MATCH.—On Monday, 4th December, there was played, upon the extensive plain of Carterhaugh, near the junction of the Ettrick and Yarrow, the greatest match at the ball which has taken place for many years. It was held by the people of the Dale of Yarrow, against those of the parish of Selkirk; the former being brought to the field by the Right Hon. the Earl of Home, and the Gallant Sutors by their Chief Magistrate, Ebenezer Clarkson, Esq. Both sides were joined by many volunteers from other parishes; and the appearance of the various parties marching from their different glens to the place of rendezvous, with pipes playing and loud acclamations, carried back the coldest imagination to the old times when the Foresters assembled with the less peaceable purpose of invading the English territory, or defending their own. The romantic character of the scenery aided the illusion, as well as the performance of a feudal ceremony previous to commencing the games.

"His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry came upon the ground about 11 o'clock, attended by his sons, the young Earl of Dalkeith, and Lord John Scott; the Countess of Home; the Ladies Ann, Charlotte, and Isabella Scott; Lord and Lady Montagu and family; the Hon. General Sir Edward Stopford, K. B.; Sir John Riddell of Riddell; Sir Alexander Don of Newton; Mr. Elliot Lockhart, member for the county; Mr. Pringle of Whytebank, younger; Mr. Pringle of Torwoodlee; Captain Pringle, Royal Navy; Mr. Boyd of Broadmeadows and family; Mr. Chisholm of Chisholm; Major Pott of Todrig; Mr. Walter Scott, Sheriff of Selkirkshire, and family,—and many other gentlemen and ladies.—The ancient banner of the Buccleuch family, a curious and venerable relique, emblazoned with armorial bearings, and with the word "*Bellendaine*," the ancient war-cry of the clan of Scott, was then displayed, as on former occasions, when the chief took the field in person, whether for the purpose of war or sport. The banner was delivered by Lady Ann Scott to Master Walter Scott, younger, of Abbotsford, who attended suitably mounted and armed, and riding over the field, displaying it to the sound of the war-pipes, and amid the acclamations of the assembled spectators, who could not be fewer than 2000 in number. That this singular renewal of an ancient military custom might not want poetical celebrity, verses were distributed among the spectators, composed for the occasion by Mr. Walter Scott and the Ettrick Shepherd. Mr. James Hogg acted as side-decamp to the Earl of Home in the command of the Yarrow men, and Mr. Robert Henderson of Selkirk to Mr. Clarkson, both of whom contributed not a little to the good order of the day.

"The ball was thrown up between the parties by the Duke of Buccleuch, and the first game was gained, after a severe conflict of an hour and a half duration, by the Selkirk men. The second game was still more severely contested, and after a close and stubborn struggle of more than three hours, with various fortune, and much display of strength and agility on both sides, was at length carried by the Yarrow men. The ball should then have been thrown up a third time, but considerable difficulty occurred in arranging the voluntary auxiliaries from other parishes, so as to make the match equal; and as the day began to close, it was found impossible to bring the strife to an issue, by playing a decisive game.

"Both parties, therefore, parted with equal honours; but, before they left the ground, the Sheriff threw up his hat, and in Lord Dalkeith's name and his own, challenged the Yarrow men, on the part of the Sutors, to a match to be played upon the first convenient opportunity with 100 picked men only on each side. The challenge was mutually accepted by Lord Home, on his own part, and for Lord John Scott, and was received with acclamation by the players on both sides. The principal gentlemen present took part with one side or other, except the Duke of Buccleuch, who remains neutral. Great play is expected, and all bets are to be paid by the losers to the poor of the winning parish. We cannot dismiss the subject, without giving our highest commendation to the Earl of Home, and to Mr. Clarkson, for the attention which they showed in promoting the spirit and good order of the day. For the players themselves, it was impossible to see a finer set of active and athletic young fellows than appeared on the field. But what was chiefly admired in their conduct was, that though several hundreds in number, exceedingly keen for their respective parties, and engaged in so rough and animated a contest, they maintained the most perfect good humour, and showed how unnecessary it is to discourage manly and athletic exercises among the common people, under pretext of maintaining subordination and good order. We have only to regret that the great concourse of spectators rendered it difficult

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to mention the names of the several players who distinguished themselves by feats of strength or agility; but we must not omit to record, that the first ball was *kutted* by Robert Hall, mason in *Selkirk*, and the second by George Brodie, from *Greatlaws*, upon *Ale-water*.

"The Selkirk party wore slips of fir as their mark of distinction—the Yarrow men, sprigs of heath.

"Refreshments were distributed to the players by the Duke of Buccleuch's domestics, in a booth erected for the purpose; and no persons were allowed to sell ale or spirits on the field.

"In the evening, there was a dance at the Duke's hunting-seat at Bowhill, attended by the nobility and gentry who had witnessed the sport of the day; and the fascination of Gow's violin and band detained them in the dancing-room till the dawn of the winter morning."

The newspaper then gives the songs above alluded to—viz., Scott's "Lifting of the Banner:"—

"From the brown crest of Newark its summons extending,
Our signal is waving in smoke and in flame,
And each Forester blythe, from his mountain descending,
Bounds light o'er the heather to join in the game;
Then up with the Banner! let forest wind fan her!
She has blazed over Ettrick eight ages and more;
In sport we'll attend her, in battle defend her,
With heart and with hand, like our Fathers before," &c.

—and that excellent ditty by Hogg, entitled, "The Ettrick Garland, to the Ancient Banner of the House of Buccleuch:"—

"And hast thou here, like hermit gray,
Thy mystic characters unroll'd,
O'er peaceful revellers to play,
Thou emblem of the days of old?
All hail! memorial of the brave,
The liegeman's pride, the Border's awe!
May thy gray pennon never wave
On sterner field than Carterhaugh!" &c.

I have no doubt the Sheriff of the Forest was a prouder man, when he saw his boy ride about Carterhaugh with the pennon of Bellenden, than when Platoff mounted himself for the imperial review of the *Champ de Mars*. It is a pity that I should have occasion to allude, before I quit a scene so characteristic of Scott, to another outbreak of Hogg's jealous humour. His Autobiography informs us, that when the more distinguished part of the company assembled, on the conclusion of the sport, to dine at Bowhill, he was proceeding to place himself at a particular table—but the Sheriff seized his arm, told him *that* was reserved for the nobility, and seated him at an inferior board—"between himself and the Laird of Harden"—the first gentleman of the clan Scott. "The fact is," says Hogg, "I am convinced he was sore afraid of my getting to be too great a favourite among the young ladies of Buccleuch!" Who can read this, and not be reminded of Sancho Panza and the Duchess? And, after all, he quite mistook what Scott had said to him; for certainly there was, neither on this, nor on any similar occasion at Bowhill, any *high table for the nobility*, though there was a *side-table for the children*, at which when the Shepherd of Ettrick was about to seat himself, his friend probably whispered that it was reserved for the "*little* lords and ladies, and their playmates." This blunder may seem undeserving of any explanation; but it is often in small matters that the strongest feelings are most strikingly betrayed—and this story is, in exact proportion to its silliness, indicative of the jealous feeling which mars and distorts so many of Hogg's representations of Scott's conduct and demeanour.

It appears, from the account of this football match in the Edinburgh Journal, that Scott took a lead in proposing a renewal of the contest. This, however, never occurred; and that it ought not to do so, had probably occurred from the first to the Duke of Buccleuch, who is mentioned as having alone abstained from laying any bets on the final issue.

When Mr. Washington Irving visited Scott two years afterwards at Abbotsford, he told his American friend that "the old feuds and local interests, and revelries and animosities of the Scotch, still slept in their ashes, and might easily be roused; their hereditary feeling for names was still great; it was not always safe to have even the mimic war of football between villages;—the old clannish spirit was too apt to break out."*

The good Duke of Buccleuch's solitary exemption from these heats of Carterhaugh, might read a significant lesson to minor politicians of all parties on more important scenes. In pursuance of the same peace-making spirit, he appears to have been desirous of doing something gratifying to the men of the town of Selkirk, who had on this occasion taken the field against his Yarrow tenantry. His Grace consulted Scott about the design of a piece of plate to be presented to their community; and his letter on this weighty subject must not be omitted in the memoirs of a Sheriff of Selkirk:—

To his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c., Bowhill.

"Edinburgh, Thursday.

"My dear Lord,

"I have proceeded in my commission about the cup. It will be a very handsome one. But I am still puzzled to dispose of the birse† in a becoming manner. It is a most unmanageable decoration. I tried it upright on the top of the cup; it looked like a shaving-brush, and the goblet might be intended to make the lather. Then I thought I had a brilliant idea. The arms of Selkirk are a female seated on a sarcophagus, decorated with the arms of Scotland, which will make a beautiful top to the cup. So I thought of putting the birse into the lady's other hand; but, alas! it looked so precisely like the rod of chastisement uplifted over the poor child, that I laughed at the drawing for half an hour. Next, I tried to take off the castigatory appearance, by inserting the bristles in a kind of handle; but then it looked as if the poor woman had been engaged in the capacities of housemaid and child-keeper at once, and fatigued with her double duty, had sat down on the wine-cooler, with the broom in one hand, and the bairn in the other. At length, after some conference with Charles Sharpe, I have hit on a plan, which, I think, will look very well, if tolerably executed,—namely, to have the lady seated in due form on the top of the lid, (which will look handsome, and will be well taken,) and to have a thistle wreathed around the sarcophagus, and rising above her head, and from the top of the thistle shall proceed the birse. I will bring a drawing with me, and they shall get the cup ready in the mean time. I hope to be at Abbotsford on Monday night, to stay for a week. My cat has eat two or three birds, while regaling on the crumbs that were thrown for them. This was a breach of hospitality; but *oportet vivere*—and *micat inter omnes*—with which stolen pun, and my respectful compliments to Lord Montagu and the ladies, I am, very truly, your Grace's most faithful and obliged servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—Under another cover, which I have just received, I send the two drawings of the front and reverse of the lid of the proposed cup. Your Grace will be so good as understand that the thistle,—the top of which is garnished with the bristle,—is entirely detached, in working, from the figure, and slips into a socket. The following lines are humbly suggested for a motto, being taken from an ancient Scottish canzonetta,—unless the Yarrow committee can find any better:—

'The sutor ga'e the sow a tass;
Grumph! quo' the sow, it's a' for my birse.'"

Some weeks before the year 1815 closed, Mr. Morritt sustained the heaviest of domestic afflictions; and several letters on that sad subject had passed between Rokeby and Abbotsford, before the date of the following:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M.P., Rokeby Park.

"Edinburgh, 22d Dec. 1815.

"My dear Morritt,

"While you know what satisfaction it would have given me to have seen you here, I am very sensible of the more weighty reasons which you urge for preferring to stay at Rokeby for some time. I only hope you will remember that Scotland has claims on you, whenever you shall find your own mind so far at ease as to permit you to look abroad for consolation; and if it should happen that you thought of being here about our time of vacation, I have my time then entirely at my own command, and I need not say, that as much of it as could in any

* Irving's Abbotsford and Newstead, 1835, p. 46.

† A *birse*, or bunch of hog's *bristles*, forms the cognizance of the Sutors. When a new burgess is admitted into their community, *the birse* passes round with the cup of welcome, and every elder brother dips into the wine, and draws it through his mouth, before it reaches the happy neophyte, who, of course, pays it similar respect.

Poetical Works, (Edit. 1834,) vol. ix. p. 312.

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manner of way contribute to your amusement, is most heartily at yours. I have myself at present the melancholy task of watching the declining health of my elder brother, Major Scott, whom, I think, you have seen.

"My literary occupation is getting through the press the Letters of Paul, of whose lucubrations I trust soon to send you a copy. As the observations of a bystander, perhaps you will find some amusement in them, especially as I had some channels of information not accessible to every one. The recess of our courts, which takes place to-morrow, for three weeks, will give me ample time to complete this job, and also the second volume of Triermain, which is nearly finished,—a strange rude story, founded partly on the ancient northern traditions respecting the Berserkers, whose peculiar habits, and fits of martial frenzy, make such a figure in the Sagas. I shall then set myself seriously to the Antiquary, of which I have only a very general sketch at present; but when once I get my pen to the paper, it will walk fast enough. I am sometimes tempted to leave it alone, and try whether it will not write as well without the assistance of my head as with it. A hopeful prospect for the reader. In the mean while, the snow, which is now falling so fast as to make it dubious when this letter may reach Rokeby, is likely to forward these important avocations, by keeping me a constant resident in Edinburgh, in lieu of my plan of going to Abbotsford, where I had a number of schemes in hand in the way of planting and improving. I believe I told you I have made a considerable addition to my little farm, and extended my domains towards a wild lake, which I have a good prospect of acquiring also. It has a sort of legendary fame; for the persuasion of the solitary shepherds who approach its banks, is, that it is tenanted by a very large amphibious animal, called by them a water-bull, and which several of them pretend to have seen. As his dimensions greatly exceed those of an otter, I am tempted to think with Trinculo, 'This is the devil, and no monster.' But, after all, is it not strange, that as to almost all the lakes in Scotland, both Lowland and Highland, such a belief should prevail? and that the description popularly given uniformly corresponds with that of the hippopotamus? It is possible, that at some remote period, that remarkable animal, like some others which have now disappeared, may have been an inhabitant of our large lakes? Certainly the vanishing of the mammoth and other animals from the face of creation, renders such a conjecture less wild than I would otherwise esteem it. It is certain we have lost the beaver, whose bones have been more than once found in our Selkirkshire bogs and marl mosses. The remains of the wild bull are very frequently found; and I have more than one scull, with the horns of most formidable dimensions.

"About a fortnight ago, we had a great foot-ball match in Selkirkshire, when the Duke of Buccleuch raised his banner (a very curious and ancient pennon) in great form. Your friend Walter was banner-bearer, dressed like a forester of old, in green, with a green bonnet, and an eagle feather in it; and, as he was well mounted, and rode handsomely over the field, he was much admired by all his clansmen.

"I have thrown these trifles together, without much hope that they will afford you amusement; but I know you will wish to know what I am about, and I have but trifles to send to those friends who interest themselves about a trifler. My present employment is watching, from time to time, the progress of a stupid cause, in order to be ready to reduce the sentence into writing, when the court shall have decided whether Gordon of Kenmore or MacMichan of Meikleforthhead be the superior of the lands of Tarschrechan and Dalbrattle, and entitled to the feudal casualities payable forth thereof, which may amount to twopence sterling, once in half a-dozen of years. Marry, sir, they make part of a freehold qualification, and the decision may wing a voter. I did not send the book you received by the Selkirk coach. I wish I could have had sense enough to send any thing which could afford you consolation. I think our friend Lady Louisa was likely to have had this attention; she has, God knows, been herself tried with affliction, and is well acquainted with the sources from which comfort can be drawn. My wife joins in kindest remembrances, as do Sophia and Walter. Ever yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

This letter is dated the 22d of December. On the 24th, John Ballantyne, being then at Abbotsford, writes to Messrs. Constable:—"Paul is *all* in hand;" and an envelope, addressed to James Ballantyne on the 29th, has preserved another little fragment of Scott's playful doggerel:—

"Dear James—I'm done, thank God, with the long yarns
Of the most prosy of Apostles—Paul;
And now advance, sweet Heathen of Monkbarns,
Step out, old quizz, as fast as I can scrawl."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

PUBLICATION OF PAUL'S LETTERS TO HIS KINSFOLK—GUY MANNERING "TERRY-FIED"—DEATH OF MAJOR JOHN SCOTT—LETTERS TO THOMAS SCOTT—PUBLICATION OF THE ANTIQUARY—HISTORY OF 1814 FOR THE EDINBURGH ANNUAL REGISTER—LETTERS ON THE HISTORY OF SCOTLAND PROJECTED—PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST TALES OF MY LANDLORD BY MURRAY AND BLACKWOOD—ANECDOTES OF MR. TRAIN—QUARTERLY REVIEW ON THE TALES—BUILDING AT ABBOTSFORD BEGUN—LETTERS TO MORRITT, TERRY, MURRAY, AND THE BALLANTYNES.—1816.

THE year 1815 may be considered as, for Scott's peaceful tenor of life, an eventful one. That which followed has left almost its only traces in the successive appearance of nine volumes, which attest the prodigal genius, and hardly less astonishing industry of the man. Early in January were published Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk, of which I need not now say more than that they were received with lively curiosity, and general, though not vociferous applause. The first edition was an octavo, of 6000 copies; and it was followed, in the course of the next two or three years, by a second and a third, amounting together to 3000 more. The popularity of the novelist was at its height; and this admitted, if not avowed, specimen of Scott's prose, must have been perceived, by all who had any share of discrimination, to flow from the same pen.

Mr. Terry produced in the spring of 1816 a dramatic piece, entitled, "Guy Mannering," which met with great success on the London boards, and still continues to be a favourite with the theatrical public; what share the novelist himself had in this first specimen of what he used to call "the art of *Terryfying*," I cannot exactly say; but his correspondence shows that the pretty song of the *Lullaby** was not his only contribution to it; and I infer that he had taken the trouble to modify the plot, and rearrange, for stage purposes, a considerable part of the original dialogue. The casual risk of discovery, through the introduction of the song which had, in the mean time, been communicated to one of his humble dependents, the late Alexander Campbell, editor of Albyn's Anthology—(commonly known at Abbotsford as, by way of excellence, "*The Dunniewassail*,")—and Scott's suggestions on that difficulty, will amuse the reader of the following letter:—

To D. Terry, Esq., Alfred Place, Bloomsbury, London.

"Abbotsford, 18th April, 1816.

"My dear Terry,

"I give you joy of your promotion to the dignity of an householder, and heartily wish you all the success you so well deserve, to answer the approaching enlargement of your domestic establishment. You will find a house a very devouring monster, and that the purveying for it requires a little exertion, and a great deal of self-denial and arrangement. But when there is domestic peace and contentment, all that would be otherwise disagreeable, as restraining our taste and occupying our time, becomes easy. I trust Mrs. Terry will get her business easily over, and that you will soon 'dandle Dickie on your knee.' I have been at the spring circuit, which made me late in receiving your letter, and there I was introduced to a man whom I never saw in my life before, namely, the proprietor of all the Pepper and Mustard family, in other words, the genuine Dandie Dinmont. Dandie is himself modest, and says, 'he b'lieves its only the dougs that is in the buik, and no himsel.' As the surveyor of taxes was going his ominous rounds past Hyndlee, which is the abode of Dandie, his whole pack rushed out on the man of execution, and Dandie followed them, (conscious that their number greatly exceeded his return,) exclaiming, 'the tae hauf o' them is but whalps, man.' In truth, I knew nothing of the man, except his odd humour of having only two names for twenty dogs. But there are lines of general resemblance among all these hill-men, which there is no missing; and Jamie Davidson of Hyndlee certainly looks

* See Scott's Poetical Works, (Edit. 1834,) vol. xi. p. 317.

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Dandie Dinmont remarkably well. He is much flattered with the compliment, and goes uniformly by the name among his comrades, but has never read the book. Ailie used to read it to him, but it set him asleep. All this you will think funny enough. I am afraid I am in a scrape about the song, and that of my own making; for as it never occurred to me that there was any thing odd in my writing two or three verses for you, which have no connexion with the novel, I was at no pains to disown them; and Campbell is just that sort of crazy creature, with whom there is no confidence, not from want of honour and disposition to oblige, but from his flighty temper. The music of *Cadil gu lo* is already printed in his publication, and nothing can be done with him, for fear of setting his tongue a-going. Erskine and you may consider whether you should barely acknowledge an obligation to an unknown friend, or pass the matter altogether in silence. In my opinion, my *first* idea was preferable to both, because I cannot see what earthly connexion there is between the song and the novel, or how acknowledging the one is fathering the other. On the contrary, it seems to me that acknowledgment tends to exclude the idea of farther obligation than to the extent specified. I forgot also that I had given a copy of the lines to Mrs. Macleod of Macleod, from whom I had the air. But I remit the matter entirely to you and Erskine, for there must be many points in it which I cannot be supposed a good judge of. At any rate don't let it delay your publication, and believe I shall be quite satisfied with what you think proper.

"I have got from my friend Glengarry the noblest dog ever seen on the Border since Johnnie Armstrong's time. He is between the wolf and deer greyhound, about six feet from the tip of the nose to the tail, and high and strong in proportion: he is quite gentle, and a great favourite: tell Will. Erskine he will eat off his plate without being at the trouble to put a paw on the table or chair. I showed him to Matthews, who dined one day in Castle Street before I came here, where, except for Mrs. S., I am like unto

'The spirit who dwelleth by himself
In the land of mist and snow'—

for it is snowing and hailing eternally, and will kill all the lambs to a certainty, unless it changes in a few hours. At any rate, it will cure us of the embarrassments arising from plenty and low markets. Much good luck to your dramatic exertions: when I can be of use, command me. Mrs. Scott joins me in regards to Mrs. Terry, and considers the house as the greatest possible bargain: the situation is all you can wish. Adieu, yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—On consideration, and comparing difficulties, I think I will settle with Campbell to take my name from the verses as they stand in his collection. The verses themselves I cannot take away without imprudent explanations; and as they go to other music, and stand without any name, they will probably not be noticed, so you need give yourself no further trouble on the score. I should like to see my copy: pray send it to the post-office, under cover to Mr. Freeling, whose unlimited privilege is at my service on all occasions."

Early in May appeared the novel of "the Antiquary," which seems to have been begun a little before the close of 1815. It came out at a moment of domestic distress.

Throughout the year 1815 Major John Scott had been drooping. He died on the 8th of May, 1816; and I extract the letter in which this event was announced to Mr. Thomas Scott by his only surviving brother.

To Thomas Scott, Esq., Paymaster of the 70th Regiment, Canada.

"Edinburgh, 15th May, 1816.

"My dear Tom,

"This brings you the melancholy news of our brother John's concluding his long and lingering illness by death, upon Thursday last. We had thought it impossible he should survive the winter, but, as the weather became milder, he gathered strength, and went out several times. In the beginning of the week he became worse, and on Wednesday kept his bed. On Thursday, about two o'clock, they sent me an express to Abbotsford—the man reached me at nine. I immediately set out, and travelled all night—but had not the satisfaction to see my brother alive. He had died about four o'clock, without much pain, being completely exhausted. You will naturally feel most anxious about my mother's state of health and spirits. I am happy to say, she has borne this severe shock with great firmness and resignation, is perfectly well in her health, and as strong in her mind as ever you knew her. She feels her loss, but is also sensible that protracted existence, with a constitution so irretrievably broken up, could have been no blessing. Indeed I must say, that, in many respects, her situation will be more comfortable on account of this removal, when the first shock is over; for to watch an invalid, and to undergo all the changes of a temper fretted by suffering, suited ill with her age and habits. The funeral, which took place yesterday, was decent and private, becoming our father's eldest son, and the head of a quiet family. After it, I asked Hay Donaldson and Mr. MacCulloch* to look over his papers, in case there should be any testamentary provision, but none such was found; nor do I think he had any intention of altering the destination, which divides his effects between his surviving brothers.

Your affectionate

W. S."

A few days afterwards, he hands to Mr. Thomas Scott a formal statement of pecuniary affairs; the result of which was, that the Major had left something not much under £6000. Major Scott, from all I have heard, was a sober, sedate bachelor, of dull mind and frugal tastes, who, after his retirement from the army, divided his time between his mother's primitive fireside, and the society of a few whist-playing brother officers, that met for an evening rubber at Fortune's tavern. But, making every allowance for his retired and thrifty habits, I infer that the payments made to each of the three brothers out of their father's estate must have, prior to 1816, amounted to £5000. From the letter conveying this statement (29th May,) I extract a few sentences:

"Dear Tom,

". . . . . Should the possession of this sum, and the certainty that you must, according to the course of nature, in a short space of years succeed to a similar sum of £3000 belonging to our mother, induce you to turn your thoughts to Scotland, I shall be most happy to forward your views with any influence I may possess; and I have little doubt that, sooner or later, something may be done. But unfortunately, every avenue is now choked with applicants, whose claims are very strong; for the number of disbanded officers, and public servants dismissed in consequence of Parliament turning restive and refusing the income-tax, is great and increasing. Economy is the order of the day, and I assure you they are shaving properly close. It would, no doubt, be comparatively easy to get you a better situation where you are, but then it is bidding farewell to your country, at least for a long time, and separating your children from all knowledge of those with whom they are naturally connected. I shall anxiously expect to hear from you on your views and wishes. I think, at all events, you ought to get rid of the drudgery of the paymastership—but not without trying to exchange it for something else. I do not know how it is with you—but I do not feel myself quite so *young* as I was when we met last, and I should like well to see my only brother return to his own country and settle, without thoughts of leaving it, till it is exchanged for one that is dark and distant. . . . . I left all Jack's personal trifles at my mother's disposal. There was nothing of the slightest value, excepting his gold watch, which was my sister's, and a good one. My mother says he had wished my son Walter should have it, as his male representative—which I can only accept on condition *your* little Walter will accept a similar token of regard from his remaining uncle.—Yours affectionately,

W. S."

The letter in which Scott communicated his brother's death to Mr. Morritt, gives us his own original opinion of The Antiquary. It has also some remarks on the separation of Lord and Lady Byron—and the "domestic verses" of the noble poet.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M. P. London.

"Edinburgh, May 16, 1816.

"My dear Morritt,

"I have been occupied of late with scenes of domestic distress, my poor brother, Major John Scott, having last week closed a life which wasting disease had long rendered burthensome. His death, under all the circumstances, cannot be termed a subject of deep affliction; and though we were always on fraternal terms of mutual kindness and good-will, yet our habits of life, our taste for society and circles of friends, were so totally different,

* The late Mr. Hay Donaldson, W. S.—an intimate friend of both Thomas and Walter Scott, and Mr. Macculloch of Ardwell, the brother of Mrs. Thomas Scott.

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that there was little frequent intercourse between us than our connexion and real liking to each other might have occasioned. Yet it is a heavy consideration to have lost the last but one who was interested in our early domestic life, our habits of boyhood, and our first friends and connexions. It makes one look about and see how the scene has changed around him, and how he himself has been changed with it. My only remaining brother is in Canada, and seems to have an intention of remaining there; so that my mother, now upwards of eighty, has now only one child left to her out of thirteen whom she has borne. She is a most excellent woman, possessed, even at her advanced age, of all the force of mind and sense of duty which have carried her through so many domestic griefs, as the successive death of eleven children, some of them come to men and women's estate, naturally infers. She is the principal subject of my attention at present, and is, I am glad to say, perfectly well in body and composed in mind.

"Nothing can give me more pleasure than the prospect of seeing you in September, which will suit our motions perfectly well. I trust I shall have an opportunity to introduce you to some of our glens which you have not yet seen. But I hope we shall have some mild weather before that time, for we are now in the seventh month of winter, which almost leads me to suppose that we shall see no summer this season. As for spring, that is past praying for. In the month of November last, people were skating in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh; and now, in the middle of May, the snow is lying white on Arthur's Seat, and on the range of the Pentlands. It is really fearful, and the sheep are perishing by scores. *Jam satis terræ nivis, &c.* may well be taken up as the song of eighteen hundred and sixteen.

"So Lord Byron's romance seems to be concluded for one while—and it is surely time, after he has announced, or rather they themselves have announced, half a dozen blackguard newspaper editors, to have been his confidants on the occasion. Surely it is a strange thirst of public fame that seeks such a road to it. But Lord Byron, with high genius and many points of a noble and generous feeling, has Childe Harolded himself, and outlawed himself, into too great a resemblance with the pictures of his imagination. He has one excuse, however, and it is a sad one. I have been reckoned to make a good hit enough at a pirate, or an outlaw, or a smuggling bandit; but I cannot say I was ever so much enchanted with my work as to think of carrying off a *drift* of my neighbour's sheep, or half a dozen of his milk cows. Only I remember, in the rough times, having a scheme with the Duke of Buccleuch, that when the worst came to the worst, we should repair Hermitage Castle, and live, like Robin Hood and his merry men, at the expense of all round us. But this presupposed a grand *bouleversement* of society. In the mean while, I think my noble friend is something like my old peacock, who chooses to bivouac apart from his lady, and sit below my bedroom window, to keep me awake with his screeching lamentation. Only I own he is not equal in melody to Lord Byron, for *Fare-thee-well—and if for ever*, &c., is a very sweet dirge indeed. After all, *C'est genie mal logé*, and that's all that can be said about it.

"I am quite reconciled to your opinions on the income-tax, and am not at all in despair at the prospect of keeping £200 a year in my pocket, since the ministers can fadge without it. But their throwing the helve after the hatchet, and giving up the malt-duty because they had lost the other, was droll enough. After all, our fat friend* must learn to live within compass, and fire off no more crackers in the Park, for John Bull is getting dreadfully sore on all sides when money is concerned.

"I sent you, some time since, the Antiquary. It is not so interesting as its predecessors—the period did not admit of so much romantic situation. But it has been more fortunate than any of them in the sale, for 6000 went off in the first six days, and it is now at press again; which is very flattering to the unknown author. Another incognito proposes immediately to resume the second volume of Triermain, which is at present in the state of the Bear and Fiddle. Adieu, dear Morritt. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

* Shortly after Beau Brummell (immortalized in Don Juan) fell into disgrace with the Prince Regent, and was dismissed from the society of Carlton House, he was riding with another gentleman in the Park, when the Prince met them. His Royal Highness stopt to speak to Brummell's companion—the Beau continued to jog on—and when the other dandy rejoined him, asked with an air of sovereign indifference, "Who is your fat friend?" Such, at least, was the story that went the round of the newspapers at the time, and highly tickled Scott's fancy. I have heard that nobody enjoyed so much as the Prince of Wales himself an earlier specimen of the Beau's assurance. Taking offence at some part of His Royal Highness's conduct or demeanour, "Upon my word," observed Mr. Brummell, "if this kind of thing goes on, I shall be obliged to cut Wales, and bring the old King into fashion."

Speaking of his third novel in a letter of the same date to Terry, Scott says, "It wants the romance of Waverley and the adventure of Guy Mannering; and yet there is some salvation about it, for if a man will paint from nature, he will be likely to amuse those who are daily looking at it."

After a little pause of hesitation, The Antiquary attained popularity not inferior to Guy Mannering; and, though the author appears for a moment to have shared the doubts which he read in the countenance of James Ballantyne, it certainly was, in the sequel, his chief favourite among all his novels. Nor is it difficult to account for this preference, without laying any stress on the fact, that, during a few short weeks, it was pretty commonly talked of as a falling off from its immediate predecessors—and that some minor critics re-echoed this stupid whisper in print. In that view, there were many of its successors that had much stronger claims on the parental instinct of protection. But the truth is, that although Scott's Introduction of 1830 represents him as pleased with fancying that, in the principal personage, he had embalmed a worthy friend of his boyish days, his own antiquarian propensities, originating, perhaps, in the kind attentions of George Constable of Wallace-Cragie, and fostered not a little, at about as ductile a period, by those of old Clerk of Eldin, and John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, had by degrees so developed themselves, that he could hardly, even when the Antiquary was published, have scrupled about recognising a quaint caricature of the founder of the Abbotsford Museum, in the inimitable portraiture of the Laird of Monkbarns. The Descriptive Catalogue of that collection, which he began towards the close of his life, but, alas! never finished, is entitled, "*Reliquiæ Trottcosianæ—or the Gabions of the late Jonathan Oldbuck, Esq.*"

But laying this, which might have been little more than a good-humoured pleasantry, out of the question, there is assuredly no one of all his works on which more of his own early associations have left their image. Of those early associations, as his full-grown tastes were all the progeny, so his genius, in all its happiest efforts, was the "Recording Angel;" and when George Constable first expounded his "Gabions" to the child that was to immortalize his name, they were either wandering hand in hand over the field where the grass still grew rank upon the grave of *Balmawhapple*, or sauntering on the beach where the *Mucklebackets* of Prestonpans dried their nets, singing,

"Weel may the boatie row, and better may she speed,
O weel may the boatie row that wins the bairns' bread"—

or telling wild stories about cliff-escapes and the funerals of shipwrecked fishermen.

Considered by itself, without reference to these sources of personal interest, this novel seems to me to possess, almost throughout, in common with its two predecessors, a kind of simple unsought charm, which the subsequent works of the series hardly reached, save in occasional snatches:—like them it is, in all its humbler and softer scenes, the transcript of actual Scottish life, as observed by the man himself. And I think it must also be allowed, that he has nowhere displayed his highest art, that of skilful contrast, in greater perfection. Even the tragic romance of Waverley does not set off its Macwheebles and Callum Begs better than the oddities of Jonathan Oldbuck and his circle are relieved, on the one hand, by the stately gloom of the Glenallans, on the other, by the stern affliction of the poor fisherman, who, when discovered repairing the "auld black bitch o' a boat" in which his boy had been lost, and congratulated by his visiter on being capable of the exertion, makes answer, "And what would you have me to do, unless I wanted to see four children starve, because one is drowned? *it's weel wi' you gentles, that can sit in the house wi' handkerchers at your een, when ye lose a friend; but the like o' us maun to our wark again, if our hearts were beating as hard as my hammer.*"

It may be worth noting, that it was in correcting the proof-sheets of this novel that Scott first took

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to equipping his chapters with mottoes of his own fabrication. On one occasion he happened to ask John Ballantyne, who was sitting by him, to hunt for a particular passage in Beaumont and Fletcher. John did as he was bid, but did not succeed in discovering the lines. "Hang it, Johnnie," cried Scott, "I believe I can make a motto sooner than you will find one." He did so accordingly; and from that hour, whenever memory failed to suggest an appropriate epigraph, he had recourse to the inexhaustible mines of "*old play*" or "*old ballad*," to which we owe some of the most exquisite verses that ever flowed from his pen.

Unlike, I believe, most men, whenever Scott neared the end of one composition, his spirits seem to have caught a new spring of buoyancy, and before the last sheet was sent from his desk, he had crowded his brain with the imagination of another fiction. The Antiquary was published, as we have seen, in May, but by the beginning of April he had already opened to the Ballantynes the plan of the first Tales of my Landlord; and—to say nothing of Harold the Dauntless, which he began shortly after the Bridal of Triermain was finished, and which he seems to have kept before him for two years as a congenial plaything, to be taken up whenever the coach brought no proof-sheets to jog him as to serious matters—he had also, before this time, undertaken to write the historical department of the Register for 1814. Mr. Southey had, for reasons upon which I do not enter, discontinued his services to that work; and it was now doubly necessary, after trying for one year a less eminent hand, that if the work were not to be dropped altogether, some strenuous exertion should be made to sustain its character. Scott had not yet collected the materials requisite for his historical sketch of a year distinguished for the importance and complexity of its events; but these, he doubted not, would soon reach him, and he felt no hesitation about pledging himself to complete, not only that sketch, but four new volumes of prose romances—and his Harold the Dauntless also, if Ballantyne could make any suitable arrangement on that score—between the April and the Christmas of 1816.

The Antiquary had been published by Constable, but I presume that, in addition to the usual stipulations, he had been again, on that occasion, solicited to relieve John Ballantyne and Co.'s stock to an extent which he did not find quite convenient; and at all events he had, though I know not on what ground, shown a considerable reluctance of late to employ James Ballantyne and Co. as printers. One or other of these impediments is alluded to in a note of Scott's, which, though undated, has been pasted into John Ballantyne's private letter-book among the documents of the period in question. It is in these words:—

"Dear John,

"I have seen the great swab, who is supple as a glove, and will do ALL, which some interpret NOTHING. However, we shall do well enough.

W. S."

Constable had been admitted almost from the beginning, into the *secret* of the Novels—and for that, among other reasons, it would have been desirable for the Novelist to have him continue the publisher without interruption; but Scott was led to suspect, that if he were called upon to conclude a bargain for a fourth novel before the third had made its appearance, his scruples as to the matter of *printing* might at least protract the treaty; and why Scott should have been urgently desirous of seeing the transaction settled before the expiration of the half-yearly term of Whitsunday, is sufficiently explained by the fact, that while so much of the old unfortunate stock of John Ballantyne and Co. still remained on hand—and with it some occasional recurrence of commercial difficulty as to *floating bills* was to be expected—the sanguine author had gone on purchasing one patch of land after another, until his estate at Abbotsford had already grown from 150 to nearly 1000 acres. The property all about his original farm had been in the hands of various small holders, (Scotice *cock-lairds*;) these persons were sharp enough to understand, ere long, that their neighbour could with difficulty resist any temptation that might present itself in the shape of an offer of more acres; and thus he proceeded buying up lot after lot of unimproved ground, at extravagant prices, his appetite increasing by what it fed on, while the ejected yeomen set themselves down elsewhere to fatten at their leisure upon the profits, most commonly the anticipated profits, of "The Scotch Novels."

He was ever and anon pulled up with a momentary misgiving,—and resolved that the latest acquisition should be the last, until he could get rid entirely of "John Ballantyne and Co.;" but John Ballantyne was, from the utter lightness of his mind, his incapacity to look a day before him, and his eager impatience to enjoy the passing hour, the very last man in the world, who could, under such circumstances, have been a serviceable agent. Moreover John, too, had his professional ambition; he was naturally proud of his connexion, however secondary, with the publication of these works—and this connexion, though subordinate, was still very profitable; he must have suspected, that should his name disappear altogether from the list of booksellers, it would be a very difficult matter for him to retain any concern in them; and I cannot, on the whole, but consider it as certain, that, the first and more serious embarrassments being overcome, he was far from continuing to hold by his patron's anxiety for the ultimate and total abolition of their unhappy copartnership. He, at all events, unless when some sudden emergency arose, flattered Scott's own gay imagination, by uniformly representing every thing in the most smiling colours; and though Scott, in his replies, seldom failed to introduce some passing hint of caution—such as "*Nullum numen abest si sit prudentia*"—he more and more took home to himself the agreeable cast of his *Rigdum's* anticipations, and wrote to him in a vein as merry as his own—*e. g.*—"As for our stock,

"'Twill be wearing awa', John,
Like snaw-wreaths when it's thaw, John," &c. &c. &c.

I am very sorry, in a word, to confess my conviction that John Ballantyne, however volatile and light-headed, acted at his period with cunning selfishness, both by Scott and by Constable. He well knew that it was to Constable alone that his firm had more than once owed its escape from utter ruin and dishonour; and he must also have known, that had a fair, straightforward effort been made for that purpose, after the triumphant career of the Waverley series had once commenced, nothing could have been more easy than to bring all the affairs of his "back-stock, &c.," to a complete close, by entering into a distinct and candid treaty on that subject, in connexion with the future works of the great Novelist, either with Constable or with any other first-rate house in the trade. But John, foreseeing that, were that unhappy concern quite out of the field, he must himself subside into a mere subordinate member of his brother's printing company, seems to have parried the blow by the only arts of any consequence in which he ever was an adept. He appears to have systematically disguised from Scott the extent to which the whole Ballantyne concern had been sustained by Constable—especially during his Hebridean tour of 1814, and his Continental one of 1815—and prompted and enforced the idea of trying other booksellers from time to time, instead of adhering to Constable, merely for the selfish purposes,—first, of facilitating the immediate discount of bills;—secondly, of further perplexing Scott's affairs, the entire disentanglement of which would have been, as he fancied, prejudicial to his own personal importance.

It was resolved, accordingly, to offer the risk and half profits of the first edition of another new novel—or rather collection of novels—not to Messrs. Constable, but to Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street, and Mr. Blackwood, who was then Murray's agent

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in Scotland; but it was at the same time resolved, partly because Scott wished to try another experiment on the public sagacity, but partly also, no question, from the wish to spare Constable's feelings, that the title-page of the "Tales of my Landlord" should not bear the magical words "by the Author of Waverley." The facility with which both Murray and Blackwood embraced such a proposal as no untried novelist, being sane, could have dreamt of hazarding, shows that neither of them had any doubt as to the identity of the author. They both considered the withholding of the avowal on the forthcoming title-page as likely to check very much the first success of the book; but they were both eager to prevent Constable's acquiring a sort of prescriptive right to publish for the unrivalled novelist, and willing to disturb his tenure at this additional, and as they thought it, wholly unnecessary risk.

How sharply the unseen parent watched this first negotiation of his *Jedediah Cleishbotham*, will appear from one of his letters;—

To Mr. John Ballantyne, Hanover Street, Edinburgh.

"Abbotsford, April 29, 1816.

"Dear John,

"James has made one or two important mistakes in the bargain with Murray and Blackwood. Briefly as follows:—

"1stly. Having only authority from me to promise 6000 copies, he proposes they shall have the copyright *for ever*. I will see their noses cheese first.

"2dly. He proposes I shall have twelve months' bills —I have always got six. However, I would not stand on that.

"3dly. He talks of volumes being put into the publishers' hands to consider and decide on. No such thing; a bare perusal at St. John Street* only.

"Then for omissions—it is not stipulated that we supply the paper and print of successive editions. This must be nailed, and not left to understanding.—Secondly, I will have London bills as well as Blackwood's.

"If they agree to these conditions, good and well. If they demur, Constable must be instantly tried; giving half to the Longmans, and *we* drawing on *them* for that moiety, or Constable lodging *their* bill in our hands. You will understand it is a four volume touch—a work totally different in style and structure from the others; a new cast, in short, of the net which has hitherto made miraculous draughts. I do not limit you to terms, because I think you will make them better than I can do. But he must do more than others, since he will not or cannot print with us. For every point but that, I would rather deal with Constable than any one; he has always shown himself spirited, judicious, and liberal. Blackwood must be brought to the point *instantly*; and *whenever* he demurs, Constable must be treated with, for there is no use in suffering the thing to be blown on. At the same time, you need not conceal from him that there were some proposals elsewhere, but you may add, with truth, I would rather close with him. Yours truly,

W. S.

"P. S.—I think Constable should jump at this affair; for I believe the work will be very popular."

Messrs. Murray and Blackwood agreed to all the author's conditions here expressed. They also relieved John Ballantyne and Co. of stock to the value of £500; and at least Mr. Murray must, moreover, have subsequently consented to anticipate the period of his payments. At all events, I find, in a letter of Scott's, dated in the subsequent August, this new echo of the old advice:—

To Mr. John Ballantyne.

"Dear John,

"I have the pleasure to enclose Murray's acceptances. I earnestly recommend to you to push realizing as much as you can.

'Consider weel, gude man,
We hae but borrowed gear;
The horse that I ride on,
It is John Murray's mear.'

Yours truly, W. Scott."

I know not how much of the tale of the Black Dwarf had been seen by Blackwood, in St. John Street, before he concluded this bargain for himself and his friend Murray; but when the closing sheets of that novel reached him, he considered them as by no means sustaining the delightful promise of the opening ones. He was a man of strong talents, and, though without any thing that could be called learning, of very respectable information, greatly superior to what has, in this age, been common in his profession; acute, earnest, eminently zealous in whatever he put his hand to; upright, honest, sincere, and courageous. But as Constable owed his first introduction to the upper world of literature and of society in general to his Edinburgh Review, so did Blackwood his to the Magazine, which has now made his name familiar to the world—and at the period of which I write, that miscellany was unborn; he was known only as a diligent antiquarian bookseller of the old town of Edinburgh, and the Scotch agent of the great London publisher, Murray. The abilities, in short, which he lived to develop, were as yet unsuspected—unless, perhaps, among a small circle; and the knowledge of the world, which so few men gather from any thing but painful collision with various conflicting orders of their fellow-men, was not his. He was to the last plain and blunt; at this time I can easily believe him to have been so, to a degree which Scott might look upon as "ungracious"—I take the epithet from one of his letters to James Ballantyne. Mr. Blackwood, therefore, upon reading what seemed to him the lame and impotent conclusion of a well-begun story, did not search about for any glossy periphrase, but at once wrote to beg that James Ballantyne would inform the unknown author that such was his opinion. This might possibly have been endured; but Blackwood, feeling, I have no doubt, a genuine enthusiasm for the author's fame, as well as a just tradesman's anxiety as to his own adventure, proceeded to suggest the outline of what would, in his judgment, be a better upwinding of the plot of the Black Dwarf, and concluded his epistle, which he desired to be forwarded to the nameless novelist, with announcing his willingness, in case the proposed alteration were agreed to, that the whole expense of cancelling and reprinting a certain number of sheets should be charged to his own personal account with "James Ballantyne and Co." His letter appears to have further indicated that he had taken counsel with some literary person, on whose taste he placed great reliance, and who, if he had not originated, at least approved of the proposed process of recasting. Had Scott never possessed any such system of inter-agency as the Ballantynes supplied, he would, among other and perhaps greater inconveniences, have escaped that of the want of personal familiarity with several persons, with whose confidence,—and why should I not add? with the innocent gratification of whose little vanities—his own pecuniary interests were often deeply connected. A very little personal contact would have introduced such a character as Blackwood's to the respect, nay, to the affectionate respect, of Scott, who, above all others, was ready to sympathize cordially with honest and able men, in whatever condition of life he discovered them. He did both know and appreciate Blackwood better in after times; but in 1816, when this plain-spoken communication reached him, the name was little more than a name, and his answer to the most solemn of go-betweens was in these terms, which I sincerely wish I could tell how Signior Aldiboron tiphoscophornio translated into any dialect submissible to Blackwood's apprehension.

"Dear James,

"I have received Blackwood's impudent letter. G—d— his soul! Tell him and his coadjutor that I belong to the Black Hussars of Literature, who neither give nor receive criticism. I'll be cursed but this is the most impudent proposal that ever was made.

W. S."

This, and a few other documents referring to the same business, did not come into my hands until both Ballantyne and Blackwood were no more: and it is not surprising that Mr. Murray's recollection,

* James Ballantyne's dwelling-house was in this street, adjoining the Canongate of Edinburgh.

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if (which I much doubt) he had been at all consulted about it, should not, at this distance of time, preserve any traces of its details. "I remember nothing," he writes to me, "but that one of the very proudest days of my life was that on which I published the first Tales of my Landlord; and a vague notion that I owed the dropping of my connexion with the Great Novelist to some trashy disputes between Blackwood and the Ballantynes."

While these volumes were in progress, Scott found time to make an excursion into Perthshire and Dumbartonshire, for the sake of showing the scenery, made famous in the Lady of the Lake and Waverley, to his wife's old friends Miss Dumergue and Mrs. Sarah Nicolson,* who had never before been in Scotland. The account which he gives of these ladies' visit at Abbotsford, and this little tour, in a letter to Mr. Morritt, shows the "Black Hussar of Literature" in his gentler and more habitual mood.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M. P. Rokeby Park.

"Abbotsford, 21st August, 1816.

"My dear Morritt,

"I have not had a moment's kindly leisure to answer your kind letter, and to tell how delighted I shall be to see you in this least of all possible dwellings, but where we, nevertheless, can contrive a pilgrim's quarters and the warmest welcome for you and any friend of your journey;—if young Stanley, so much the better. Now, as to the important business with the which I have been occupied, you are to know we have had our kind hostesses of Piccadilly upon a two months' visit to us. We owed them so much hospitality, that we were particularly anxious to make Scotland agreeable to the good girls. But, alas! the wind has blown, and the rain has fallen, in a style which beats all that ever I remembered. We accomplished, with some difficulty, a visit to Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond, and, by dint of the hospitality of Cambusmore and the Rose, we defied bad weather, wet roads, and long walks. But the weather settled into regular tempest, when we settled at Abbotsford; and, though the natives, accustomed to bad weather, (though not at such a time of year,) contrived to brave the extremities of the season, it only served to increase the dismay of our unlucky visiters, who, accustomed only to Paris and London, expected *fiacres* at the Milestane Cross, and a pair of cars at the Deadman's Haugh. Add to this, a strong disposition to *commérage*, when there was no possibility of gratifying it, and a total indisposition to scenery or rural amusements, which were all we had to offer—and you will pity both hosts and guests. I have the gratification to think I fully supported the hospitality of my country. I walked them to death. I talked them to death. I showed them landscapes which the driving rain hardly permitted them to see, and told them of feuds about which they cared as little as I do about their next door news in Piccadilly. Yes, I even played at cards, and as I had Charlotte for a partner, so ran no risk of being scolded, I got on pretty well. Still the weather was so execrable, that, as the old drunken landlord used to say at Arroquhar, 'I was prefectly ashamed of it;' and, to this moment, I wonder how my two friends fought it out so patiently as they did. But the young people and the cottages formed considerable resources. Yesterday they left us, deeply impressed with the conviction, which I can hardly blame, that the sun never shone in Scotland,—which that noble luminary seems disposed to confirm, by making this the first fair day we have seen this month—so that his beams will greet them at Longtown, as if he were determined to put Scotland to utter shame.

"In you I expect a guest of a different calibre; and I think (barring downright rain) I can promise you some sport of one kind or other. We have a good deal of game about us; and Walter, to whom I have resigned my gun and license, will be an excellent attendant. He brought in six brace of moorfowl on the 12th, which had (*si fas est dicere*) its own effect, in softening the minds of our guests towards this unhappy climate. In other respects things look melancholy enough here. Corn is, however, rising; and the poor have plenty of work, and wages which, though greatly inferior to what they had when hands were scarce, assort perfectly well with the present state of the markets. Most folks try to live as much on their own produce as they can, by way of fighting off distress; and though speculating farmers and landlords must suffer, I think the temporary ague-fit will, on the whole, be advantageous to the country. It will check that inordinate and unbecoming spirit of expense, or rather extravagance, which was poisoning all classes, and bring us back to the sober virtues of our ancestors. It will also have the effect of teaching the landed interest, that their connexion with their farmers should be of a nature more intimate than that of mere payment and receipt of rent, and that the largest offerer for a lease is often the person least entitled to be preferred as a tenant. Above all, it will complete the destruction of those execrable quacks, terming themselves land-doctors, who professed, from a two day's scamper over your estate, to tell you its constitution,—in other words its value,—acre by acre. These men, paid according to the golden hopes they held out, afforded by their reports one principal means of deceiving both landlord and tenant, by setting an ideal and extravagant value upon land, which seemed to entitle the one to expect, and the other to offer, rent far beyond what any expectation formed by either, upon their own acquaintance with the property, could rationally have warranted. More than one landed gentleman has cursed, in my presence, the day he ever consulted one of those empirics, whose prognostications induced him to reject the offers of substantial men, practically acquainted with the *locale*. Ever, my dear Morritt, most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT."

In October, 1816, appeared the Edinburgh Annual Register, containing Scott's historical sketch of the year 1814—a composition which would occupy two such volumes as the reader now has in his hand. Though executed with extraordinary rapidity, the sketch is as clear as spirited; but I need say no more of it here, as the author travels mostly over the same ground again in his Life of Napoleon.

Scott's correspondence proves, that during this autumn he had received many English guests besides the good spinsters of Piccadilly and Mr. Morritt. I regret to add, it also proves that he had continued all the while to be annoyed with calls for money from John Ballantyne; yet before the 12th of November called him to Edinburgh, he appears to have nearly finished the first "Tales of my Landlord." He had, moreover, concluded a negotiation with Constable and Longman for a series of Letters on the History of Scotland:—of which, however, if he ever wrote any part, the MS. has not been discovered. It is probable that he may have worked some detached fragments into his long subsequent "Tales of a Grandfather." The following letter shows likewise that he was now busy with plans of building at Abbotsford, and deep in consultation on that subject with an artist eminent for his skill in Gothic architecture,—Mr. Edward Blore, R.A.

To Daniel Terry, Esq.

"November 12th, 1816.

"My dear Terry,

"I have been shockingly negligent in acknowledging your repeated favours; but it so happened, that I have had very little to *say*, with a great deal to *do*; so that I trusted to your kindness to forgive my apparent want of kindness, and indisputable lack of punctuality. You will readily suppose that I have heard with great satisfaction of the prosperity of your household, particularly of the good health of my little namesake and his mother. Godmothers of yore used to be fairies; and though only a godfather, I think of sending you, one day, a *fairy* gift—a little drama, namely, which, if the audience be indulgent, may be of use to him. Of course, you will stand godfather to it yourself: it is yet only in embryo—a sort of poetical Hans in Kelder—nor am I sure when I can bring him forth; not for this season, at any rate. You will receive, in the course of a few days, my late *whereabouts* in four volumes: there are two tales—the last of which I really prefer to any fictitious narrative I have yet been able to produce—the first is wish-washy enough. The subject of the second tale lies among the old Scottish Cameronians—nay, I'll tickle ye off a Covenanter as readily as old Jack could do a young Prince; and a rare fellow he is, when brought forth in his true colours. Were it not for the necessity of using scriptural language, which is essential to the character, but improper for the stage, it would be very dramatic. But of all this you will judge by and by. To give the go-by to the public, I have doubled and leaped into my form, like a hare in snow: that is, I have changed my publisher, and come forth like a maiden knight's white shield (there is a conceit!) without any adhesion to fame gained in former adventures, (another!) or, in other words, with a virgin title-page (another!)—I should not be so light-hearted about all this, but that it is very nearly finished and out, which is always

*The sister of Miss Jane Nicolson.—See *ante*, pp. 61, 83.

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a blithe moment for Mr. Author. And now to other matters. The books came safe, and were unpacked two days since, on our coming to town—most ingeniously were they stowed in the legs of the very handsome stand for Lord Byron's vase, with which our friend George Bullock has equipped me. I was made very happy to receive him at Abbotsford, though only for a start; and no less so to see Mr. Blore, from whom I received your last letter. He is a very fine young man, modest, simple, and unaffected in his manners, as well as a most capital artist. I have had the assistance of both these gentlemen in arranging an addition to the cottage at Abbotsford, intended to connect the present farm-house with the line of low buildings to the right of it. Mr. Bullock will show you the plan, which I think is very ingenious. He has promised to give it his consideration with respect to the interior; and Mr. Blore has drawn me a very handsome elevation, both to the road and to the river. I expect to get some decorations from the old Tolbooth of Edinburgh, particularly the copestones of the door-way, or lintels, as we call them, and a *niche* or two—one very handsome indeed! Better get a niche *from* the Tolbooth than a niche *in* it, to which such building operations are apt to bring the projectors. This addition will give me:—first,—a handsome boudoir, in which I intend to place Mr. Bullock's Shakspeare,* with his superb cabinet, which serves as a pedestal. This opens into the little drawing-room, to which it serves as a chapel of ease; and on the other side, to a handsome dining-parlour of 27 feet by 18, with three windows to the north, and one to the south, the last to be Gothic, and filled with stained glass. Besides these commodities, there is a small conservatory or greenhouse; and a study for myself, which we design to fit up with ornaments from Melrose Abbey. Bullock made several casts with his own hands—masks, and so forth, delightful for cornices, &c.

"Do not let Mrs. Terry think of the windows till little Wat is duly cared after.† I am informed by Mr. Blore that he is a fine thriving fellow, very like papa. About my armorial bearings: I will send you a correct drawing of them as soon as I can get hold of Blore; namely—of the escutcheons of my grandsires on each side, and my own. I could detail them in the jargon of heraldry, but it is better to speak to your eyes by translating them into coloured drawings, as the sublime science of armory has fallen into some neglect of late years, with all its mascles, buckles, crescents, and boars of the first, second, third, and fourth.

"I was very sorry I had no opportunity of showing attention to your friend Mr. Abbot, not being in town at the time. I grieve to say, that neither the genius of Kean, nor the charms of Miss O'Neill, could bring me from the hill-side and the sweet society of Tom Purdie. All our family are very well—Walter as tall nearly as I am, fishing salmon and shooting moor-fowl and blackcock, in good style; the girls growing up, and, as yet, not losing their simplicity of character; little Charles excellent at play, and not deficient at learning, when the young dog will take pains. Abbotsford is looking pretty at last, and the planting is making some show. I have now several hundred acres thereof, running out as far as beyond the lake. We observe with great pleasure the steady rise which you make in public opinion, and expect, one day, to hail you stage-manager. Believe me, my dear Terry, always very much yours, W. Scott.

"P. S.—The Counsellor, and both the Ballantynes, are well and hearty."

On the first of December the first series of the Tales of my Landlord appeared, and notwithstanding the silence of the titlepage, and the change of publishers, and the attempt which had certainly been made to vary the style both of delineation and of language, all doubts whether they were or were not from the same hand with Waverley had worn themselves out before the lapse of a week. The enthusiasm of their reception among the highest literary circles of London may be gathered from the following letter:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.

"Albemarle Street, 14th December, 1816.

"Dear Sir,

"Although I dare not address you as the author of certain 'Tales,' (which, however, must be written either by Walter Scott or the Devil,) yet nothing can restrain me from thinking it is to your influence with the author that I am indebted for the essential honour of being one of their publishers, and I must intrude upon you to offer my most hearty thanks—not divided, but doubled—alike for my worldly gain therein, and for the great acquisition of professional reputation which their publication has already procured me. I believe I might, under any oath that could be proposed, swear that I never experienced such unmixed pleasure as the reading of this exquisite work has afforded me; and if you could see me, as the author's literary chamberlain, receiving the unanimous and vehement praises of every one who has read it, and the curses of those whose needs my scanty supply could not satisfy, you might judge of the sincerity with which I now entreat you to assure him of the most complete success. Lord Holland said, when I asked his opinion—'Opinion! We did not one of us go to bed last night—nothing slept but my gout.' Frere, Hallam, Boswell,‡ Lord Glenbervie, William Lamb,† all agree that it surpasses all the other novels. Gifford's estimate is increased at every reperusal. Heber says there are only two men in the world—Walter Scott and Lord Byron. Between you, you have given existence to a THIRD. Ever your faithful servant,

JOHN MURRAY."

To this cordial effusion Scott returned the following answer. It was necessary, since he had fairly resolved against compromising his incognito, that he should be prepared not only to repel the impertinent curiosity of strangers, but to evade the proffered congratulations of overflowing kindness. He contrived, however, to do so, on this and all similar occasions, in a style of equivoque which could never be seriously misunderstood:—

To John Murray, Esq., Albemarle Street, London.

"Edinburgh, 18th December, 1816.

"My dear Sir,

"I give you heartily joy of the success of the Tales, although I do not claim that paternal interest in them which my friends do me the credit to assign me. I assure you I have never read a volume of them until they were printed, and can only join with the rest of the world in applauding the true and striking portraits which they present of old Scottish manners. I do not expect implicit reliance to be placed on my disavowal, because I know very well that he who is disposed not to own a work must necessarily deny it, and that otherwise his secret would be at the mercy of all who choose to ask the question, since silence in such a case must always pass for consent, or rather assent. But I have a mode of convincing you that I am perfectly serious in my denial—pretty similar to that by which Solomon distinguished the fictitious from the real mother—and that is, by reviewing the work, which I take to be an operation equal to that of quartering the child. But this is only on condition I can have Mr. Erskine's assistance, who admires the work greatly more than I do, though I think the painting of the second tale both true and powerful. I knew Old Mortality very well; his name was Paterson, but few knew him otherwise than by his nickname. The first tale is not very original in its concoction, and lame and impotent in its conclusion. My love to Gifford. I have been over head and ears in work this summer, or I would have sent the Gipsies; indeed I was partly stopped by finding it impossible to procure a few words of their language.

"Constable wrote to me about two months since, desirous of having a new edition of Paul; but not hearing from you, I conclude you are still on hand. Longman's people had then only sixty copies.

"Kind compliments to Heber, whom I expected at Abbotsford this summer; also to Mr. Croker, and all your four o'clock visiters. I am just going to Abbotsford to make a small addition to my premises there. I have now about 700 acres, thanks to the booksellers and the discerning public. Yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P.S.—I have much to ask about Lord Byron, if I had time. The third canto of the Childe is inimitable. Of the last poems, there are one or two which indicate rather an irregular play of imagination.‡ What a pity that a man of such exquisite genius will not be contented to be happy on the ordinary terms! I declare my heart bleeds when I think of him, self-banished from the country to which he is an honour."

* A cast from the monumental effigy at Stratford-upon-Avon—now in the library at Abbotsford—was the gift of Mr. George Bullock, long distinguished in London as a collector of curiosities for sale, and honourably so by his "*Mexican Museum*," which formed during several years a popular exhibition throughout the country. This ingenious man was, as the reader will see in the sequel, a great favourite with Scott.

† Mrs. Terry had offered the services of her elegant pencil in designing some windows of painted glass for Scott's armoury, &c.

* The late James Boswell, Esq., of the Temple—second son of *Bozzy*.

† The Honourable William Lamb—now Lord Melbourne.

‡ Parisina—the Dream—and the "Domestic Pieces," had been recently published.

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Mr. Murray, gladly embracing this offer of an article for his journal on the Tales of My Landlord, begged Scott to take a wider scope, and dropping all respect for the idea of a divided parentage, to place together any materials he might have for the illustration of the Waverley Novels in general; he suggested, in particular, that, instead of drawing up a long-promised disquisition on the Gipsies in a separate shape, whatever he had to say concerning that picturesque generation might be introduced by way of comment on the character of *Meg Merrilees*. What Scott's original conception had been I know not: he certainly gave his reviewal all the breadth which Murray could have wished, and *inter alia*, diversified it with a few anecdotes of the Scottish Gipsies. But the late excellent biographer of John Knox, Dr. Thomas M'Crie, had, in the mean time, considered the representations of the Covenanters in the story of Old Mortality as so unfair as to demand at his hands a very serious rebuke. The Doctor forthwith published, in a magazine called the Edinburgh Christian Instructor, a set of papers, in which the historical foundations of that tale were attacked with indignant warmth; and though Scott, when he first heard of these invectives, expressed his resolution never even to read them, he found the impression they were producing so strong, that he soon changed his purpose, and finally devoted a very large part of his article for the Quarterly Review to an elaborate defence of his own picture of the Covenanters.*

Before the first Tales of my Landlord were six weeks' old, two editions of 2000 copies disappeared, and a third of 2000 was put to press; but notwithstanding this rapid success, which was still further continued, and the friendly relations which always subsisted between the author and Mr. Murray, circumstances ere long occurred which carried the publication of the work into the hands of Messrs. Constable.

The author's answer to Dr. M'Crie, and his Introduction of 1830, have exhausted the historical materials on which he constructed his Old Mortality; and the origin of the Black Dwarf, as to the conclusion of which story he appears on reflection to have completely adopted the opinion of honest Blackwood, has already been sufficiently illustrated by an anecdote of his early wanderings in Tweeddale. The latter tale, however imperfect, and unworthy as a work of art to be placed high in the catalogue of his productions, derives a singular interest from its delineation of the dark feelings so often connected with physical deformity; feelings which appear to have diffused their shadow over the whole genius of Byron—and which, but for this single picture, we should hardly have conceived ever to have passed through Scott's happier mind. All the bitter blasphemy of spirit which, from infancy to the tomb, swelled up in Byron against the unkindness of nature; which sometimes perverted even his flights into a sentiment of diabolical malignity; all the black and desolate train of reflections must have been encountered and deliberately subdued by the manly parent of the Black Dwarf. Old Mortality, on the other hand, is remarkable as the *novelist's* first attempt to re-people the past by the power of imagination working on materials furnished by books. In Waverley, he revived the fervid dreams of his boyhood, and drew, not from printed records, but from the artless oral narratives of his *Invernahyles*. In Guy Mannering, he embodied characters and manners familiar to his own wandering youth. But whenever his letters mention Old Mortality in its progress, they represent him as strong in the confidence that the industry with which he had pored over a library of forgotten tracts would enable him to identify himself with the time in which they had birth, as completely as if he had listened with his own ears to the dismal sermons of Peden, ridden with Claverhouse and Dalzell in the route of Bothwell, and been an advocate at the bar of the Privy Council, when Lauderdale catechised and tortured the assassins of Archbishop Sharp. To reproduce a departed age with such minute and life-like accuracy as this tale exhibits, demanded a far more energetic sympathy of imagination than had been called for in any effort of his serious verse. It is indeed most curiously instructive for any student of art to compare the Roundheads of Rokeby with the Bluebonnets of Old Mortality. For the rest—the story is framed with a deeper skill than any of the preceding novels; the canvass is a broader one; the characters are contrasted and projected with a power and felicity which neither he nor any other master ever surpassed; and, notwithstanding all that has been urged against him as a disparager of the Covenanters, it is to me very doubtful whether the inspiration of romantic chivalry ever prompted him to nobler emotions than he has lavished on the re-animation of their stern and solemn enthusiasm. This work has always appeared to me the Marmion of his novels.

I have disclaimed the power of farther illustrating its historical groundworks, but I am enabled by Mr. Train's kindness to give some interesting additions to Scott's own account of this novel as a composition. The generous Supervisor visited him in Edinburgh in May, 1816, a few days after the publication of the Antiquary, carrying with him several relics which he wished to present to his collection, among others, a purse that had belonged to Rob Roy; and also a fresh heap of traditionary gleanings, which he had gathered among the tale-tellers of his district. One of these last was in the shape of a letter to Mr. Train from a Mr. Broadfoot, "schoolmaster at the clachan of Penningham, and author of *the celebrated song* of the Hills of Galloway"—with which I confess myself unacquainted. Broadfoot had facetiously signed his communication, *Clashbottom*—"a professional appellation, derived," says Mr. Train, "from the use of the birch, and by which he was usually addressed among his companions,—who assembled, not at the Wallace Inn of Gandercleuch, but at the sign of the Shoulder of Mutton in Newton-Stewart." Scott received these gifts with benignity, and invited the friendly donor to breakfast next morning. He found him at work in his library, and surveyed with enthusiastic curiosity the furniture of the room, especially its only picture, a portrait of Graham of Claverhouse. Train expressed the surprise with which every one who had known Dundee only in the pages of the Presbyterian Annalists, must see for the first time that beautiful and melancholy visage, worthy of the most pathetic dreams of romance. Scott replied, "that no character had been so foully traduced as the Viscount of Dundee—that, thanks to Wodrow, Cruikshanks, and such chroniclers, he, who was every inch a soldier and a gentleman, still passed among the Scottish vulgar for a ruffian desperado, who rode a goblin horse, was proof against shot, and in league with the Devil." "Might he not," said Mr. Train, "be made, in good hands, the hero

* Since I have mentioned this reviewal, I may as well, to avoid recurrence to it, express here my conviction, that Erskine, not Scott, was the author of the critical estimate of the Waverley novels which it embraces—although, for the purpose of mystification, Scott had taken the trouble to transcribe the paragraphs in which that estimate is contained. At the same time, I cannot but add that, had Scott really been the sole author of this reviewal, he need not have incurred the severe censure which has been applied to his supposed conduct in the matter. After all, his judgment of his own works must have been allowed to be not above, but very far under the mark; and the whole affair would, I think, have been considered by every candid person exactly as the letter about Solomon and the rival mothers was by Murray, Gifford, and "the four o'clock visiters" of Albemarle Street—as a good joke. A better joke certainly than the allusion to the report of Thomas Scott being the real author of Waverley, at the close of the article, was never penned; and I think it includes a confession over which a misanthrope might have chuckled.—"We intended here to conclude this long article, when a strong report reached us of certain Transatlantic confessions, which, if genuine, (though of this we know nothing,) assign a different author to these volumes than the party suspected by our Scottish correspondents. Yet a critic may be excused seizing upon the nearest suspicious person, on the principle happily expressed by Claverhouse, in a letter to the Earl of Linlithgow. He had been, it seems, in search of a gifted weaver, who used to hold forth at conventicles:—'I sent for the webster, (weaver,) they brought in his *brother* for him: though he, may be, cannot preach like his brother, I doubt not but he is as well-principled as he, wherefore I thought it would be no great fault to give him the trouble to go to jail with the rest.'" —*Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xix. pp. 85-6.

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of a national romance, as interesting as any about Sir Wallace or Prince Charlie?" "He might," said Scott, "but your western zealots would require to be faithfully portrayed, in order to bring him out with the right effect." "And what," resumed Train, "if the story were to be delivered as if from the mouth of *Old Mortality*? Would *he* not do as well as *the Minstrel* did in the Lay?" "Old Mortality!" said Scott—"who was he?" Mr. Train then told what he could remember of old Paterson, and seeing how much his story interested the hearer, offered to inquire farther about that enthusiast on his return to Galloway. "Do so, by all means," said Scott—"I assure you I shall look with anxiety for your communication." He said nothing at this time of his own meeting with Old Mortality in the churchyard of Dunotter—and I think there can be no doubt that that meeting was thus recalled to his recollection; or that to this intercourse with Mr. Train, we owe the whole machinery of the Tales of my Landlord, as well as the adoption of Claverhouse's period for the scene of one of its first fictions. I think it highly probable that we owe a farther obligation to the worthy Supervisor's presentation of Rob Roy's *sporran*.

The original design for the First Series of Jedediah Cleishbotham was, as Scott told me, to include four separate tales illustrative of four districts of the country, in the like number of volumes; but, his imagination once kindled upon any theme, he could not but pour himself out freely—so that notion was soon abandoned.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS PUBLISHED—SCOTT ASPIRES TO BE A BARON OF THE EXCHEQUER—LETTER TO THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH CONCERNING POACHERS, ETC.—FIRST ATTACK OF CRAMP IN THE STOMACH—LETTERS TO MORRITT—TERRY—AND MRS. MACLEAN CLEPHANE—STORY OF THE DOOM OF DEVORGOIL—JOHN KEMBLE'S RETIREMENT FROM THE STAGE—WILLIAM LAIDLAW ESTABLISHED AT KAESIDE—NOVEL OF ROB ROY PROJECTED—LETTER TO SOUTHEY ON THE RELIEF OF THE POOR, ETC.—LETTER TO LORD MONTAGU ON HOGG'S QUEEN'S WAKE, AND ON THE DEATH OF FRANCES LADY DOUGLAS.—1817.

WITHIN less than a month, the Black Dwarf and Old Mortality were followed by "Harold the Dauntless, by the author of the Bridal of Triermain." This poem had been, it appears, begun several years back; nay, part of it had been actually printed before the appearance of Childe Harold, though that circumstance had escaped the author's remembrance when he penned, in 1830, his Introduction to the Lord of the Isles; for he there says, "I am still astonished at my having committed the gross error of selecting the very name which Lord Byron had made so famous." The volume was published by Messrs. Constable, and had, in those booksellers' phrase, "considerable success." It has never, however, been placed on a level with Triermain; and though it contains many vigorous pictures, and splendid verses, and here and there some happy humour, the confusion and harsh transitions of the fable, and the dim rudeness of character and manners, seems sufficient to account for this inferiority in public favour. It is not surprising that the author should have redoubled his aversion to the notion of any more serious performance in verse. He had seized on an instrument of wider compass, and which, handled with whatever rapidity, seemed to reveal at every touch, treasures that had hitherto slept unconsciously within him. He had thrown off his fetters, and might well go forth rejoicing in the native elasticity of his strength.

It is at least a curious coincidence in literary history, that, as Cervantes, driven from the stage of Madrid by the success of Lope de Vega, threw himself into prose romance, and produced, at the moment when the world considered him as silenced for ever, the Don Quixote which has outlived Lope's two thousand triumphant dramas—so Scott, abandoning verse to Byron, should have rebounded from his fall by the only prose romances which seem to be classed with the masterpiece of Spanish genius, by the general judgment of Europe.

I shall insert two letters, in which he announces the publication of Harold the Dauntless. In the first of them, he also mentions the light and humourous little piece, entitled, The Sultan of Serendib, or the Search after Happiness, originally published in a weekly paper, after the fashion of the old Essayists, which about this time issued from John Ballantyne's premises, under the appropriate name of "the SALE-ROOM." The paper had slender success; and though Scott wrote several things for it, none of them, except his metrical essay, attracted any notice. *The Sale-Room* was, in fact, a dull and hopeless concern; and I should scarcely have thought it worth mentioning, but for the confirmation it lends to my suspicion that Mr. John Ballantyne was very unwilling, after all his warnings, to retire completely from the field of publishing.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M. P., Rokeby Park.

"Edinburgh, Jan. 30, 1817.

"My dear Morritt,

"I hope to send you in a couple of days Harold the Dauntless, which has not turned out so good as I thought it would have done. I begin to get too old and stupid, I think, for poetry, and will certainly never again adventure on a grand scale. For amusement, and to help a little publication that is going on here, I have spun a doggrel tale called Search after Happiness, of which I shall send a copy by post, if it is of a frankable size; if not, I can put it up with the Dauntless. Among other misfortunes of Harold is his name, but the thing was partly printed before Childe Harold was in question.

"My great and good news at present is, that the bog (that perpetual hobbyhorse) has produced a commodity of most excellent marle, and promises to be of the very last consequence to my wild ground in the neighbourhood; for nothing can equal the effect of marle as a top-dressing. Methinks (in my mind's eye, Horatio) I see all the blue-bank, the hinny-lee, and the other provinces of my poor kingdom, waving with deep rye-grass and clover, like the meadows at Rokeby. In honest truth, it will do me yeoman's service.

"My next good tidings are, that Jedediah carries the world before him. Six thousand have been disposed of, and three thousand more are pressing onward, which will be worth £2500 to the worthy pedagogue of Gandercleuch. Some of the Scotch Whigs, of the right old fanatical leaven, have waxed wroth with Jedediah—

> 'But shall we go mourn for that, my dear?
> The cold moon shines by night,
> And when we wander here and there,
> We then do go most right.'

After all, these honest gentlemen are like Queen Elizabeth in their ideas of portrait-painting. They require the pictures of their predecessors to be likenesses, and at the same time demand that they shall be painted without shade, being probably of opinion, with the virgin majesty of England, that there is no such thing in nature.

"I presume you will be going almost immediately to London—at least all our Scotch members are requested to be at their posts, the meaning of which I cannot pretend to guess. The finances are the only ticklish matter, but there is, after all, plenty of money in the country, now that our fever-fit is a little over. In Britain, when there is the least damp upon the spirits of the public, they are exactly like people in a crowd, who take the alarm, and shoulder each other to and fro, till some dozen or two of the weakest are borne down and trodden to death; whereas, if they would but have patience, and remain quiet, there would be a safe and speedy end to their embarrassment. How we want Billie Pitt now to get up and give the tone to our feelings and opinions!

"As I take up this letter to finish the same, I hear the Prince Regent has been attacked and fired at. Since he was not hurt, (for I should be sincerely sorry for my fat friend,) I see nothing but good luck to result from this assault. It will make him a good manageable boy, and, I think, secure you a quiet Session of Parliament. Adieu, my dear Morritt, God bless you. Let me know if the gimcracks come safe—I mean the book, &c. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Lady Louisa Stuart, Gloucester Place, London.

"Edinburgh, Jan. 31, 1817.

"My dear Lady Louisa,

"This accompanies *Harold the Dauntless*. I thought once I should have made it something clever, but it turn-

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ed rapid upon my imagination; and I finished it at last with hurry and impatience. Nobody knows, that has not tried the feverish trade of poetry, how much it depends upon mood and whim: I don't wonder, that, in dismissing all the other deities of paganism, the Muse should have been retained by common consent; for, in sober reality, writing good verses seem to depend upon something separate from the volition of the author. I sometimes think my fingers set up for themselves, independent of my head; for twenty times I have begun a thing on a certain plan, and never in my life adhered to it (in a work of imagination, that is) for half an hour together. I would hardly write this sort of egotistical trash to any one but yourself, yet it is very true for all that. What my kind correspondent had anticipated on account of Jedediah's effusions, has actually taken place; and the author of a very good life of Knox has, I understand, made a most energetic attack, upon the score that the old Covenanters are not treated with decorum. I have not read it, and certainly never shall. I really think there is nothing in the book that is not very fair and legitimate subject of raillery; and I own I have my suspicions of that very susceptible devotion which so readily takes offence: such men should not read books of amusement; but do they suppose, because they are virtuous, and choose to be thought outrageously so, 'there shall be no cakes and ale?'—'Ay, by our Lady, and ginger shall be hot in the mouth, too.' As for the consequences to the author, they can only affect his fortune or his temper—the former, such as it is, has been long fixed beyond shot of these sort of fowlers; and for my temper, I considered always that, by subjecting myself to the irritability which much greater authors have felt on occasions of literary dispute, I should be laying in a plentiful stock of unhappiness for the rest of my life. I therefore make it a rule never to read the attacks made upon me. I remember being capable of something like this sort of self-denial at a very early period of life, for I could not be six years old. I had been put into my bed in the nursery, and two servant girls sat down by the embers of the fire, to have their own quiet chat, and the one began to tell a most dismal ghost story, of which I remember the commencement distinctly at this moment; but perceiving which way the tale was tending, and though necessarily curious, being at the same time conscious that, if I listened on, I should be frightened out of my wits for the rest of the night, I had the force to cover up my head in the bed-clothes, so that I could not hear another word that was said. The only inconvenience attending a similar prudential line of conduct in the present case, is, that it may seem like a deficiency of spirit; but I am not much afraid of that being laid to my charge—my fault in early life (I hope long since corrected) having lain rather the other way. And so I say, with mine honest Prior—

'Sleep, Philo, untouch'd, on my peaceable shelf,
Nor take it amiss that so little I heed thee;
I've no malice at thee, and some love for myself—
Then why should I answer, since first I must read thee?'

"So, you are getting finely on in London. I own I am very glad of it. I am glad the banditti act like banditti, because it will make men of property look round them in time. This country is very like the toys which folks buy for children, and which, tumble them about in any way the urchins will, are always brought to their feet again, by the lead deposited in their extremities. The mass of property has the same effect on our Constitution, and is a sort of ballast which will always *right* the vessel, to use a sailor's phrase, and bring it to its due equipoise.

"Ministers have acted most sillily in breaking up the burgher volunteers in large towns. On the contrary, the service should have been made coercive. Such men have a moral effect upon the minds of the populace, besides their actual force, and are so much interested in keeping good order, that you may always rely on them, especially as a corps, in which there is necessarily a common spirit of union and confidence. But 'all this is nonsense again, quoth my Uncle Toby to himself.—Adieu, my dear Lady Louisa; my sincere good wishes always attend you. W. S."

Not to disturb the narrative of his literary proceedings, I have deferred until now the mention of an attempt which Scott made during the winter of 1816–1817, to exchange his seat at the Clerk's table for one on the bench of the Scotch Court of Exchequer. It had often occurred to me, in the most prosperous years of his life, that such a situation would have suited him better in every respect than that which he held, and that his never attaining a promotion, which the Scottish public would have considered so naturally due to his character and services, reflected little honour on his political allies. But at the period when I was entitled to hint this to him, he appeared to have made up his mind that the rank of Clerk of Session was more compatible than that of a Supreme Judge with the habits of a literary man, who was perpetually publishing, and whose writings were generally of the imaginative order. I had also witnessed the zeal with which he seconded the views of more than one of his own friends, when their ambition was directed to the Exchequer bench. I remained, in short, ignorant that he ever had seriously thought of it for himself, until the ruin of his worldly fortunes in 1826; nor had I any information that his wish to obtain it had ever been distinctly stated, until certain letters, one of which I shall introduce, were placed in my hands, after his death, by the present Duke of Buccleuch. The late Duke's answers to these letters are also before me; but of them it is sufficient to say, that, while they show the warmest anxiety to serve Scott, they refer to private matters, which ultimately rendered it inconsistent with his Grace's feelings to interfere at the time in question with the distribution of Crown patronage. I incline to think, on the whole, that the death of this nobleman, which soon after left the influence of his house in abeyance, must have, far more than any other circumstance, determined Scott to renounce all notions of altering his professional position.

To the Duke of Buccleuch, &c., &c.

"Edinburgh, 11th Dec. 1816.

"My dear Lord Duke,

"Your Grace has been so much my constant and kind friend and patron through the course of my life, that I trust I need no apology for thrusting upon your consideration some ulterior views, which have been suggested to me by my friends, and which I will either endeavour to prosecute, time and place serving, or lay aside all thoughts of, as they appear to your Grace feasible, and likely to be forwarded by your patronage. It has been suggested to me, in a word, that there would be no impropriety in my being put in nomination as a candidate for the situation of a Baron of Exchequer, when a vacancy shall take place. The difference of the emolument between that situation and those which I now hold, is just £400 a-year, so that, in that point of view, it is not a very great object. But there is a difference in the rank, and also in the leisure afforded by a Baron's situation: and a man may, without condemnation, endeavour, at my period of life, to obtain as much honour and ease as he can handsomely come by. My pretensions to such an honour (next to your Grace's countenancing my wishes) would rest very much on the circumstance that my nomination would vacate two good offices (Clerk of Session and Sheriff of Selkirkshire) to the amount of £1000 and £340 a-year; and, besides, would extinguish a pension of £300 which I have for life, over and above my salary as Clerk of Session, as having been in office at the time when the Judicature Act deprived us of a part of our vested fees and emoluments. The extinction of this pension would be just so much saved to the public. I am pretty confident also that I should be personally acceptable to our friend the Chief Baron.* But whether all or any of these circumstances will weigh much in my favour, must solely and entirely rest with your Grace, without whose countenance it would be folly in me to give the matter a second thought. *With* your patronage, both my situation and habits of society may place my hopes as far as any who are likely to apply; and your interest would be strengthened by the opportunity to place some good friend in Selkirkshire, besides converting the Minstrel of the Clan into a Baron,—a transmutation worthy of so powerful and kind a chief. But if your Grace thinks I ought to drop thoughts of this preferment, I am bound to say, that I think myself as well provided for by my friends and the public as I have the least title to expect, and that I am perfectly contented and grateful for what I have received. Ever your Grace's faithful and truly obliged servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

The following letter, to the same noble friend, contains a slight allusion to this affair of the Barony; but I insert it for a better reason. The Duke had, it seems, been much annoyed by some depredations on his game in the district of Ettrick Water; and more, so by the ill use which some boys from Selkirk made of his liberality, in allowing the people of that town free access to his beautiful walks

* The late Right Honourable Robert Dundas of Arniston, Chief Baron of the Scotch Exchequer; one of Scott's earliest and kindest friends in that distinguished family.

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n the banks of the Yarrow, adjoining Newark and lowhill. The Duke's forester, by name Thomas Hudson, had recommended rigorous measures with eference to both these classes of offenders, and the Sheriff was of course called into council:—

To His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c., &c., &c.

"Abbotsford, January 11, 1817.

My dear Lord Duke,

"I have been thinking anxiously about the disagreeable affair of Tom Hudson, and the impudent ingratitude f the Selkirk rising generation, and I will take the usual berty your friendship permits me, of saying what occurs o me on each subject. Respecting the shooting, the rime is highly punishable, and we will omit no inquiries discover the individuals guilty. Charles Erskine, who a good police officer, will be sufficiently active. I know y friend and kinsman, Mr. Scott of Harden, feels very nxious to oblige your Grace, and I have little doubt if ou will have the goodness to mention to him this unpleaant circumstance, he will be anxious to put his game nder such regulations as should be agreeable to you. ut I believe the pride and pleasure he would feel in bliging your Grace, as heading one of the most ancient nd most respectable branches of your name, (if I may e pardoned for saying so much in our favour,) would be ertainly much more gratified by a compliance with your easonal request, than if it came through any other chanel. Your Grace knows there are many instances in life which the most effectual way of conferring a favour is ondescending to accept one. I have known Harden long nd most intimately—a more respectable man either for eling, or talent, or knowledge of human life, is rarely to e met with. But he is rather indecisive—requiring some tant stimulus in order to make him resolve to do, not nly what he knows to be right, but what he really wishes o do, and means to do one time or other. He is exactly rior's Earl of Oxford:—

'Let that be done which Mat doth say,—
'Yea,' quoth the Earl, '*but not to-day.*'

nd so exit Harden and enter Selkirk.

"I know hardly any thing more exasperating than the nduct of the little blackguards, and it will be easy to scover and make an example of the biggest and most olent. In the mean while, my dear Lord, pardon my uesting you will take no general or sweeping resolu- as to the Selkirk folks. Your Grace lives near them your residence, both from your direct beneficence, and e indirect advantages which they derive from that resnce, is of the utmost consequence; and they must be ade sensible that all these advantages are endangered the very violent and brutal conduct of their children. t I think your Grace will be inclined to follow this up ly for the purpose of correction, not for that of requital. ey are so much beneath you, and so much in your wer, that this would be unworthy of you—especially as the inhabitants of the little country town must necesily be included in the punishment. Were your Grace ally angry with them, and acting accordingly, you might mately feel the regret of my old schoolmaster, who, en he had knocked me down, apologized by saying he not know his own strength. After all, those who look any thing better than ingratitude from the uneducated d unreflecting mass of a corrupted population, must alys be deceived; and the better the heart is that has en expanded towards them, their wants, and their shes, the deeper is the natural feeling of disappointnt. But it is our duty to fight on, doing what good we (and surely the disposition and the means were never re happily united than in your Grace,) and trusting to d Almighty, whose grace ripens the seeds we commit the earth, that our benefactions shall bear fruit. And w, my Lord, asking your pardon for this discharge of conscience, and assuring your Grace I have no wish exchange my worsted gown, or the remote *Pisgah* exnge of a silk one, for the cloak of a presbyterian parh, even with the certainty of succeeding to the first of r numerous Kirk-presentations, I take the liberty to l my own opinion. The elder boys must be looked out l punished, and the parents severely reprimanded, and whole respectable part of the town made sensible of the they must necessarily sustain by the discontinuance your patronage. And at, or about the same time, I uld think it proper if your Grace were to distinguish any little notice such Selkirk people working with you have their families under good order.

I am taking leave of Abbotsford *multum gemens*, and e just been giving directions for planting upon Turnsin. When shall we eat a cold luncheon there, and k at the view, and root up the monster in his abyss? I ure you, none of your numerous vassals can show a er succession of *distant* prospects. For the home-

X

view—ahem!—We must wait till the trees grow. Ever your Grace's truly faithful

W. Scott."

While the abortive negotiation as to the Exchequer was still pending, Scott was visited, for the first time since his childish years, with a painful illness, which proved the harbinger of a series of attacks, all nearly of the same kind, continued at short intervals, during more than two years. Various letters, already introduced, have indicated how widely his habits of life when in Edinburgh differed from those of Abbotsford. They at all times did so to a great extent; but he had pushed his liberties with a most robust constitution to a perilous extreme, while the affairs of the Ballantynes were labouring, and he was now to pay the penalty.

The first serious alarm occurred towards the close of a merry dinner party in Castle Street, (on the 5th of March,) when Scott suddenly sustained such exquisite torture from cramp in the stomach, that his masculine powers of endurance gave way, and he retired from the room with a scream of agony which electrified his guests. This scene was often repeated, as we shall see presently. His friends in Edinburgh continued all that spring in great anxiety on his account. Scarcely, however, had the first symptoms yielded to severe medical treatment, than he is found to have beguiled the intervals of his suffering by planning a dramatic piece on a story supplied to him by one of Train's communications, which he desired to present to Terry on behalf of the actor's first-born son, who had been christened by the name of Walter Scott Terry.* Such was the origin of "the Fortunes of Devorgoil"—a piece which, though completed soon afterwards, and submitted by Terry to many manipulations, with a view to the stage, was never received by any manager, and was first published, towards the close of the author's life, under the title, slightly altered for an obvious reason, of "the Doom of Devorgoil." The sketch of the story, which he gives in the following letter, will probably be considered by many besides myself as well worth the drama. It appears that the actor had mentioned to Scott his intention of *Terrifying* "the Black Dwarf."

To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.

"Edinburgh, 12th March, 1817.

"Dear Terry,

"I am now able to write to you on your own affairs, though still as weak as water from the operations of the medical faculty, who, I think, treated me as a recusant to their authority, and having me once at advantage, were determined I should not have strength to rebel again in a hurry. After all, I believe it was touch and go; and considering how much I have to do for my own family and others, my elegy might have been that of the Auld Man's Mare—

'The peats and turf are all to lead,
What all'd the beast to die?'

You don't mention the nature of your undertaking in your last, and in your former you spoke both of the Black Dwarf and of Triermain. I have some doubts whether the town will endure a second time the following up a well-known tale with a dramatic representation—and there is no *vis comica* to redeem the Black Dwarf, as in the case of Dominie Sampson. I have thought of two subjects for you, if, like the Archbishop's homilies, they do not smell of the apoplexy. The first is a noble and very dramatic tradition preserved in Galloway, which runs briefly thus:—The Barons of Plenton (the family name, I think, was ——by Jupiter, forgot!) boasted of great antiquity, and formerly of extensive power and wealth, to which the ruins of their huge castle, situated on an inland loch, still bear witness. In the middle of the seventeenth century, it is said, these ruins were still inhabited by the lineal descendant of this powerful family. But the ruinous halls and towers of his ancestors were all that had descended to him, and he cultivated the garden of the castle, and sold its fruits for a subsistence. He married in a line suitable rather to his present situation than the dignity of his descent, and was quite sunk into the rank of peasantry, excepting that he was still called—more in mockery, or at least in familiarity, than in respect—the Baron of Plenton. A causeway connected the castle with the mainland; it

* This young gentleman is now an officer in the East India Company's army.

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was cut in the middle, and the moat only passable by a drawbridge which yet subsisted, and which the poor old couple contrived to raise every night by their joint efforts, the country being very unsettled at the time. It must be observed, that the old man and his wife occupied only one apartment in the extensive ruins, a small one adjoining to the drawbridge; the rest was waste and dilapidated. As they were about to retire one night to rest, they were deterred by a sudden storm, which, rising in the wildest manner possible, threatened to bury them under the ruins of the castle. While they listened in terror to the complicated sounds of thunder, wind, and rain, they were astonished to hear the clang of hoofs on the causeway, and the voices of people clamouring for admittance. This was a request not rashly to be granted. The couple looked out, and dimly discerned through the storm that the causeway was crowded with riders. 'How many of you are there?' demanded John.—'Not more than the hall will hold,' was the answer; 'but open the gate, lower the bridge, and do not keep the *ladies* in the rain.'—John's heart was melted for the *ladies*, and, against his wife's advice, he undid the bolts, sunk the drawbridge, and bade them enter in the name of God. Having done so, he instantly retired into his *sanctum sanctorum* to await the event, for there was something in the voices and language of his guests that sounded mysterious and awful. They rushed into the castle, and appeared to know their way through all its recesses. Grooms were heard hurrying their horses to the stables—sentinels were heard mounting guard—a thousand lights gleamed from place to place through the ruins, till at length they seemed all concentrated in the baronial hall, whose range of broad windows threw a resplendent illumination on the moss-grown court below. After a short time, a domestic, clad in a rich but very antique dress, appeared before the old couple, and commanded them to attend his lord and lady in the great hall. They went with tottering steps, and to their great terror found themselves in the midst of a most brilliant and joyous company; but the fearful part of it was, that most of the guests resembled the ancestors of John's family, and were known to him by their resemblance to pictures which mouldered in the castle, or by traditionary description. At the head, the founder of the race, dressed like some mighty baron, or rather some Galwegian prince, sat with his lady. There was a difference of opinion between these ghostly personages concerning our honest John. The chief was inclined to receive him graciously; the lady considered him, from his mean marriage, as utterly unworthy of their name and board. The upshot is, that the chief discovers to his descendant the means of finding a huge treasure concealed in the castle; the lady assures him that the discovery shall never avail him. In the morning he trace can be discovered of the singular personages who had occupied the hall. But John sought for and discovered the vault where the spoils of the Southrons were concealed, rolled away the covering stone, and feasted his eyes on a range of massy chests of iron, filled doubtless with treasure. As he deliberated on the best means of bringing them up, and descending into the vault, he observed it began slowly to fill with water. Baling and pumping were resorted to, and when he had exhausted his own and his wife's strength, they summoned the assistance of the neighbourhood. But the vengeance of the visionary lady was perfect; the waters of the lake had forced their way into the vault, and John, after a year or two spent in draining and so forth, died broken-hearted, the last baron of Plenton.

"Such is the tale, of which the incidents seem new, and the interest capable of being rendered striking; the story admits of the highest degree of decoration, both by poetry, music, and scenery, and I propose (in behalf of my godson) to take some pains in dramatizing it. As thus—you shall play John, as you can speak a little Scotch; I will make him what the Baron of Bradwardine would have been in his circumstances, and he shall be alternately ludicrous from his family pride and prejudices, contrasted with his poverty, and respectable from his just and independent tone of feeling and character. I think Scotland is entitled to have something on the stage to balance Macklin's two worthies.* You understand the dialect will be only tinged with the national dialect—not that the baron is to speak broad Scotch, while all the others talk English. His wife and he shall have one child, a daughter, suitored unto by the concelted young parson or schoolmaster of the village, whose addresses are countenanced by her mother—and by Halbert the hunter, a youth of unknown descent. Now this youth shall be the rightful heir and representative of the English owners of the treasure, of which they had been robbed by the baron's ancestors, for which unjust act their spirits still walked the earth. These, with a substantial character or two, and the ghostly personages, shall mingle as they may—and the discovery of the youth's birth shall break the spell of the treasure-chamber. I will make the ghosts talk as never ghosts talked in the body or out of it; and the music may be as unearthly as you can get it. The rush of the shadows into the castle shall be seen through the window of the baron's apartment in the first scene. The ghost's banquet, and many other circumstances, may give great exercise to the scene-painter and dresser. If you like this plan, you had better suspend any other for the present. In my opinion, it has the infinite merit of being perfectly new in plot and structure, and I will go about the sketch as soon as my strength is restored by some measure by air and exercise. I am sure I can finish it in a fortnight then. Ever yours truly,

W. Scott."

* Sir Archy Mac-Sarcasm and Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant.

About the time when this letter was written, a newspaper paragraph having excited the apprehension of two—or I should say three—of his dearest friends, that his life was in actual danger, Scott wrote to them as follows—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M.P., Portland Place, London.

"Edinburgh, 20th March, 1817.

"My dear Morritt,

"I hasten to acquaint you that I am in the land of life and thriving, though I have had a slight shake, and still feel the consequences of medical treatment. I had been plagued all through this winter with cramps in my stomach, which I endured as a man of mould might, and endeavoured to combat them by drinking scalding water, and so forth. As they grew rather unpleasantly frequent, I had reluctant recourse to Baillie. But before his answer arrived, on the 5th, I had a most violent attack, which broke up a small party at my house, and sent me to bed roaring like a bull-calf. All sorts of remedies were applied, as in the case of Gil Blas' pretended colic, but such was the pain of the real disorder, that it out-devilled the Doctor hollow. Even heated salt, which was applied in such a state that it burned my shirt to rags, I hardly felt when clapped to my stomach. At length the symptoms became inflammatory, and dangerously so, the seat being the diaphragm. They only gave way to very profuse bleeding and blistering, which, under higher assistance, saved my life. My recovery was slow and tedious from the state of exhaustion. I could neither stir for weakness and giddiness, nor read for dazzling in my eyes, nor listen for a whizzing sound in my ears, nor even think for lack of the power of arranging my ideas. So I had a comfortless time of it for about a week. Even yet I by no means feel, as the copy-book hath it,

'The lion bold, which the lamb doth hold—'

on the contrary, I am as weak as water. They tell me (of course) I must renounce every creature comfort, as my friend Jedediah calls it. As for dinner and so forth, I care little about it—but toast and water, and three glasses of wine, sound like hard laws to me. However, to parody the lamentation of Hassan, the camel-driver,

'The lily health outvies the grape's bright ray,
And life is dearer than the unquebec—'

so I shall be amenable to discipline. But in my own secret mind I suspect the state of my bowels more than any thing else. I take enough of exercise and enough of rest; but unluckily they are like a Lapland year, divided some night and one day. In the vacation I never sit down; in the session time I seldom rise up. But all this must be better arranged in future; and I trust I shall live to weary out all your kindness.

"I am obliged to break off hastily. I trust I shall be able to get over the Fell in the end of summer, which will rejoice me much, for the sound of the woods of Rokeby is lovely in mine ear. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Mrs. Maclean Clephane, of Torloisk, Mull.

"Edinburgh, 23d March, 1817.

"My dear Mrs. and Miss Clephane,

"Here comes to let you know you had nearly seen the last sight of me, unless I had come to visit you on my red beam like one of Fingal's heroes, which, Ossianic as you are, I trow you would readily dispense with. The cause was a cramp in my stomach, which, after various painful visits, as if it had been sent by Prospero, and had mistaken me for Caliban, at length chose to conclude by setting fire to its lodging, like the Frenchmen as they retreated through Russia, and placed me in as proper a state of inflammation as if I had had the whole Spafields' committee in my unfortunate stomach. Then bleeding and blistering was the word; and they bled and blistered till they left me neither skin nor blood. However, they beat off the foul fiend, and I am bound to praise the bridge which carried me over. I am still very totterish, and very giddy

kept to parade, or father to porridge, for I mourned at all foreign slops, and adhered to our ancient national manufacture. But I have no apprehension of any return of the serious part of the malady, and I am now recovering my strength, though looking somewhat cadaverous upon the occasion.

"I much approve of your going to Italy by sea; indeed it is the only way you ought to think of it. I am only sorry you are going to leave us for a while; but indeed the Isle of Mull might be Florence to me in respect of separation, and cannot be quite Florence to you, since Lady Compton is not there. I lately heard her mentioned in a company where my interest in her was not known, as one of the very few English ladies now in Italy whom their acquirements, conduct, and mode of managing time, induce that part of foreign society, whose approbation is valuable, to consider with high respect and esteem. This I think is very likely; for, whatever folks say of foreigners, those of good education and high rank among them, must have a supreme contempt for the frivolous, dissatisfied, empty, gad-about manners of many of our modern belles. And we may say among ourselves, that there are few upon whom high accomplishments and information sit more gracefully.

"John Kemble is here to take leave, acting over all his great characters, and with all the spirit of his best years. He played Coriolanus last night, (the first time I have ventured out,) fully as well as I ever saw him; and you know what a complete model he is of the Roman. He has made a great reformation in his habits; given up wine, which he used to swallow by pellfuls,—and renewed his youth like the eagles. He seems to me always to play best those characters in which there is a predominating tinge of some over-mastering passion, or acquired habit of acting and speaking, colouring the whole man. The patrician pride of Coriolanus, the stoicism of Brutus and Cato, the rapid and hurried vehemence of Hotspur, mark the class of characters I mean. But he fails where ready and pliable yielding to the events and passions of life makes what may be termed a more natural personage. Accordingly I think his Macbeth, Lear, and especially his Richard, inferior in spirit and truth. In Hamlet, the natural and melancholy of the prince places him within Kemble's range;—yet many delicate and sudden turns of passion slip through his fingers. He is a lordly vessel, stoutly and magnificent when going large before the wind, but wanting the facility to go '*ready about*,' so that he is sometimes among the breakers before he can wear ship. But we lose in him a most excellent critic, an accomplished scholar, and one who graced our forlorn drama with at least little it has left of good sense and gentlemanlike feeling. And so exit he. He made me write some lines to speak when he withdraws, and he has been here criticising and correcting till he got them quite to his mind, which has rather tired me. Most truly yours while

WALTER SCOTT."

On the 29th of March, 1817, John Philip Kemble, after going through the round of his chief parts, to the delight of the Edinburgh audience, took his final leave of them as *Macbeth*, and in the costume of that character delivered a farewell address, composed for him by Scott.* No one who witnessed that scene, and heard the lines as then recited, can ever expect to be again interested to the same extent by any thing occurring within the walls of a theatre; nor was I ever present at any public dinner in all its circumstances more impressive than was that which occurred a few days afterwards, when Kemble's Scotch friends and admirers assembled round him—Francis Jeffrey being chairman, Walter Scott and John Wilson the croupiers.

* See Scottish Works, vol. xi. p. 36. Scott's Farewell to Kemble first appeared in "The Yule Room," for April 5th, 1817; and in the introductory lines, James Ballantyne says,—"The character fixed upon, with happy propriety, for Kemble's closing scene, was Macbeth. He had laboured under a severe cold for a few days before, but on the memorable night the physical annoyance added to the energy of his mind. 'He was,' he said, in the green-room, immediately before the curtain rose, 'determined to leave behind him the most perfect specimen of his art which he had ever shown;' and his success was complete. At the moment of the actor's death the curtain fell by the universal acclamation of the audience. The applauses were vehement and prolonged; they ceased—were resumed—rose again—were reiterated—and again were hushed. In a few minutes the curtain ascended, and Mr. Kemble came forward in the dress of Macbeth (the audience by a spontaneous movement rising to receive him) to deliver his address. . . . Mr. Kemble delivered the lines with exquisite beauty, and with an effect that was evidenced by the tears and sobs of many of the audience. His own emotions were very conspicuous. When his farewell was closed, he lingered long on the stage, as if unable to retire. The house again stood up, and greeted him with the waving of hats and long shouts of applause."

Shortly before this time Mr. William Laidlaw had met with misfortunes, which rendered it necessary for him to give up the lease of a farm, on which he had been for some years settled, in Mid-Lothian. He was now anxiously looking about him for some new establishment, and it occurred to Scott that it might be mutually advantageous, as well as agreeable, if his excellent friend would consent to come and occupy a house on his property, and endeavour, under his guidance, to make such literary exertions as might raise his income to an amount adequate for his comfort. The prospect of obtaining such a neighbour was, no doubt, the more welcome to "Abbotsford and Kaeside," from its opening at this period of fluctuating health; and Laidlaw, who had for twenty years loved and revered him, considered the proposal with far greater delight than the most lucrative appointment on any noble domain in the island could have afforded him. Though possessed of a lively and searching sagacity as to things in general, he had always been as to his own worldly interests, simple as a child. His tastes and habits were all modest; and when he looked forward to spending the remainder of what had not hitherto been a successful life, under the shadow of the genius that he had worshipped almost from boyhood, his gentle heart was all happiness. He surveyed with glistening eyes the humble cottage in which his friend proposed to lodge him, his wife, and his little ones, and said to himself that he should write no more sad songs on *Forest Flittings*.*

Scott's notes to him at this time afford a truly charming picture of thoughtful and respectful delicacy on both sides. Mr. Laidlaw, for example, appears to have hinted that he feared his friend, in making the proposal as to the house at Kaeside, might have perhaps in some degree overlooked the feelings of "Laird Moss," who, having sold his land several months before, had as yet continued to occupy his old homestead. Scott answers:—

To Mr. W. Laidlaw.

"Edinburgh, April 5, 1817.

"My dear Sir,

"Nothing can give me more pleasure than the prospect of your making yourself comfortable at Kaeside till some good thing casts up. I have not put Mr. Moss to any inconvenience, for I only requested an answer, giving him leave to sit if he had a mind—and of free will he leaves my premises void and redd at Whitsunday. I suspect the house is not in good order, but we shall get it brushed up a little. Without affectation I consider myself the obliged party in this matter—or at any rate it is a mutual benefit, and you shall have grass for a cow, and so forth—whatever you want. I am sure when you are so near I shall find some literary labour for you that will make ends meet. Yours, in haste,

W. Scott."

He had before this time made considerable progress in another historical sketch (that of the year 1815) for the Edinburgh Annual Register; and the first literary labour which he provided for Laidlaw, appears to have been arranging for the same volume a set of newspaper articles, usually printed under the head of *Chronicle*, to which were appended some little extracts of new books of travels, and the like miscellanies. The Edinburgh Monthly Magazine, subsequently known by the name of its projector, Blackwood, commenced in April of this year; and one of its editors, Mr. Thomas Pringle, being a Teviotdale man and an old acquaintance of Laidlaw's, offered to the latter the care of its *Chronicle department* also,—not perhaps without calculating that, in case Laidlaw's connexion with the new journal should become at all a strict one, Scott would be induced to give it occasionally the benefit of his own literary assistance. He accordingly did not write—being unwell at the time—but *dictated* to Pringle a collection of anecdotes concerning Scottish gipsies, which attracted a good deal of notice.†

* Mr. Laidlaw has not published many verses; but his song of "Lucy's Flitting"—a simple and pathetic picture of a poor Ettrick maiden's feelings in leaving a service where she had been happy—has long been and must ever be a favourite with all who understand the delicacies of the Scottish dialect and the manners of the district in which the scene is laid.

† These anecdotes were subsequently inserted in the Introduction to Guy Mannering.

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and, I believe, he also assisted Laidlaw in drawing up one or more articles on the subject of Scottish superstitions. But the bookseller and Pringle soon quarreled, and, the Magazine assuming, on the retirement of the latter, a high Tory character, Laidlaw's Whig feelings induced him to renounce its alliance; while Scott, having no kindness for Blackwood personally, and disapproving (though he chuckled over it) the reckless extravagance of juvenile satire, which, by and by, distinguished his journal, appears to have easily acquiesced in the propriety of Laidlaw's determination. I insert mean time a few notes, which will show with what care and kindness he watched over Laidlaw's operations for the Annual Register.

To Mr. Laidlaw, at Kaeside.

"Edinburgh, June 16, 1817.

"Dear Sir,

"I enclose you 'rare guerdon,' better than remuneration,—namely, a cheque for £25, for the Chronicle part of the Register. The incidents selected should have some reference to amusement as well as information, and may be occasionally abridged in the narration; but, after all, paste and scissors form your principal materials. You must look out for two or three good original articles; and, if you would read and take pains to abridge one or two curious books of travels, I would send out the volumes. Could I once get the head of the concern fairly round before the wind again, I am sure I could make it £100 a-year to you. In the present instance it will be at least £60. Yours truly,

W. S."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, July 3, 1817.

"My dear Sir,

"I send you Adam's and Riley's travels. You will observe I don't want a review of the books, or a detail of these persons' adventures, but merely a short article expressing the light, direct or doubtful, which they have thrown on the interior of Africa. 'Recent Discoveries in Africa,' will be a proper title. I hope to find you materially amended, or rather quite stout, when I come out on Saturday. I am quite well this morning. Yours in haste,

W. S.

"P. S.—I add Mariner's Tonga Islands and Campbell's Voyage. Pray, take great care of them, as I am a coxcomb about my books, and hate specks or spots. Take care of yourself, and want for nothing that Abbotsford can furnish."

These notes have carried us down to the middle of the year. But I must now turn to some others, which show that before Whitsuntide, when Laidlaw settled at Kaeside, negotiations were on foot respecting another novel.

To Mr. John Ballantyne, Hanover Street, Edinburgh.

"Abbotsford, Monday. [April, 1817.]

"Dear John,

"I have a good subject for a work of fiction *in petto*. What do you think Constable would give for a smell of it? You ran away without taking leave the other morning, or I wished to have spoken to you about it. I don't mean a continuation of Jedediah, because there might be some delicacy in putting that by the original publishers. You may write if any thing occurs to you on this subject. It will not interrupt my History. By the way, I have a great lot of the Register ready for delivery, and no man asks for it. I shall want to pay up some cashat Whitsunday, which will make me draw on my brains. Yours truly,

W. Scott."

To the Same.

"Abbotsford, Saturday, May 3, 1817.

"Dear John,

"I shall be much obliged to you to come here with Constable on Monday, as he proposes a visit, and it will save time. By the way, you must attend that the usual quantity of stock is included in the arrangement—that is £600 for 6000 copies. My sum is £1700, payable in May—a round advance, by'r Lady, but I think I am entitled to it, considering what I have twined off hitherto on such occasions.

"I make a point on your coming with Constable, health allowing. Yours truly,

W. S."

The result of this meeting is indicated in a note scribbled by John Ballantyne at the bottom of the foregoing letter, before it was seen by his brother the printer—

"Half-past 3 o'clock, Tuesday.

"Dear James,

"I am this moment returned from Abbotsford, with entire and full success. Wish me joy. I shall gain above £600—Constable taking my share of stock also. The title is *Rob Roy—by the author of Waverley!!!* Keep this letter for me. J. B."

On the same page there is written, in fresher ink, which marks, no doubt, the time when John pasted it into his collection of private papers now before me—

"N. B.—I did gain above £1200.—J. B."

The title of this novel was suggested by Constable, and he told me years afterwards the difficulty he had to get it adopted by the author. "What!" said he, "Mr. Acconcheur, must you be setting up for Mr. Sponsor too?—But let's hear it." Constable said the name of the real hero would be the best possible name for the book. "Nay," answered Scott, "never let me have to write up to a name. You well know I have generally adopted a title that told nothing."—The bookseller, however, persevered; and after the trio had dined, these scruples gave way.

On rising from the table, according to Constable, they sallied out to the green before the door of the cottage, and all in the highest spirits enjoyed the fine May evening. John Ballantyne, hopping up and down in his glee, exclaimed "is Rob's gun here, Mr. Scott; would you object to my trying the auld barrel with a *few de joy*?" "Nay, Mr. Puff," said Scott, "it would burst and blow you to the devil before your time." "Johnny, my man," said Constable, "what the mischief puts drawing at sight into *your* head?" Scott laughed heartily at this innuendo; and then observing that the little man felt somewhat sore, called attention to the notes of a bird in the adjoining shrubbery. "And by the by," said he, as they, continued listening, "'tis a long time, Johnny, since we have had the Cobbler of Kelso." Mr. Puff forthwith jumped up on a mass of stone, and seating himself in the proper attitude of one working with his awl, began a favorite interlude, mimicking a certain son of Crispin, at whose stall Scott and he had often lingered when they were schoolboys, and a blackbird, the only companion of his cell, that used to sing to him, while he talked and whistled to it all day long. With this performance Scott was always delighted: nothing could be richer than the contrast of the bird's wild sweet notes, some of which he imitated with wonderful skill, and the accompaniment of the Cobbler's hoarse cracked voice, uttering all manner of endearing epithets, which Johnny multiplied and varied in a style worthy of the Old Woman in Rabelais at the birth of Pantagruel. I often wondered that Matthews, who borrowed so many good things from John Ballantyne, allowed this Cobbler, which was certainly the masterpiece, to escape him.

Scott himself had probably exceeded that evening the three glasses of wine sanctioned by his Sangrados. "I never," said Constable, "had found him so disposed to be communicative about what he meant to do. Though he had had a return of his illness but the day before, he continued for an hour or more to walk backwards and forwards on the green, talking and laughing—he told us he was sure he should make a hit in a Glasgow weaver, whom he would *ravel up with Rob*; and fairly outshone the Cobbler, in an extempore dialogue between the bailie and the cateran—something not unlike what the book gives us as passing in the Glasgow tolbooth."

Mr. Puff might well exult in the "full and entire success" of this trip to Abbotsford. His friend had made it a *sine qua non* in the bargain with Constable, that he should have a third share in the bookseller's moiety of the copyright—and though Johnny had no more trouble about the publishing or selling of Rob Roy than his own Cobbler of Kelso, this stipulation had secured him a *bonus* of £1200, before two years passed. Moreover, one must admire his adroitness in persuading Constable, during their journey back to Edinburgh, to relieve him of that fraction of his own old stock, with

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which his unhazardous share in the new bargain was burdened. Scott's kindness continued, as long as John Ballantyne lived, to provide for him a constant succession of similar advantages at the same easy rate; and Constable, from deference to Scott's wishes, and from his own liking for the humorous auctioneer, appears to have submitted with hardly a momentary grudge to this heavy tax on his most important ventures.

The same week Scott received Southey's celebrated letter to Mr. William Smith, M. P. for Norwich. The poet of Keswick had also forwarded to him somewhat earlier his Pilgrimage to Waterloo, which piece contains a touching allusion to the affliction the author had recently sustained in the death of a fine boy. Scott's letter on this occasion was as follows:—

To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick.

Selkirk, May 9th, 1817.

"My dear Southey,

"I have been a strangely negligent correspondent for some months past, more especially as I have had you rarely out of my thoughts, for I think you will hardly doubt of my sincere sympathy in events which have happened since I have written. I shed sincere tears over the Pilgrimage to Waterloo. But in the crucible of human life, the purest gold is tried by the strongest heat, and I can only hope for the continuance of your present family blessings in one so well formed to enjoy the pure happiness they afford. My health has, of late, been very indifferent. I was very nearly succumbing under a violent inflammatory attack, and still feel the effects of the necessary treatment. I believe they took one-third of the blood of my system, and blistered in proportion; so that both my flesh and my blood have been in a woefully reduced state. I got out here some weeks since, where, by dint of the insensible exercise which one takes in the country, I feel myself gathering strength daily, but am still obliged to observe a severe regimen. It was not to croak about myself, however, that I took up the pen, but to wish you joy of your triumphant answer to that coarse-minded William Smith. He deserved all he has got, and, to say the truth, you do not spare him, and have no cause. His attack seems to have proceeded from the vulgar insolence of a low mind desirous of attacking genius at disadvantage. It is the ancient and eternal strife of which the witch speaks in Thalaba. Such a man as he feels he has no alliance with such as you, and his evil instincts lead him to treat as hostile whatever he cannot comprehend. I met Smith once during his stay in Edinburgh,* and had, what I seldom have with any one in society, a high quarrel with him. His mode of travelling had been from one gentleman's seat to another, abusing the well-known hospitality of the Highland lairds by taking possession of their houses, even during their absence, domineering in them when they were present, and not only eating the dinner of to-day, but requiring that the dinner of to-morrow should also be made ready and carried forward with him, to save the expense of inns. All this was no business of mine, but when in the middle of a company consisting of those to whom he had owed this hospitality, he abused the country, of which he knew little—the language, of which he knew nothing—and the people, who have their faults, but are much more harmless, moral, and at the same time high-spirited population than, I venture to say, he ever lived amongst—I thought it was really too bad, and so e'en took up the debate and gave it him over the knuckles as smartly as I could. Your pamphlet, therefore, fed fat my ancient grudge against him as well as the modern one, for you cannot doubt that my blood boiled at reading the report of his speech. Enough of this gentleman, who, I think, will not walk out of the round in a hurry again, to slander the conduct of individuals.

"I am at present writing at our head-court of freeholders—a set of quiet, unpretending, but sound-judging country gentlemen, and whose opinions may be very well taken as a fair specimen of those men of sense and honour, who are not likely to be dazzled by literary talent, which lies out of their beat, and who, therefore, cannot be of partial counsel in the cause: and I never heard an opinion more generally, and even warmly expressed, than that your triumphant vindication brands Smith as a slanderer in all time coming. I think you may not be displeased to know this, because what men of keen feelings and literary pursuits must have felt cannot be unknown to you, and you may not have the same access to know the impression made upon the general class of society.

"I have to thank you for the continuation of the History of Brazil—one of your gigantic labours; the fruit of a mind so active, yet so patient of labour. I am not yet far advanced in the second volume, reserving it usually for my hour's amusement in the evening, as children keep their dainties *for bonne bouche:* but as far as I have come, it possesses all the interest of the commencement, though a more faithless and worthless set than both Dutch and Portuguese I have never read of; and it requires your knowledge of the springs of human action, and your lively description of 'hair-breadth 'scapes,' to make one care whether the hog bites the dog, or the dog bites the hog. Both nations were in rapid declension from their short-lived age of heroism, and in the act of experiencing all those retrograde movements which are the natural consequence of selfishness on the one hand, and bigotry on the other.

"I am glad to see you are turning your mind to the state of the poor. Should you enter into details on the subject of the best mode of assisting them, I would be happy to tell you the few observations I have made—not on a very small scale neither, considering my fortune, for I have kept about thirty of the labourers in my neighbourhood in constant employment this winter. This I do not call charity, because they executed some extensive plantations and other works, which I could never have got done so cheaply, and which I always intended one day to do. But neither was it altogether selfish on my part, because I was putting myself to inconvenience in incurring the expense of several years at once, and certainly would not have done so, but to serve mine honest neighbours, who were likely to want work but for such exertion. From my observation, I am inclined greatly to doubt the salutary effect of the scheme generally adopted in Edinburgh and elsewhere for relieving the poor. At Edinburgh, they are employed on public works at so much a-day—tenpence, I believe, or one shilling, with an advance to those who have families. This rate is fixed below that of ordinary wages, in order that no person may be employed but those who really cannot find work elsewhere. But it is attended with this bad effect, that the people regard it partly as charity, which is humiliating,—and partly as an imposition, in taking their labour below its usual saleable value; to which many add a third view of the subject—namely, that this sort of half-pay is not given them for the purpose of working, but to prevent their rising in rebellion. None of these misconceptions are favourable to hard labour, and the consequence is, that I never have seen such a set of idle *faineants* as those employed on this system in the public works, and I am sure that, notwithstanding the very laudable intention of those who subscribed to form the fund, and the yet more praiseworthy, because more difficult, exertions of those who superintend it, the issue of the scheme will occasion full as much mischief as good to the people engaged in it. Private gentlemen, acting on something like a similar system, may make it answer better, because they have not the lazy dross of a metropolis to contend with—because they have fewer hands to manage—and above all, because an individual always manages his own concerns better than those of the country can be managed. Yet all who have employed those who were distressed for want of work at under wages, have had, less or more, similar complaints to make. I think I have avoided this in my own case, by inviting the country-people to do piece-work by the contract. Two things only are necessary—one is, that the nature of the work should be such as will admit of its being ascertained, when finished, to have been substantially executed. All sort of spade-work and hoe-work, with many other kinds of country labour, fall under this description, and the employer can hardly be cheated in the execution, if he keeps a reasonable look out. The other point is to take care that the undertakers, in their anxiety for employment, do not take the job too cheap. A little acquaintance with country labour will enable one to regulate this; but it is an essential point, for if you do not keep them to their bargain, it is making a jest of the thing, and forfeiting the very advantage you have in view—that, namely, of inducing the labourer to bring his heart and spirit to his work. But this he will do where he has a fair bargain, which is to prove a good or bad one according to his own exertions. In this case you make the poor man his own friend, for the profits of his good conduct are all his own. It is astonishing how partial the people are to this species of contract, and how diligently they labour, acquiring or maintaining all the while those habits which renders them honourable and useful members of society. I mention this to you, because the rich, much to their honour, do not, in general, require to be so much stimulated to benevolence, as to be directed in the most useful way to exert it.

"I have still a word to say about the poor of our own parish of Parnassus. I have been applied to by a very worthy friend, Mr. Scott of Slinton, in behalf of an unfor-

* Scott's meeting with this Mr. Smith occurred at the table of his friend and colleague, Hector Macdonald Buchanan. The company, except Scott and Smith, were all, like their hospitable landlord, Highlanders.

tunate Mr. Gilmour, who, it seems, has expended a little fortune in printing, upon his own account, poems which, from the sample I saw, seem exactly to answer the description of Dean Swift's country house—

'Too bad for a blessing, too good for a curse,
I wish from my soul they were better or worse.'

But you are the dean of our corporation, and, I am informed, take some interest in this poor gentleman. If you can point out any way in which I can serve him, I am sure my inclination is not wanting, but it looks like a very hopeless case. I beg my kindest respects to Mrs. Southey, and am always sincerely and affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

About this time Hogg took possession of Altrive Lake, and some of his friends in Edinburgh set on foot a subscription edition of his Queen's Wake (at a guinea each copy,) in the hope of thus raising a sum adequate to the stocking of the little farm. The following letter alludes to this affair; and also to the death of Frances Lady Douglas, sister to Duke Henry of Buccleuch, whose early kindness to Scott has been more than once mentioned.

To the Right Honourable Lord Montagu, &c. &c. &c.

" Abbotsford, June 8, 1817.

" My dear Lord,

" I am honoured with your letter, and will not fail to take care that the Shepherd profits by your kind intentions, and those of Lady Montagu. This is a scheme which I did not devise, for I fear it will end in disappointment, but for which I have done, and will do all I possibly can. There is an old saying of the seamen's, 'every man is not born to be a boatswain,' and I think I have heard of men born under a sixpenny planet, and doomed never to be worth a groat. I fear something of this vile sixpenny influence had gleamed in at the cottage window when poor Hogg first came squeaking into the world. All that he made by his original book he ventured on a flock of sheep to drive into the Highlands to a farm he had taken there, but of which he could not get possession, so that all the stock was ruined and sold to disadvantage. Then he tried another farm, which proved too dear, so that he fairly broke upon it. Then put forth divers publications, which had little sale—and brought him accordingly few pence, though some praise. Then came this Queen's Wake, by which he might and ought to have made from £100 to £200—for there were, I think, three editions—when lo! his bookseller turned bankrupt, and paid him never a penny. The Duke has now, with his wonted generosity, given him a cosie bield, and the object of the present attack upon the public, is to get if possible as much cash together as will stock it. But no one has loose guineas now to give to poor poets, and I greatly doubt the scheme succeeding, unless it is more strongly patronised than can almost be expected. In bookselling matters, an author must either be the conjuror, who commands the devil, or the witch who serves him—and few are they whose situation is sufficiently independent to enable them to assume the higher character—and this is injurious to the indigent author in every respect, for not only is he obliged to turn his pen to every various kind of composition, and so to injure himself with the public by writing hastily, and on subjects unfitted for his genius; but moreover, those honest gentlemen, the booksellers, from a natural association, consider the books as of least value, which they find they can get at least expense of copy-money, and therefore are proportionally careless in pushing the sale of the work. Whereas a good round sum out of their purse, like a moderate rise of rent on a farm, raises the work thus acquired in their own eyes, and serves as a spur to make them clear away every channel, by which they can discharge their quires upon the public. So much for bookselling, the most ticklish and unsafe, and hazardous of all professions, scarcely with the exception of horse-jockeyship.

" You cannot doubt the sincere interest I take in Lady Montagu's health. I was very glad to learn from the Duke, that the late melancholy event had produced no permanent effect on her constitution, as I know how much her heart must have suffered.* I saw our regretted friend for the last time at the Theatre, and made many schemes to be at Bothwell this next July. But thus the world glides from us, and those we most love and honour are withdrawn from the stage before us. I know not why it was that among the few for whom I had so much respectful regard, I never had associated the idea of early deprivation with Lady Douglas. Her excellent sense, deep information, and the wit which she wielded with so much good humour, were allied apparently to a healthy constitution which might have permitted us to enjoy, and be instructed by her society for many years. *This sister vision*, and the recollection dwelling on all the delight which she afforded to society, and the good which she did in private life, is what now remains to us of her wit, wisdom, and benevolence. The Duke keeps his usual health, with always just so much of the gout, however, as would make me wish that he had more—a kind wish for which I do not observe that he is sufficiently grateful. I hope to spend a few days at Drumlanrig Castle, when that ancient mansion shall have so far limited its courtesy as to stand covered in the presence of the wind and rain, which I believe is not yet the case. I am no friend to ceremony, and like a house as well when it does not carry its roof *en chapeau bras*. I heartily wish your Lordship joy of the new mansion at Ditton, and hope my good stars will permit me to pay my respects there one day. The discovery of the niches certainly bodes good luck to the house of Montagu, and as there are three of them, I presume it is to come threefold. From the care with which they were concealed, I presume they had been closed in the days of Cromwell, or a little before, and that the artist employed (like the General, who told his soldiers to fight bravely against the Pope, since they were Venetians before they were Christians) had more professional than religious zeal, and did not even, according to the practice of the time, think it necessary to sweep away Popery with the besom of destruction.† I am here on a stolen visit of two days, and find my mansion gradually enlarging. Thanks to Mr. Atkinson, (who found out a practical use for our romantic theory,) it promises to make a comfortable station for offering your Lordship and Lady Montagu a pilgrim's meal, when you next visit Melrose Abbey, and that without any risk of your valet (who I recollect is a substantial person) sticking between the wall of the parlour and the backs of the chairs placed round the table. This literally befel Sir Harry Macdougal's fat butler, who looked like a ship of the line in the loch at Bowhill, altogether unlike his master, who could glide wherever a weasel might make his way. Mr. Atkinson has indeed been more attentive than I can express, when I consider how valuable his time must be.† We are attempting no castellated conundrums to rival those Lord Napier used to have executed in sugar, when he was Commissioner, and no cottage neither, but an irregular somewhat—like an old English hall, in which your squire of £500 a-year used to drink his ale in days of yore.

" I am making considerable plantations, (that is considering,) being greatly encouraged by the progress of those I formerly laid out. Read the veracious Gulliver's account of the Windsor Forest of Lilliput, and you will have some idea of the solemn gloom of my Druid shades.

Your Lordship's truly faithful

WALTER SCOTT.

" This is the 8th of June, and not an ash tree in leaf yet. The country cruelly backward, and whole fields destroyed by the grub. I dread this next season."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

EXCURSION TO THE LENNOX—GLASGOW—AND DRUMLANRIG—PURCHASE OF TOFTFIELD—ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FERGUSON FAMILY AT HUNTLY BURN—LINES WRITTEN IN ILLNESS—VISITS OF WASHINGTON IRVING—LADY BYRON—AND SIR DAVID WILKIE—PROGRESS OF THE BUILDING AT ABBOTSFORD—LETTERS TO MORRITT—TERRY, &C.—CONCLUSION OF ROB ROY—1817.

DURING the summer term of 1817, Scott seems to have laboured chiefly on his History of 1815, for the Register, which was published in August; but he also found time to draw up the Introduction for a richly embellished quarto, entitled "Border Antiquities," which come out a month later. This valuable essay, containing large additions to the information previously embodied in the Minstrelsy, has been included in the late collection of his Miscellaneous Prose, and has thus obtained a circulation not to be expected for it in the original costly form.

* Lady Montagu was the daughter of the late Lord Douglas by his first marriage with Lady Lucy Grahame, daughter of the second Duke of Montrose.

* Lord Montagu's house at Ditton Park, near Windsor, had recently been destroyed by fire—and the ruins revealed some niches with antique candlesticks, &c., belonging to a domestic chapel that had been converted to other purposes from the time, I believe, of Henry VIII.

† Mr. Atkinson, of St. John's Wood, was the architect of Lord Montagu's new mansion at Ditton, as well as the artist ultimately employed in arranging Scott's interior at Abbotsford.

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Upon the rising of the Court in July, he made an excursion to the Lennox, chiefly that he might visit a cave at the head of Loch Lomond, said to have been a favourite retreat of his hero, Rob Roy. He was accompanied to the seat of his friend, Mr. Macdonald Buchanan, by Captain Adam Ferguson—the *long Linton* of the days of his apprenticeship; and thence to Glasgow, where, under the auspices of a kind and intelligent acquaintance, Mr. John Smith, bookseller, he refreshed his recollection of the noble cathedral, and other localities of the birthplace of Bailie Jarvie. Mr. Smith took care also to show the tourists the most remarkable novelties in the great manufacturing establishments of his flourishing city; and he remembers particularly the delight which Scott expressed on seeing the process of *singeing* muslin—that is, of divesting the finished web of all superficial knots and irregularities, by passing it, with the rapidity of lightning, over a rolling bar of red-hot iron. "The man that imagined this," said Scott, "was *the Shakspeare of the Websters*—

'Things out of hope are compass'd oft with vent'ring.'"

The following note indicates the next stages of his progress:—

To his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch Drumlanrig Castle.

"Sanquhar, 2 o'clock, July 30, 1817.

"From Rosa, where the clouds on Ben-Lomond are sleeping—
From Greenock, where Clyde to the Ocean is sweeping—
From Large, where the Scotch gave the Northmen a drilling—
From Ardrossan, whose harbour cost many a shilling—
From Old Cumnock, where beds are as hard as a plank, sir—
From a chop and green pease, and a chicken in Sanquhar,
This eve, please the Fates, at Drumlanrig we anchor.

W. S."

The Poet and Captain Ferguson remained a week at Drumlanrig, and thence repaired together to Abbotsford. By this time, the foundations of that part of the existing house, which extend from the hall westwards to the original court-yard, had been laid; and Scott now found a new source of constant occupation in watching the proceedings of his masons. He had, moreover, no lack of employment further a-field,—for he was now negotiating with another neighbouring landowner for the purchase of an addition, of more consequence than any he had hitherto made, to his estate. In the course of the autumn he concluded this matter, and became, for the price of £10,000, proprietor of the lands of *Toftfield*,* on which there had recently been erected a substantial mansion-house, fitted, in all points, for the accommodation of a genteel family. This circumstance offered a temptation which much quickened Scott's zeal for completing his arrangement. The venerable Professor Ferguson had died a year before; Captain Adam Ferguson was at home on half-pay; and Scott now saw the means of securing for himself, henceforth, the immediate neighbourhood of the companion of his youth, and his amiable sisters. Ferguson, who had written, from the lines of Torres Vedras, his hopes of finding, when the war should be over, some sheltering cottage upon the Tweed, within a walk of Abbotsford, was delighted to see his dreams realized; and the family took up their residence next spring at the new house of Toftfield, on which Scott then bestowed, at the ladies' request, the name of Huntly Burn:—this more harmonious designation being taken from the mountain brook which passes through its grounds and garden,—the same famous in tradition as the scene of Thomas the Rhymer's interviews with the Queen of Fairy. The upper part of the *Rhymer's Glen*, through which this brook finds its way from the Cauldshiels Loch to Toftfield, had been included in a previous purchase. He was now master of all these haunts of "True Thomas," and of the whole ground of the battle of Melrose from *Skirmish-Field* to *Turn-again*. His enjoyment of the new territories was, however, interrupted by various returns of his cramp, and the depression of spirit which always attended, in his case, the use of opium,—the only medicine that seemed to have power over the disease.

It was while struggling with such languor, on one lovely evening of this autumn, that he composed the followiug beautiful verses. They mark the very spot of their birth,—namely, the then naked height overhanging the northern side of the Cauldshiels Loch, from which Melrose Abbey to the eastward, and the hills of Ettrick and Yarrow to the west, are now visible over a wide range of rich woodland, all the work of the poet's hand:—

"The sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill,
In Ettrick's vale, is sinking sweet;
The westland wind is hush and still—
The lake lies sleeping at my feet.
Yet not the landscape to mine eye
Bears those bright hues that once it bore;
Though evening, with her richest dye,
Flames o'er the hills of Ettrick's shore.

"With listless look along the plain
I see Tweed's silver current glide,
And coldly mark the holy fane
Of Melrose rise in ruin'd pride.
The quiet lake, the balmy air,
The hill, the stream, the tower, the tree,—
Are they still such as once they were,
Or is the dreary change in me?

"Alas, the warp'd and broken board,
How can it bear the painter's dye!
The harp of strain'd and tuneless chord,
How to the minstrel's skill reply!
To aching eyes each landscape lowers,
To feverish pulse each gale blows chill;
And Araby's or Eden's bowers
Were barren as this moorland hill."

He again alludes to his illness in a letter to Mr. Morritt:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M. P. Rokeby.

"Abbotsford, Aug. 11, 1817.

"My dear Morritt,

"I am arrived from a little tour in the west of Scotland, and had hoped, in compliance with your kind wish, to have indulged myself with a skip over the Border as far as Rokeby, about the end of this month. But my fate denies me this pleasure; for, in consequence of one or two blunders, during my absence, in executing my new premises, I perceive the necessity of remaining at the helm while they are going on. Our masons, though excellent workmen, are too little accustomed to the gimcracks of their art, to be trusted with the execution of a *bravura* plan, without constant inspection. Besides the said labourers lay me under the necessity of labouring a little myself; and I find I can no longer with impunity undertake to made one week's hard work supply the omissions of a fortnight's idleness. Like you, I have abridged my creature-comforts—as Old Mortality would call them—renouncing beer and ale on all ordinary occasions; also pastry, fruit, &c. and all that tends to acidity. These are awkward warnings; but *sat est vixisse*. To have lived respected and regarded by some of the best men in our age, is enough for an individual like me; the rest must be as God wills, and when he wills.

"The poor laws into which you have ventured for the love of the country, form a sad quagmire. They are like John Bunyan's Slough of Despond, into which, as he observes, millions of cart loads of good resolutions have been thrown, without perceptibly mending the way. From what you say, and from what I have heard from others, there is a very natural desire to trust to one or two empirical remedies, such as general systems of education, and so forth. But a man with a broken constitution might as well put faith in Spilsbury or Godbold. It is not the knowledge, but the use which is made of it, that is productive of real benefit. To say that the Scottish peasant is less likely than the Englishman to become an incumbrance on his parish, is saying, in other words, that this country is less populous,—that there are fewer villages, and towns,—that the agricultural classes, from the landed proprietor down to the cottager, are individually more knit and cemented together;—above all, that the Scotch peasant has harder habits of life, and can endure from his

* On completing this purchase, Scott writes to John Ballantyne:—"Dear John,—I have closed with Usher for his beautiful patrimony, which makes me a great laird. I am afraid the people will take me up for coining. Indeed, these novels, while their attractions last, are something like it. I am very glad of your good prospects. Still I cry, *Prudence! Prudence!*—Yours truly, W. S."

infancy a worse fare and lodging than your parish almshouses offer. There is a terrible evil in England to which we are strangers,—the number, to-wit, of tippling houses, where the labourer, as a matter of course, spends the overplus of his earnings. In Scotland there are few; and the Justices are commendably inexorable in rejecting all application for licenses where there appears no public necessity for granting them. A man, therefore, cannot easily spend much money in liquor, since he must walk three or four miles to the place of suction and back again, which infers a sort of *malice prepense* of which few are capable; and the habitual opportunity of indulgence not being at hand, the habits of intemperance, and of waste connected with it, are not acquired. If financiers would admit a general limitation of the ale-houses over England to one fourth of the number, I am covinced you would find the money spent in that manner would remain with the peasant, as a source of self-support and independence. All this applies chiefly to the country; in towns, and in the manufacturing districts, the evil could hardly be diminished by such regulations. There would, perhaps, be no means so effectual as that (which will never be listened to) of taxing the manufacturers according to the number of hands which they employ on an average, and applying the produce in maintaining the manufacturing poor. If it should be alleged that this would injure the manufacturers, I would boldly reply,—'And why not injure, or rather limit, speculations, the excessive stretch of which has been productive of so much damage to the principles of the country, and to the population, whom it has, in so many respects, degraded and demoralized?' For a great many years, manufactures, taken in a general point of view, have not partaken of the character of a regular profession, in which all who engaged with honest industry and a sufficient capital might reasonably expect returns proportional to their advances and labour—but have, on the contrary, rather resembled a lottery, in which the great majority of the adventurers are sure to be losers, although some may draw considerable advantage. Men continued for a great many years to exert themselves, and to pay extravagant wages, not in hopes that there could be a reasonable prospect of an orderly and regular demand for the goods they wrought up, but in order that they might be the first to take advantage of some casual opening which might consume their cargo, let others shift as they could. Hence extravagant wages on some occasions; for these adventurers who thus played at hit or miss, stood on no scruples while the chance of success remained open. Hence, also, the stoppage of work, and the discharge of the workmen, when the speculators failed of their object. All this while the country was the sufferer;—for whoever gained, the result, being upon the whole a loss, fell on the nation, together with the task of maintaining a poor, rendered effeminate and vicious by over-wages and over-living, and necessarily cast loose upon society. I cannot but think that the necessity of making some fund beforehand, for the provision of those whom they debauch, and render only fit for the almshouse, in prosecution of their own adventures, though it operated as a check on the increase of manufactures, would be a measure just in itself, and beneficial to the community. But it would never be listened to;—the weaver's beam, and the sons of Zeruiah, would be too many for the proposers.

"This is the eleventh of August; Walter, happier than he will ever be again, perhaps, is preparing for the moors. He has a better dog than Trout, and rather less active. Mrs. Scott and all our family send kind love. Yours ever,

W. S."

Two or three days after this letter was written, Scott first saw Washington Irving, who has recorded his visit in a delightful Essay, which, however, having been penned nearly twenty years afterwards betrays a good many slips of memory as to names and dates. Mr. Irving says he arrived at Abbotsford on the 27th of August, 1816; but he describes the walls of the new house as already overtopping the old cottage; and this is far from being the only circumstance he mentions which proves that he should have written 1817.* The picture which my amiable friend has drawn of his reception, shows to all who remember the Scott and the Abbotsford of those days, how consistent accuracy as to essentials may be with forgetfulness of trifles.

* I have before me two letters of Mr. Irving's to Scott, both written in September, 1817, from Edinburgh, and referring to his visit (which certainly was his only one at Abbotsford) as immediately preceding. There is also in my hands a letter from Scott to his friend John Richardson, of Fludyer Street, dated 2nd September, 1817, in which he says, "When you see Tom Campbell, tell him, with my best love, that I have to thank him for making me known to Mr. Washington Irving, who is one of the best and pleasantest acquaintances I have made this many a day."

Scott had received "the History of New York by Knickerbocker," shortly after its appearance in 1810, from an accomplished American traveller, Mr. Brevoort; and the admirable humour of this early work had led him to anticipate the brilliant career which its author has since run. Mr. Thomas Campbell being no stranger to Scott's high estimation of Irving's genius, gave him a letter of introduction, which, halting his chaise on the high-road above Abbotsford, he modestly sent down to the house, "with a card, on which he had written, that he was on his way to the ruins of Melrose, and wished to know whether it would be agreeable to Mr. Scott to receive a visit from him in the course of the morning." Scott's family well remember the delight with which he received this announcement—he was at breakfast, and sallied forth instantly, dogs and children after him as usual, to greet the guest, and conduct him in person from the highway to the door.

"The noise of my chaise," says Irving, "had disturbed the quiet of the establishment. Out sallied the warder of the castle, a black greyhound, and leaping on one of the blocks of stone, began a furious barking. This alarm brought out the whole garrison of dogs, all open-mouthed and vociferous. In a little while, the lord of the castle himself made his appearance. I knew him at once, by the likenesses that had been published of him. He came limping up the gravel walk, aiding himself by a stout walking-staff, but moving rapidly and with vigour. By his side jogged along a large iron-grey staghound, of most grave demeanour, who took no part in the clamour of the canine rabble, but seemed to consider himself bound, for the dignity of the house, to give me a courteous reception.

"Before Scott reached the gate, he called out in a hearty tone, welcoming me to Abbotsford, and asking news of Campbell. Arrived at the door of the chaise, he grasped me warmly by the hand: 'Come, drive down, drive down to the house,' said he; 'ye're just in time for breakfast, and afterwards ye shall see all the wonders of the Abbey.'

"I would have excused myself on the plea of having already made my breakfast. 'Hut, man,' cried he, 'a ride in the morning in the keen air of the Scotch hills is warrant enough for a second breakfast.'

"I was accordingly whirled to the portal of the cottage, and in a few moments found myself seated at the breakfast-table. There was no one present but the family, which consisted of Mrs. Scott; her eldest daughter, Sophia, then a fine girl about seventeen; Miss Ann Scott, two or three years younger; Walter, a well-grown stripling; and Charles, a lively boy, eleven or twelve years of age.

I soon felt myself quite at home, and my heart in a glow, with the cordial welcome I experienced. I had thought to make a mere morning visit, but found I was not to be let off so lightly. 'You must not think our neighbourhood is to be read in a morning like a newspaper,' said Scott; 'it takes several days of study for an observant traveller, that has a relish for auld-world trumpery. After breakfast you shall make your visit to Melrose Abbey; I shall not be able to accompany you, as I have some household affairs to attend to; but I will put you in charge of my son Charles, who is very learned in all things touching the old ruin and the neighbourhood it stands in; and he and my friend Jonnie Bower, will tell you the whole truth about it, with a great deal more that you are not called upon to believe, unless you be a true and nothing-doubting antiquary. When you come back, I'll take you out on a ramble about the neighbourhood. To-morrow we will take a look at the Yarrow, and the next day we will drive over to Dryburgh Abbey, which is a fine old ruin, well worth your seeing.'—In a word, before Scott had got through with his plan, I found myself committed for a visit of several days, and it seemed as if a little realm of romance was suddenly open before me."

After breakfast, while Scott, no doubt, wrote a chapter of Rob Roy, Mr. Irving, under young Charles's guidance, saw Melrose Abbey, and Johnny Bower the elder, whose son long since inherited his office as showman of the ruins, and all his enthusiasm about them and their poet. The senior on this occasion "was loud in his praises of the affability of Scott. 'He'll come here sometimes,' said he, 'with great folks in his company, and the first I'll know of it is hearing his voice calling out Johnny! —Johnny Bower!—and when I go out I'm sure to be greeted with a joke or a pleasant word. He'll stand and crack an' laugh wi' me just like an auld wife,—and *to think that of a man that has such an awfu' knowledge o' history!*"

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On his return from the Abbey, Irving found Scott ready for a ramble. I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of extracting some parts of his description of it.

"As we sallied forth, every dog in the establishment turned out to attend us. There was the old staghound, Maida, that I have already mentioned, a noble animal, and Hamlet, the black greyhound, a wild thoughtless youngster, not yet arrived at the years of discretion; and Finette, a beautiful setter, with soft, silken hair, long pendant ears, and a mild eye, the parlour favourite. When in front of the house, we were joined by a superannuated greyhound, who came from the kitchen wagging his tail; and was cheered by Scott as an old friend and comrade. In our walks, he would frequently pause in conversation, to notice his dogs, and speak to them as if rational companions; and, indeed, there appears to be a vast deal of rationality in these faithful attendants on man, derived from their close intimacy with him. Maida deported himself with a gravity becoming his age and size, and seemed to consider himself called upon to preserve a great degree of dignity and decorum in our society. As he jogged along a little distance ahead of us, the young dogs would gambol about him, leap on his neck, worry at his ears, and endeavour to tease him into a gambol. The old dog would keep on for a long time with imperturbable solemnity, now and then seeming to rebuke the wantonness of his young companions. At length he would make a sudden turn, seize one of them, and tumble him in the dust, then giving a glance at us, as much as to say, 'You see, gentlemen, I can't help giving way to this nonsense,' would resume his gravity, and jog on as before. Scott amused himself with these peculiarities. 'I make no doubt,' said he, 'when Maida is alone with these young dogs, he throws gravity aside, and plays the boy as much as any of them; but he is ashamed to do so in our company, and seems to say—Ha' done with your nonsense, youngsters: what will the laird and that other gentleman think of me if I give way to such foolery?'"

"Scott amused himself with the peculiarities of another of his dogs, a little shamefaced terrier, with large glassy eyes, one of the most sensitive little bodies to insult and indignity in the world. 'If ever he whipped him,' he said, 'the little fellow would sneak off and hide himself from the light of day in a lumber garret, from whence there was no drawing him forth but by the sound of the chopping-knife, as if chopping up his victuals, when he would steal forth with humiliated and downcast look, but would skulk away again if any one regarded him.'

"While we were discussing the humours and peculiarities of our canine companions, some object provoked their spleen, and produced a sharp and petulant barking from the smaller fry; but it was some time before Maida was sufficiently roused to ramp forward two or three bounds, and join the chorus with a deep-mouthed *bow wow*. It was but a transient outbreak, and he returned instantly, wagging his tail, and looking up dubiously in his master's face, uncertain whether he would receive censure or applause. 'Ay, ay, old boy!' cried Scott, 'you have done wonders; you have shaken the Eildon hills with your roaring: you may now lay by your artillery for the rest of the day. Maida,' continued he, 'is like the great gun at Constantinople; it takes so long to get it ready, that the smaller guns can fire off a dozen times first: but when it does go off, it plays the very devil!'

"These simple anecdotes may serve to show the delightful play of Scott's humours and feelings in private life. His domestic animals were his friends. Every thing about him seemed to rejoice in the light of his countenance.

"'Our ramble took us on the hills commanding an extensive prospect. 'Now,' said Scott, 'I have brought you, like the pilgrim in the Pilgrim's Progress, to the top of the Delectable Mountains, that I may show you all the goodly regions hereabouts. Yonder is Lammermuir, and Smailholme; and there you have Galashiels, and Torwoodlee, and Gala Water; and in that direction you see Teviotdale and the Braes of Yarrow, and Ettrick stream winding along like a silver thread, to throw itself into the Tweed.' He went on thus to call over names celebrated in Scottish song, and most of which had recently received a romantic interest from his own pen. In fact, I saw a great part of the Border country spread out before me, and could trace the scenes of those poems and romances which had in a manner bewitched the world.

"I gazed about me for a time with mute surprise, I may almost say, with disappointment. I beheld a mere succession of gray waving hills, line beyond line, as far as my eye could reach, monotonous in their aspect, and so destitute of trees, that one could almost see a stout fly walking along their profile; and the far-famed Tweed appeared a naked stream, flowing between bare hills, without a tree or thicket on its banks; and yet such had been the magic web of poetry and romance thrown over the whole, that it had a greater charm for me than the richest scenery I had beheld in England. I could not help giving utterance to my thoughts. Scott hummed for a moment to himself, and looked grave; he had no idea of having his muse complimented at the expense of his native hills. 'It may be pertinacity,' said he at length; 'but to my eye these gray hills, and all this wild border country, have beauties peculiar to themselves. I like the very nakedness of the land; it has something bold, and stern, and solitary about it. When I have been for some time in the rich scenery about Edinburgh, which is like ornamented garden land, I begin to wish myself back again among my own honest gray hills; and if I did not see the heather, at least once a-year, *I think I should die!*' The last words were said with an honest warmth, accompanied by a thump on the ground with his staff, by way of emphasis, that showed his heart was in his speech. He vindicated the Tweed, too, as a beautiful stream in itself; and observed, that he did not dislike it for being bare of trees, probably from having been much of an angler in his time; and an angler does not like to have a stream overhung by trees, which embarrass him in the exercise of his rod and line.

"I took occasion to plead, in like manner, the associations of early life for my disappointment in respect to the surrounding scenery. I had been so accustomed to see hills crowned with forests, and streams breaking their way through a wilderness of trees, that all my ideas of romantic landscape were apt to be well wooded. 'Ay, and that's the great charm of your country,' cried Scott. 'You love the forest as I do the heather; but I would not have you think I do not feel the glory of a great woodland prospect. There is nothing I should like more than to be in the midst of one of your grand wild original forests, with the idea of hundreds of miles of untrodden forest around me. I once saw at Leith an immense stick of timber, just landed from America. It must have been an enormous tree when it stood in its native soil, at its full height, and with all its branches. I gazed at it with admiration; it seemed like one of the gigantic obelisks which are now and then brought from Egypt to shame the pigmy monuments of Europe; and, in fact, these vast aboriginal trees, that have sheltered the Indians before the intrusion of the white men, are the monuments and antiquities of your country.'

"The conversation here turned upon Campbell's poem of Gertrude of Wyoming, as illustrative of the poetic materials furnished by American scenery. Scott cited several passages of it with great delight. 'What a pity it is,' said he, 'that Campbell does not write more, and oftener, and give full sweep to his genius! He has wings that would bear him to the skies; and he does, now and then, spread them grandly, but folds them up again, and resumes his perch, as if he was afraid to launch away. What a grand idea is that,' said he, 'about prophetic boding, or, in common parlance, second sight—

'Coming events cast their shadows before!'—

The fact is,' added he, 'Campbell is, in a manner, a bugbear to himself. The brightness of his early success is a detriment to all his further efforts. *He is afraid of the shadow that his own fame casts before him.*'

"We had not walked much farther, before we saw the two Miss Scotts advancing along the hill-side to meet us. The morning's studies being over, they had set off to take a ramble on the hills, and gather heather blossoms with which to decorate their hair for dinner. As they came bounding lightly like young fawns, and their dresses fluttering in the pure summer breeze, I was reminded of Scott's own description of his children, in his introduction to one of the cantos of Marmion:—

'My imps, though hardy, bold, and wild,
As best befits the mountain child,' &c.

As they approached, the dogs all sprang forward, and gambolled around them. They joined us with countenances full of health and glee. Sophia, the eldest, was the most lively and joyous, having much of her father's varied spirit in conversation, and seeming to catch excitement from his words and looks; Ann was of a quieter mood, rather silent, owing, in some measure, no doubt, to her being some years younger."

Having often, many years afterwards, heard Irving speak warmly of William Laidlaw, I must not omit the following passage:—

"One of my pleasantest rambles with Scott about the neighbourhood of Abbotsford, was taken in company with Mr. William Laidlaw, the steward of his estate. This was a gentleman for whom Scott entertained a particular value. He had been born to a competency, had been well educated, his mind was richly stored with varied information, and he was a man of sterling moral worth

Having been reduced by misfortune, Scott had got him to take charge of his estate. He lived at a small farm, on the hillside above Abbotsford, and was treated by Scott as a cherished and confidential friend, rather than a dependant.

"That day at dinner we had Mr. Laidlaw and his wife, and a female friend, who accompanied them. The latter was a very intelligent respectable person, about the middle age, and was treated with particular attention and courtesy by Scott. Our dinner was a most agreeable one, for the guests were evidently cherished visiters to the house, and felt that they were appreciated. When they were gone, Scott spoke of them in the most cordial manner. 'I wished to show you,' said he, 'some of our really excellent, plain Scotch people: not fine gentlemen and ladies, for such you can meet every where, and they are every where the same. The character of a nation is not to be learnt from its fine folks.' He then went on with a particular eulogium on the lady who had accompanied the Laidlaws. She was the daughter, he said, of a poor country clergyman, who had died in debt, and left her an orphan and destitute. Having had a good plain education, she immediately set up a child's school, and had soon a numerous flock under her care, by which she earned a decent maintenance. That, however, was not her main object. Her first care was to pay off her father's debts, that no ill word or ill will might rest upon his memory. This, by dint of Scotch economy, backed by filial reverence and pride, she accomplished, though in the effort she subjected herself to every privation. Not content with this, she in certain instances refused to take pay for the tuition of the children of some of her neighbours, who had befriended her father in his need, and had since fallen into poverty. 'In a word,' added Scott, 'she's a fine old Scotch girl, and I delight in her more than in many a fine lady I have known, and I have known many of the finest.'

"The evening passed away delightfully in a quaint-looking apartment, half study, half drawing-room. Scott read several passages from the old romance of Arthur, with a fine deep sonorous voice, and a gravity of tone that seemed to suit the antiquated black-letter volume. It was a rich treat to hear such a work read by such a person, and in such a place; and his appearance, as he sat reading, in a large arm-chair, with his favourite hound Maida at his feet, and surrounded by books and reliques, and Border trophies, would have formed an admirable and most characteristic picture. When I retired for the night, I found it almost impossible to sleep: the idea of being under the roof of Scott; of being on the Borders on the Tweed; in the very centre of that region which had, for some time past, been the favourite scene of romantic fiction; and, above all, the recollections of the ramble I had taken, the company in which I had taken it, and the conversation which had passed, all fermented in my mind, and nearly drove sleep from my pillow.

"On the following morning the sun darted his beams from over the hills through the low lattice of my window. I rose at an early hour, and looked out between the branches of eglantine which overhung the casement. To my surprise, Scott was already up, and forth, seated on a fragment of stone, and chatting with the workmen employed in the new building. I had supposed, after the time he had wasted upon me yesterday, he would be closely occupied this morning: but he appeared like a man of leisure, who had nothing to do but bask in the sunshine, and amuse himself. I soon dressed myself and joined him. He talked about his proposed plans of Abbotsford; happy would it have been for him could he have contented himself with his delightful little vine-covered cottage, and the simple, yet hearty and hospitable, style in which he lived at the time of my visit!"

Among others visiters who succeeded the distinguished American that autumn were Lady Byron, the wife of the poet, and the great artist, Mr. now Sir David Wilkie, who then executed for Captain Ferguson that pleasing little picture, in which Scott and his family are represented as a group of peasants, while the gallant soldier himself figures by them in the character of a gamekeeper, or perhaps poacher. Mr. Irving has given, in the little work from which I have quoted so liberally, an amusing account of the delicate scruples of Wilkie about soliciting Scott to devote a morning to the requisite sitting, until, after lingering for several days, he at length became satisfied that, by whatever magic his host might contrive to keep Ballantyne's presses in full play, he had always abundance of leisure for matters less important than Ferguson's destined heirloom. I shall now, however, return to his correspondence; and begin with a letter to Joanna Baillie on Lady Byron's visit.

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Abbotsford, Sept. 26, 1817.

"My dear Miss Baillie,

"A series of little trinketty sort of business, and occupation, and idleness, have succeeded to each other so closely, that I have been scarce able, for some three weeks past, to call my time my own for half an hour together; but enough of apologies—they are vile things, and I know you will impute my negligence to any thing rather than forgetting or undervaluing your friendship. You know, by this time, that we have had a visit from Lady Byron, delightful both on its own account, and because it was accompanied with good news and a letter from you. I regret we could not keep her longer than a day with us, which was spent on the banks of the Yarrow, and I hope and believe she was pleased with us, because I am sure she will be so with every thing that is intended to please her: meantime her visit gave me a most lawyer-like fit of the bile. I have lived too long to be surprised at any instance of human caprice, but still it vexes me. Now, one would suppose Lady Byron, young, beautiful, with birth, and rank, and fortune, and taste, and high accomplishments, and admirable good sense, qualified to have made happy one whose talents are so high as Lord Byron's, and whose marked propensity it is to like those who are qualified to admire and understand his talents; and yet it has proved otherwise. I can safely say, my heart ached for her all the time we were together; there was so much patience and decent resignation to a situation which must have pressed on her thoughts, that she was to me one of the most interesting creatures I had seen for a score of years. I am sure I should not have felt such strong kindness towards her had she been at the height of her fortune, and in the full enjoyment of all the brilliant prospects to which she seemed destined. You will wish to hear of my complaint. I think, thank God, that it is leaving me—not suddenly, however, for I have had some repetitions, but they have become fainter and fainter, and I have not been disturbed by one for these three weeks. I trust, by care and attention, my stomach will return to its usual tone, and I am as careful as I can. I have taken hard exercise with good effect, and am often six hours on foot without stopping or sitting down, to which my plantations and enclosures contribute not a little. I have, however, given up the gun this season, finding myself unable to walk up to the dogs; but Walter has taken it in hand, and promises to be a first-rate shot; he brought us in about seven or eight brace of birds the evening Lady Byron came to us, which papa was of course a little proud of. The black-cocks are getting very plenty on our moor ground at Abbotsford, but I associate them so much with your beautiful poem,* that I have not the pleasure I used to have in knocking them down. I wish I knew how to send you a brace. I get on with my labours here; my house is abot. to be roofed in, and a comical concern it is. Yours truly,

W. S."

The next letter refers to the Duke of Buccleuch's preparations for a cattle-show at Bowhill, which was followed by an entertainment on a large scale to his Grace's Selkirkshire neighbours and tenantry, and next day by a fox-hunt, after Dandie Dinmont's fashion, among the rocks of the Yarrow. The Sheriff attended *with his tail on*; and Wilkie, too, went with him. It was there that Sir David first saw Hogg, and the Shepherd's greeting was graceful. He eyed the great painter for a moment in silence, and then stretching out his hand, said,—"Thank God for it. I did not know that you were so young a man!"

To the Duke of Buccleuch, &c., &c., &c., Drumlanrig Castle.

"My dear Lord Duke,

"I am just honoured with your Grace's of the 27th. The posts, which are as cross as pie-crust, have occasioned some delay. Depend on our attending at Bowhill on the 29th, and staying over the show. I have written to Adam Ferguson, who will come with a whoop and a hollo. So will the Ballantynes—flageolett and all—for the festival, and they shall be housed at Abbotsford. I have an inimitably good songster in the person of Terence Magrath, who teaches my girls. He beats almost all whom I have

* "Good morrow to thy sable beak,
And glossy plumage dark and sleek,
Thy crimson moon, and azure eye,
Cock of the heath, so wikily shy!" &c.

† The *flageolet* alludes to Mr. Alexander Ballantyne, the third of the brothers—a fine musician, and a most amiable and modest man, never connected with Scott in any business matters, but always much his favourite in private.

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ever heard attempt Moore's songs, and I can easily cajole him also out to Abbotsford for a day or two. In jest or earnest, I never heard a better singer in a room, though his voice is not quite full enough for a concert; and for an after-supper song, he almost equals Irish Johnstone.*

"Trade of every kind is recovering, and not a loom idle in Glasgow. The most faithful respects of this family attend the Ladies and all at Drumlanrig. I ever am your Grace's truly obliged and grateful

WALTER SCOTT.

"Given from my Castle of Grawacky,
this second day of the month called
October, One Thousand Eight
Hundred and Seventeen Years.

"There is a date nearly as long as the letter.

"I hope we shall attack the foxes at Bowhill. I will hazard Maida."

We have some allusions to this Bowhill party in another letter; the first of several which I shall now insert according to their dates, leaving them, with a few marginal notes, to tell out the story of 1817:—

To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.

"Abbotsford, October 24, 1817.

"Dear Terry,

"Bullock has not gone to Skye, and I am very glad he has not, for to me who knew the Hebrides well, the attempt seemed very perilous at this season. I have considerably enlarged my domains since I wrote to you, by the purchase of a beautiful farm adjacent. The farm-house, which is new and excellent, I have let to Adam Ferguson and his sisters. We will be within a pleasant walk of each other, and hope to end our lives, as they began, in each other's society. There is a beautiful brook, with remnants of natural wood, which would made Toftfield rival Abbotsford, but for the majestic Tweed. I am in treaty for a field or two more; one of which contains the only specimen of a Peel-house, or defensive residence of a small proprietor, which remains in this neighbourhood. It is an orchard, in the hamlet of Darnick, to which it gives a most picturesque effect. Blore admires it very much. We are all well here, but crowded with company. I have been junketting this week past at Bowhill. Mr. Magrath has been with us these two or three days, and has seen his ward, Hamlet,† behave most *princelike* on Newark Hill and elsewhere. He promises to be a real treasure. Notwithstanding, Mr. Magrath went to Bowhill with me one day, where his vocal talents gave great pleasure, and I hope will procure him the notice and protection of the Buccleuch family. The Duke says my building engrosses, as a common centre, the thoughts of Mr. Atkinson and Mr. Bullock, and wishes he could make them equally anxious in his own behalf. You may believe this flatters me not a little.

"P. S.—I agree with you that the tower will look rather rich for the rest of the building; yet you may be assured, that with diagonal chimneys and notched gables, it will have a very fine effect, and is in Scotch architecture by no means incompatible. My house has been like a *cried fair*, and extreme the inconvenience of having no corner sacred to my own use, and free from intrusion. Ever truly yours, W. S."

To the Same.

"Abbotsford, 29th October, 1817.

"My dear Terry,

"I enclose a full sketch of the lower story, with accurate measurements of rooms, casements, door-ways, chimneys, &c. that Mr. Atkinson's good will May not want means to work upon. I will speak to the subjects of your letter separately, that I may omit none of them. *1st*, I cannot possibly surrender the window to the west in the library,‡ although I subscribe to all you urge about it. Still it is essential in point of light to my old eyes, and the single northern aspect would not serve me. Above all, it looks into the yard, and enables me to summon Tom Purdie without the intervention of a third party. Indeed, as I can have but a few books about me, it is of the less consequence. *2dly*, I resign the idea of *coving* the library to your better judgment, and I think the Stirling Heads* will be admirably disposed in the glass of the armoury window. I have changed my mind as to having doors on the book-presses, which is, after all, a great bore. No person will be admitted into my sanctum, and I can have the door locked during my absence. *3dly*, I expect Mr. Bullock here every day, and should be glad to have the drawings for the dining-room wainscot, as he could explain them to the artists, who are to work them. This (always if quite convenient) would be the more desirable, as I must leave this place in a fortnight at farthest—the more's the pity—and, consequently, the risk of blunders will be considerably increased. I should like if the pannelling of the wainscot could admit of a press on each side of the sideboard. I don't mean a formal press with a high door, but some crypt, or, to speak vulgarly, *cupboard*, to put away bottles of wine, &c. You know I am my own butler, and such accommodation is very convenient. We begin roofing to-morrow. Wilkie admires the whole as a composition, and that is high authority. I agree that the fountain shall be out of doors in front of the green-house; there may be an enclosure for it with some ornamented mason-work, as in old gardens, and it will occupy an angle, which I should be puzzled what to do with, for turf and gravel would be rather meagre, and flowers not easily kept. I have the old fountain belonging to the Cross of Edinburgh, which flowed with wine at the coronation of our kings and on other occasions of public rejoicing. I send a sketch of this venerable relic, connected as it is with a thousand associations. It is handsome in its forms and proportions—a free-stone basin about three feet in diameter, and five inches and a half in depth, very handsomely hollowed. A piece has been broken off one edge, but as we have the fragment, it can easily be restored with cement. There are four openings for pipes in the circumference—each had been covered with a Gothic masque, now broken off and defaced, but which may be easily restored. Through these the wine had fallen into a larger and lower reservoir. I intend this for the centre of my fountain. I do not believe I should save £100 by retaining Mrs. Redford, by the time she was raised, altered, and beautified, for, like the Highlandman's gun, she wants stock, lock, and barrel, to put her into repair. In the mean time, 'the cabin is convenient.' Yours ever, W. S."

To Mr. William Laidlaw, Kaeside.

"Edinburgh, Nov. 16th, 1817.

"Dear Willie,

"I have no intention to let the Whitehaugh without your express approbation, and I wish you to act as my adviser and representative in these matters. I would hardly have ventured to purchase so much land without the certainty of your counsel and co-operation. . . . . On the other side you will find a small order on the banker at Galashiels, to be renewed half-yearly; not by way of recompensing your friendship 'with a load of barren money,' but merely to ease my conscience in some degree for the time which I must necessarily withdraw from the labour which is to maintain your family. Believe me, dear Willie, yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, 19th Nov., 1817.

"Dear Willie,

"I hope you will not quarrel with my last. Believe me, that, to a sound-judging and philosophical mind, this same account of Dr. and Cr., which fills up so much time in the world, is comparatively of very small value. When you get rich, unless I thrive in the same proportion, I will request your assistance for less, for little, or for nothing, as the case may require; but while I wear my seven-league boots to stride in triumph over moss and muir, it would be very silly in either of us to let a cheque twice a-year of £25 make a difference between us. But all this we will talk over when we meet. I meditate one day a *coup-de-maitre*, which will make my friend's advice and exertion essential—indeed worthy of much better remuneration. When you come, I hope you will bring us information of all my rural proceedings. Though so lately come to town, I still remember, at my waking hours, that I can neither see Tom Purdie nor Adam Paterson,† and rise with the more unwillingness. I was unwell on Monday and Tuesday, but am quite recovered. Yours truly, W. S."

* Mr. Magrath has now been long established in his native city of Dublin. His musical excellence was by no means the only merit that attached Scott to his society while he remained in Edinburgh.

† This fine greyhound, a gift from Terry, had been sent to Scotland under the care of Mr. Magrath. Terry had called the dog *Mirmion*, but Scott rechristened him *Hamlet*, in honour of his "inky coat."

‡ Before the second and larger part of the present house of Abbotsford was built, the small room subsequently known as the breakfast parlour, was during several years Scott's *sanctum*.

* This alludes to certain pieces of painted glass, representing the heads of some of the old Scotch kings, copied from the carved ceiling of the presence-chamber in Stirling Castle. There are engravings of them in a work called "Lacunar Strevelinense." Edinb. 4to. 1817.

† Adam Paterson was the intelligent foreman of the company of masons then employed at Abbotsford.

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To Thomas Scott, Esq., Paymaster, 70th Regiment, Kingston, Canada.

"Edinburgh, 13th Dec., 1817.

"My dear Tom,

"I should be happy to attend to your commission about a dominie for your boy, but I think there will be much risk in yoking yourself with one for three or four years. You know what sort of black cattle these are, and how difficult it is to discern their real character, though one may give a guess at their attainments. When they get good provender in their guts, they are apt to turn out very different animals from what they were in their original low condition, and get frisky and troublesome. I have made several inquiries, however, and request to know what salary you would think reasonable, and also what acquisitions he ought to possess. There is no combating the feelings which you express for the society of your son, otherwise I really think that a Scottish education would be highly desirable; and should you at any time revert to this plan, you may rely on my bestowing the same attention upon him as upon my own boys.

"I agree entirely with you on the necessity of your remaining in the regiment while it is stationary, and retiring on half-pay when it marches; but I cannot so easily acquiesce in your plan of settling in Canada. On the latter event taking place, on the contrary, I think it would be highly advisable that you should return to your native country. In the course of nature, you must soon be possessed of considerable property, now life-rented by our mother, and I should think that even your present income would secure you comfort and independence here. Should you remain in Canada, you must consider your family as settlers in that state, and as I cannot believe that it will remain very long separated from America, I should almost think this equal to depriving them of the advantages of British subjects—at least of those which they might derive from their respectable connexions in this country. With respect to your son, in particular, I have little doubt that I could be of considerable service to him in almost any line of life he might chance to adopt here, but could, of course, have less influence on his fortunes, were he to remain on the Niagara. I certainly feel anxious on this subject, because the settlement of your residence in America would be saying, in other words, that we two, the last remains of a family once so numerous, are never more to meet upon this side of time. My own health is very much broken up by the periodical recurrence of violent cramps in the stomach, which neither seem disposed to yield to medicine nor to abstinence. The complaint, the doctors say, is not dangerous in itself, but I cannot look forward to its continued recurrence, without being certain that it is to break my health, and anticipate old age in cutting me short. Be it so, my dear Tom—*Sat cui vixisse*—and I am too much of a philosopher to be anxious about protracted life, which, with all its infirmities and deprivations, I have never considered as a blessing. In the years which may be before me, it would be a lively satisfaction to me to have the pleasure of seeing you in this country, with the prospect of a comfortable settlement. I have but an imperfect account to render of my doings here. I have amused myself with making an addition to my cottage in the country; one little apartment is to be fitted up as an armoury for my old relics and curiosities. On the wicket I intend to mount your *deer's foot**—as an appropriate knocker. I hope the young ladies liked their watches, and that all your books, stationary, &c., came safe to hand. I am told you have several kinds of the oak peculiar to America. If you can send me a few good acorns, with the names of the kinds they belong to, I will have them reared with great care and attention. The heaviest and smoothest acorns should be selected, as one would wish them, sent from such a distance, to succeed, which rarely happens, unless they are particularly well ripened. I shall be as much obliged to you as Sancho was to the Duchess, or, to speak more correctly, the Duchess to Sancho, for a similar favour. Our mother keeps her health surprisingly well now, nor do I think there is any difference, unless that her deafness is rather increased. My eldest boy is upwards of six feet high; therefore born, as Sergeant Kite says, to be a great man. I should not like such a rapid growth, but that he carries strength along with it; my youngest boy is a very sharp little fellow—and the girls give us great satisfaction. Ever affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The following note is without date. It accompanied, no doubt, the last proof-sheet of Rob Roy, and was therefore in all probability written about ten days before the 31st of December, 1817—on which day the novel was published.

To Mr. James Ballantyne, St. John Street.

"Dear James,

With great joy
I send you Roy.
'Twas a tough job,
But we're done with Rob.

"I forget if I mentioned Terry in my list of Friends. Pray send me two or three copies as soon as you can. It were pity to make the Grinder* pay carriage. Yours, ever,

W. S."

The novel had indeed been a "tough job"—for lightly and airily as it reads, the author had struggled almost throughout with the pains of cramp, or the lassitude of opium. Calling on him one day to dun him for copy, James Ballantyne found him with a clean pen and a blank sheet before him, and uttered some rather solemn exclamation of surprise. "Ay, ay, Jemmy," said he, "'tis easy for you to bid me get on, but how the deuce can I make Rob Roy's wife speak with such a *curmurring* in my guts?"

CHAPTER XL.

ROB ROY PUBLISHED—NEGOTIATION CONCERNING THE SECOND SERIES OF THE TALES OF MY LANDLORD—COMMISSION TO SEARCH FOR THE SCOTTISH REGALIA—LETTERS TO THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—MR. CROKER—MR. MORRITT—MR. MURRAY—MR. MATURIN, &C.—CORRESPONDENCE ON RURAL AFFAIRS WITH MR. LAIDLAW—AND ON THE BUILDINGS AT ABBOTSFORD WITH MR. TERRY—DEATH OF MRS. MURRAY KEITH AND MR. GEORGE BULLOCK.—1818.

Rob Roy and his wife, Bailie Nicol Jarvie and his housekeeper, Die Vernon and Rashleigh Osbaldistone—these boldly drawn and most happily contrasted personages—were welcomed as warmly as the most fortunate of their predecessors. Constable's resolution to begin with an edition of 10,000, proved to have been as sagacious as bold; for within a fortnight a second impression of 3000 was called for; and the subsequent sale of this novel has considerably exceeded 40,000 more.

Scott, however, had not waited for this new burst of applause. As soon as he came within view of the completion of Rob Roy, he desired John Ballantyne to propose to Constable and Co. a second series of the Tales of my Landlord, to be comprised, like the first, in four volumes, and ready for publication by "the King's birth-day;" that is, the 4th of June 1818. "I have hungered and thirsted," he wrote, "to see the end of those shabby borrowings among friends; they have all been wiped out except the good Duke's £4000—and I will not suffer either new offers of land or any thing else to come in the way of that clearance. I expect that you will be able to arrange this resurrection of Jedediah, so that £5000 shall be at my order."

Mr. Rigdum used to glory in recounting that he acquitted himself on this occasion with a species of dexterity not contemplated in his commission. He well knew how sorely Constable had been wounded by seeing the first Tales of Jedediah published by Murray and Blackwood—and that the utmost success of Rob Roy would only double his anxiety to keep them out of the field, when the hint should be dropt that a second MS. from Gandercleuch might shortly be looked for. He, therefore, took a convenient opportunity to mention the new scheme as if casually—so as to give Constable the impression that the author's purpose was to divide the second series also between his old rival in Albemarle Street, of whom his jealousy was always most sensitive, and his neighbour Blackwood, whom, if there had been no other grudge, the recent conduct and rapidly increasing sale of his Magazine would have been sufficient to make Constable hate with a perfect hatred. To see not only his old Scots Magazine

* Thomas Scott had sent his brother the horns and feet of a gigantic stag, shot by him in Canada. The feet were ultimately suspended to bell-cords in the armoury at Abbotsford; and the horns mounted as drinking cups.

* They called Daniel Terry among themselves "The Grinder," in double allusion to the song of *Terry the Grinder*, and to some harsh under-notes of their friend's voice.

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eclipsed, but the authority of the Edinburgh Review itself bearded on its own soil by this juvenile upstart, was to him gall and wormwood; and, moreover, he himself had come in for his share in some of those grotesque *jeux d'esprit* by which, at this period, Blackwood's young Tory wags delighted to assail their elders and betters of the Whig persuasion. To prevent the proprietor of this new journal from acquiring any thing like a hold on the author of Waverley, and thus competing with himself not only in periodical literature, but in the highest of the time, was an object for which, as John Ballantyne shrewdly guessed, Constable would have made at that moment almost any sacrifice. When, therefore, the haughty but trembling bookseller—"The Lord High Constable" (as he had been dubbed by these jesters)—signified his earnest hope that the second Tales of my Landlord were destined to come *out* under the same auspices with Rob Roy, the plenipotentiary answered with an air of deep regret, that he feared it would be impossible for the author to dispose of the work unless to publishers who should agree to take with it *the whole* of the remaining stock of "John Ballantyne and Co.;" and Constable, pertinaciously as he had stood out against many more modest propositions of this nature, was so worked upon by his jealous feelings, that his resolution at once gave way. He agreed on the instant to do all that John seemed to shrink from asking—and at one sweep cleared the Augean stable in Hanover Street of unsaleable rubbish to the amount of £52701 I am assured by his surviving partner that when he had finally redisposed of the stock, he found himself a loser by fully two thirds of this sum. Burthened with this heavy condition, the agreement for the sale of 10,000 copies of the embryo series was signed before the end of November, 1817; and on the 7th of January, 1818, Scott wrote as follows to his noble friend:—

To the Duke of Buccleuch, &c. &c.

My dear Lord Duke,

"I have the great pleasure of enclosing the discharged bond which your Grace stood engaged in for me, and on my account. The accommodation was of the greatest consequence to me, as it enabled me to retain possession of some valuable literary property, which I must otherwise have suffered to be sold at a time when the booksellers had no money to buy it. My dear Lord, to wish that all your numerous and extensive acts of kindness may be attended with similar advantages to the persons whom you oblige, is wishing you what to your mind will be the best recompense; and to wish that they may be felt by all as gratefully as by me, though you may be careless to hear about that part of the story, is only wishing what is creditable to human nature. I have this moment your more than kind letter, and congratulate your Grace that, in one sense of the word, you can be what you never will be in any other, *ambidexter*. But I am sorry you took so much trouble, and I fear *pains* besides, to display your new talent. Ever your Grace's truly faithful

WALTER SCOTT."

The closing sentence of this letter refers to a fit of the gout which had disabled the Duke's right hand, but not cooled his zeal on a subject which, throughout January, 1818, occupied, I firmly believe, much more of his correspondent's thoughts by day and dreams by night, than any one, or perhaps than all others, besides. The time now approached when Commission to examine the Crown-room in the Castle of Edinburgh, which had sprung from one of Scott's conversations with the Prince Regent in 1815, was at length to be acted upon. The minstrel of the "Rough Clan" had taken care that the name of his chief should stand at the head of the document; but the Duke's now precarious health ultimately prevented him from being present at the discovery of the long buried and almost forgotten regalia of Scotland. The two following letters on this subject are of the same date—Edinburgh, 14th January, 1818.

To the Duke of Buccleuch, &c., &c., Bowhill

My dear Lord,

"You will hear from the Advocate, that the Commission for opening the Regalia is arrived, and that the Commissioners held their first meeting yesterday. They have named next Wednesday (in case your Grace can attend) for opening the mysterious chest. So this question will be put to rest for ever.

"I remember among the rebel company which debauched my youth, there was a drunken old Tory, who used to sing a ballad made about these same regalia at the time of the Union, in which they were all destined to the basest uses; the crown, for example,

'To make a can for Brandy Nan
To puke in when she's tipsy.'

The rest of the song is in a tone of equally pure humour; the chorus ran—

'Farewell, thou ancient kingdom—
Farewell, thou ancient kingdom,
Who sold thyself for English pelf—
Was ever such a thing done?'

I hope your Grace feels yourself sufficiently interested in the recovery of these ancient symbols of national independence, so long worn by your forefathers, and which were never profaned by the touch of a monarch of a foreign dynasty.—Here is fine planting weather. I trust it is as good in the Forest and on Tweedside. Ever your Grace's truly faithful

WALTER SCOTT."

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M. P., Rokeby

"Dear Morritt,

"Our fat friend has remembered a petition which I put up to him, and has granted a Commission to the Officers of State and others (my unworthy self included)—which trusty and well-beloved persons are to institute a search after the Regalia of Scotland. There has an odd mystery hung about the fate of these royal symbols of national independence. The spirit of the Scotch at the Union clang fondly to these emblems; and to sooth their jealousy, it was specially provided by an article of the Union, that the Regalia should never be removed, under any pretext, from the kingdom of Scotland. Accordingly, they were deposited, with much ceremony, as an authentic instrument bears, in a strong chest, secured by many locks, and the chest itself placed in a strong room, which again was carefully bolted up and secured, leaving to national pride the satisfaction of pointing to the barred window, with the consciousness that there lay the Regalia of Scotland. But this gratification was strangely qualified by a surmise, which somehow became generally averred, stating, that the Regalia had been sent to London; and you may remember that we saw at the Jewel Office a crown, *said to be* the ancient Crown of Scotland. If this transfer (by the way highly illegal) was ever made, it must have been under some secret warrant; for no authority can be traced for such a proceeding in the records of the Secretary of State's Office. Fifteen or twenty years ago, the Crown-room, as it is called, was opened by certain Commissioners, under authority of a sign-manual. They saw the fatal chest, strewed with the dust of an hundred years, about six inches thick: a coating of like thickness lay on the floor; and I have heard the late President Blair say, that the uniform and level appearance of the dust warranted them to believe that the chest, if opened at all after 1707, must have been violated within a short time of that date, since, had it been opened at a later period, the dust accumulated on the lid, and displaced at opening it, must have been lying around the chest. But the Commissioners did not think their warrant entitled them to force this chest, for which no keys could be found; especially as their warrant only entitled them to search for *records*—not for crowns and sceptres.

"The mystery, therefore, remained unpenetrated; and public curiosity was left to console itself with the nursery rhyme—

'On Tintock tap there is a mist,
And in the mist there is a kist.'

Our fat friend's curiosity, however, goes to the point at once, authorizing and enjoining an express search for the Regalia. Our friend of Buccleuch is at the head of the commission, and will, I think, be as keen as I or any one to see the issue.

"I trust you have read Rob by this time. I think he smells of the cramp. Above all, I had too much flax on my distaff; and as it did not consist with my patience or my plan to make a fourth volume, I was obliged at last to draw a rough, coarse, and hasty thread. But the book is well liked here, and has reeled off in great style. I have two stories on the anvil, far superior to Rob Roy in point of interest. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The Commissioners, who finally assembled on the 4th of February, were, according to the record—"the Right Hon. Charles Hope, Lord President of

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the Court of Session; the Right Hon. David Boyle, Lord Justice Clerk; the Right Hon. William Adam, Lord Chief Commissioner of the Jury Court; Major-General John Hope (Commanding the Forces in Scotland); the Solicitor General (James Wedderburn, Esq.); the Lord Provost of Edinburgh (Kincaid Mackenzie, Esq.); William Clerk, Esq., Principal Clerk of the Jury Court; Henry Jardine, Esq., Deputy Remembrancer in the Exchequer; Thomas Thompson, Esq., Deputy Clerk Register of Scotland; and Walter Scott, Esq., one of the Principal Clerks of Session."

Of the proceedings of this day, the reader has a full and particular account in an Essay which Scott penned shortly afterwards, and which is included in his Prose Miscellanies (vol. vii.) But I must not omit the contemporaneous letters in which he announced the success of the quest to his friend the Secretary of the Admiralty, and through him to the Regent—

To J. W. Croker, Esq. M. P., &c. Admiralty, London.

"Edinburgh, 4th Feb., 1818.

"My dear Croker.

"I have the pleasure to assure you the Regalia of Scotland were this day found in perfect preservation. The Sword of State and Sceptre showed marks of hard usage at some former period; but in all respects agree with the description of Thompson's work.* I will send you a complete account of the opening to-morrow, as the official account will take some time to draw up. In the mean time, I hope you will remain as obstinate in your unbelief as St. Thomas, because then you will come down to satisfy yourself. I know nobody entitled to earlier information, save ONE, to whom you can perhaps find the means of communicating the result of our researches. The post is just going off. Ever yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the same.

"Edinburgh, 5th Feb., 1818.

"My dear Croker,

"I promised I would add something to my report of yesterday, and yet I find I have but little to say. The extreme solemnity of opening sealed doors of oak and iron, and finally breaking open a chest which had been shut since 7th of March, 1707, about a hundred and eleven years, gave a sort of interest to our researches, which I can hardly express to you, and it would be very difficult to describe the intense eagerness with which we watched the rising of the lid of the chest, and the progress of the workmen in breaking it open, which was neither an easy nor a speedy task. It sounded very hollow when they worked on it with their tools, and I began to lean to your faction of the Little Faiths. However, I never could assign any probable or feasible reason for withdrawing these memorials of ancient independence; and my doubts rather arose from the conviction that many absurd things are done in public as well as in private life merely out of a hasty impression of passion or resentment. For it was evident the removal of the Regalia might have greatly irritated people's minds here, and offered a fair pretext of breaking the Union which, for thirty years, was the predominant wish of the Scottish nation.

"The discovery of the Regalia has interested people's minds much more strongly than I expected, and is certainly calculated to make a pleasant and favourable impression upon them in respect to the kingly part of the constitution. It would be of the utmost consequence that they should be occasionally shown to them, under proper regulations, and for a small fee. The Sword of State is a most beautiful piece of workmanship, a present from Pope Julius II. to James IV. The scabbard is richly decorated with filigree work of silver, double gilded, representing oak leaves and acorns, executed in a taste worthy that classical age in which the arts revived. A draughtsman has been employed to make sketches of these articles, in order to be laid before his Royal Highness. The fate of these Regalia, which his Royal Highness' goodness has thus restored to light and honour, has, on one or two occasions been singular enough. They were, in 1652, lodged in the Castle of Dunnottar, the seat of the Earl Mareschal, by whom, according to his ancient privilege, they were kept. The castle was defended by George Ogilvie of Barra, who, apprehensive of the progress which the English made in reducing the strong places in Scotland, became anxious for the safety of these valuable memorials. The ingenuity of his lady had them conveyed out of the castle in a bag on a woman's back, among some *hards*, as they are called, of lint. They were carried to the Kirk of Kinneff, and intrusted to the care of the clergyman named Grainger, and his wife, and buried under the pulpit. The Castle of Dunnottar, though very strong and faithfully defended, was at length under necessity of surrendering, being the last strong place in Britain on which the royal flag floated in those calamitous times. Ogilvie and his lady were threatened with the utmost extremities by the Republican General Morgan, unless they should produce the Regalia. The governor stuck to it that he knew nothing of them, as in fact they had been carried away without his knowledge. The Lady maintained she had given them to John Keith, second son of the Earl Mareschal, by whom, she said, they had been carried to France. They suffered a long imprisonment, and much ill usage. On the Restoration, the old Countess Mareschal, founding upon the story Mrs. Ogilvie had told to screen her husband, obtained for her own son, John Keith, the earldom of Kintore, and the post of Knight Mareschal, with £400 a-year, as if he had been in truth the preserver of the Regalia. It soon proved that this reward had been too hastily given, for Ogilvie of Barra produced the Regalia, the honest clergyman refusing to deliver them to any one but those from whom he received them. Ogilvie was made a Knight Baronet, however, and got a new charter of the lands acknowledging the good service. Thus it happened oddly enough, that Keith, who was abroad during the transaction, and had nothing to do with it, got the earldom, pension, &c., Ogilvie only inferior honours, and the poor clergyman nothing whatever, or, as we say, *the hare's foot to lick*. As for Ogilvie's lady, she died before the Restoration, her health being ruined by the hardships she endured from the Cromwellian satellites. She was a Douglass, with all the high spirit of that proud family. On her death-bed, and not till then, she told her husband where the honours were concealed, charging him to suffer death rather than betray them. Popular tradition says, not very probably, that Grainger and his wife were *booted* (that is, tortured with the engine called the boots). I think the Knight Mareschal's office rested in the Kintore family until 1715, when it was resumed on account of the bearded Earl's accession to the Insurrection of that year. He escaped well, for they might have taken his estate and his earldom. I must save post, however, and conclude abruptly. Yours ever,

WALTER SCOTT."

* Collection of Inventories and other Records of the Royal Wardrobe and Jewel-House, &c. Edin. 1815, 4to.

On the 5th, after the foregoing letter had been written at the Clerk's table, Scott and several of his brother Commissioners revisited the Castle, accompanied by some of the ladies of their families. His daughter tells me that her father's conversation had worked her feelings up to such a pitch, that when the lid was again removed, she nearly fainted, and drew back from the circle. As she was retiring, she was startled by his voice exclaiming, in a tone of the deepest emotion "something between anger and despair," as she expresses it,—"By G——, No!" One of the Commissioners, not quite entering into the solemnity with which Scott regarded this business, had, it seems, made a sort of motion as if he meant to put the crown on the head of one of the young ladies near him, but the voice and aspect of the Poet were more than sufficient to make the worthy gentleman understand his error; and respecting the enthusiasm with which he had not been taught to sympathize, he laid down the ancient diadem with an air of painful embarrassment. Scott whispered "pray, forgive me;" and turning round at the moment, observed his daughter deadly pale, and leaning by the door. He immediately drew her out of the room, and when the air had somewhat recovered her, walked with her across the Mound to Castle Street. "He never spoke all the way home," she says, "but every now and then, I felt his arm tremble; and from that time I fancied he began to treat me more like a woman than a child. I thought he liked me better, too, than he had ever done before."

These little incidents may give some notion of the profound seriousness with which his imagination had invested this matter. I am obliged to add, that in the society of Edinburgh at the time, even in the highest Tory circles, it did not seem to awaken much even of curiosity—to say nothing of any deeper feeling; there was, however, a great excitement among the common people of the town, and a still

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greater among the peasantry, not only in the neighbourhood, but all over Scotland; and the Crown-room, becoming thenceforth one of the established *lions* of a city much resorted to, moreover, by stranger tourists, was likely, on the most moderate scale of admission-fee, to supply a revenue sufficient for remunerating responsible and respectable guardianship. This post would, as Scott thought, be a very suitable one for his friend, Captain Adam Ferguson; and he exerted all his zeal for that purpose. The Captain was appointed: his nomination, however, did not take place for some months after: and the postscript of a letter to the Duke of Buccleuch, dated May 14th, 1813, plainly indicates the interest on which Scott mainly relied for its completion:—"If you happen," he writes, "to see Lord Melville, pray give him a jog about Ferguson's affair; but between ourselves, I depend chiefly on the kind offices of Willie Adam, who is an auld sneck-drawer." The Lord Chief Commissioner, at all times ready to lend Scott his influence with the Royal Family, had, on the present occasion, the additional motive of warm and hereditary personal regard for Ferguson.

I have placed together such letters as referred principally to the episode of the Regalia; but shall now give, in the order of time, a few which will sufficiently illustrate the usual course of his existence, while the Heart of Mid-Lothian was in progress. It appears that he resumed, in the beginning of this year, his drama of Devorgoil; his letters to Terry are of course full of that subject, but they contain, at the same time, many curious indications of his views and feelings as to theatrical affairs in general—and mixed up with these a most characteristic record of the earnestness with which he now watched the interior fitting up, as he had in the season before the outward architecture, of the new edifice at Abbotsford. Mean while it will be seen that he found leisure hours for various contributions to periodical works; among others, an article on Kirkton's Church History, and another on (of all subjects in the world) *military bridges*, for the Quarterly Review; a spirited version of the old German ballad on the Battle of Sempach, and a generous criticism on Mrs. Shelly's romance of Frankenstein, for Blackwood's Magazine. This being the first winter and spring of Laidlaw's establishment at Kaeside, communications as to the affairs of the farm were exchanged weekly whenever Scott was in Edinburgh, and they afford delightful evidence of that paternal solicitude for the well-being of his rural dependants, which all along kept pace with Scott's zeal as to the economical improvement, and the picturesque adornment, of his territories.

To D. Terry, Esq., London.

"Edinburgh, 23d Jan., 1818.

"My dear Terry,

"You have by this time the continuation of the drama, down to the commencement of the third act, as I have your letter on the subject of the first. You will understand that I only mean them as sketches; for the first and second acts are too short, and both want much to combine them with the third. I can easily add music to Miss Devorgoil's part. As to Braham, he is a beast of an actor, though an angel of a singer, and truly I do not see what he could personify. Let me know, however, your thoughts and wishes, and all shall be moulded to the best of my power to meet them; the point is to make it *take* if we can; the rest is all leather and prunella. A great many things must occur to you technically better, in the way of alteration and improvement, and you know well that, though too indolent to amend things on my own conviction, I am always ready to make them meet my friends' wishes if possible. We shall both wish it better than I can make it, but there is no reason why we should not do for it all that we can. I advise you to take some sapient friend into your counsels, and let me know the result, returning the MS. at the same time.

"I am now anxious to complete Abbotsford. I think I told you I mean to do nothing whatever to the present house, but to take it away altogether at some future time, so that I finish the upper story without any communication with Mrs. Redford's *ci-devant* mansion, and shall place the opening in the lower story, wherever it will be most suitable for the new house, without regard to defacing the temporary drawing-room. I am quite feverish about the armoury. I have two pretty complete suits of armour, one Indian one, and a cuirassier's, with boots, casque, &c.; many helmets, corslets, and steel caps, swords and pontards without end, and about a dozen of guns, ancient and modern. I have besides two or three battle-axes and maces, pikes and targets, a Highlander's accoutrement complete, a great variety of branches of horns, pikes, bows and arrows, and the clubs and creases of Indian tribes. Mr. Bullock promised to give some hint about the fashion of disposing all these matters; and now our spring is approaching, and I want but my plans to get on. I have reason to be proud of the finishing of my castle, for even of the tower for which I trembled, not a stone has been shaken by the late terrific gale, which blew a roof clear off in the neighbourhood. It was lying in the road like a saddle, as Tom Purdie expressed it. Neither has a slate been lifted, though about two yards of slating were stripped from the stables in the haugh, which you know were comparatively less exposed.

"I am glad to hear of Mrs. Terry's improved health and good prospects. As for young Master Mumblecrust, I have no doubt he will be a credit to us all. Yours ever truly,

W. Scott."

As the letters to Mr. Laidlaw did not travel by post, but in the basket which had come laden with farm-produce for the use of the family in Edinburgh, they have rarely any date but the day of the week. This is, however, of no consequence.

To Mr. Laidlaw, Kaeside.

"Wednesday. [Jan., 1818.]

"Dear Willie,

"Should the weather be rough, and you nevertheless obliged to come to town, do not think of riding, but take Blucher.* Remember your health is of consequence to your family. Pray, talk generally with the notables of Darnick—I mean Rutherford, and so forth, concerning the best ordering of the road to the marle; and also of the foot-road. It appears to me some route might be found more convenient than the present, but that which is most agreeable to those interested shall also be most agreeable for me. As a patriotic member of the community of Darnick, I consider their right equally important as my own.

"I told you I should like to convert the present steading at Beechland into a little hamlet of labourers, which we will name Abbotstown. The art of making people happy is to leave them much to their own guidance, but some little regulation is necessary. In the first place I should like to have active and decent people there; then it is to be considered on what footing they should be. I conceive the best possible is, that they should pay for their cottages, and cow-grass, and potato ground, and be paid for their labour at the ordinary rate. I would give them some advantages sufficient to balance the following conditions, which, after all, are conditions in my favour—1st, That they shall keep their cottages, and little gardens, and doors, tolerably neat; and, 2d, That the men shall on no account shoot, or the boys break timber, or take birds' nests, or go among the planting. I do not know any other restrictions, and these are easy. I should think we might settle a few families very happily here, which is an object I have much at heart, for I have no notion of the proprietor who is only ambitious to be lord of the 'beast and the brute,' and chases the human face from his vicinity. By the by, could we not manage to have a piper among the colonists?

"We are delighted to hear that your little folks like the dells. Pray, in your walks try to ascertain the locality of St. John's Well, which cures the botts, and which John Moss claims for Kaeside; also the true history of the Carline's Hole. Ever most truly yours,

W. Scott.

"I hope Mrs. Laidlaw does not want for any thing that she can get from the garden or elsewhere."

To Daniel Terry, Esq.

"8th February, 1818.

"My dear Terry,

"Yours arrived, unluckily, just half an hour after my packet was in the Post-office, so this will cost you 9d., for which I grieve. To answer your principal question first, the drama is

'Yours, Terry, yours in every thought.'

"I should never have dreamed of making such an attempt in my own proper person; and if I had such a vision, I should have been anxious to have made it something of a legitimate drama, such as a literary man, uncalled upon by any circumstance to connect himself with the stage, might have been expected to produce. Now this is just

* A stage-coach so called, which runs betwixt Edinburgh and Melrose.

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hat any gentleman in your situation might run off, to give a little novelty to the entertainment of the year, and as such will meet a mitigated degree of criticism, and have a better chance of that *productive* success, which is my principal object in my godson's behalf. If any time should come when you might wish to disclose the secret, it will be in your power, and our correspondence will always serve to show that it was only at my earnest request, annexed as the condition of bringing the play forward, that you gave it your name—a circumstance which, with all the attending particulars, will prove plainly that there was no assumption on your part.

"A beautiful drama might be made on the concealment of the Scotch regalia during the troubles. But it would interfere with the democratic spirit of the times, and would probably

——'By party rage,
Or right or wrong, be hooted from the stage.'

"I will never forgive you if you let any false idea of my authorial feelings prevent your acting in this affair as if you were the real parent, not the godfather of the piece. Our facetious friend J. B. knows nought of such a matter being *en train*, and never will know. I am delighted to hear my windows are finished. Yours very truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Mr. Laidlaw, Kaeside.

"Wednesday. [Feb., 1818.]

"Dear Willie,

"I am not desirous to buy more land at present, unless I were to deal with Mr. Rutherford or Hicton, and I would rather deal with them next year than this, when I would have all my payments made for what I am now buying. Three or four such years as the last would enable me with prudence and propriety to ask Nicol* himself to flit and remove.

"I like the idea of the birch-hedge much, and if intermixed with holly and thorns, I think it might make an impenetrable thicket, having all the advantages of a hedge without the formality. I fancy you will also need a great number of (black) Italian poplars, which are among the most useful and best growers, as well as most beautiful of plants which love a wet soil.

"I am glad the saws are going.† We may begin by and by with wrights, but I cannot but think that a handy labourer might be taught to work at them. I shall insist on Tom learning the process perfectly himself.

"As to the darkness of the garrets, they are intended for the accommodation of travelling geniuses, poets, painters, and so forth, and a little obscurity will refresh their shattered brains. I daresay Lauchie‡ wil' *shave* his knoll, if it is required—it may to the barber's with the Laird's hebdomadal beard—and Packwood would have thought it the easier job of the two.

"I saw Blackwood yesterday, and Hogg the day before, and I understand from them you think of resigning the Chronicle department of the Magazine. Blackwood told me that if you did not like that part of the duty, he would consider himself accountable for the same sum he had specified to you for any other articles you might communicate from time to time. He proposes that Hogg should do the Chronicle: He will not do it so well as you, for he wants judgment and caution, and likes to have the appearance of eccentricity where eccentricity is least graceful; that, however, is Blackwood's affair. If you really do not like the Chronicle, there can be no harm in your giving it up. What strikes me is, that there in a something certain in having such a department to conduct, whereas you may sometimes find yourself at a loss when you have to cast about for a subject every month. Blackwood *is* rather in a bad pickle just now—sent to Coventry by the trade, as the booksellers call themselves, and all about the parody of the two beasts.§ Surely these gentlemen think themselves rather formed of porcelain clay than of common potter's ware. Dealing in satire against all others, their own dignity suffers so cruelly from an ill-imagined joke! If B. had good books to sell, he might set them all at defiance. His Magazine does well, and beats Constable's; but we will talk of this when we meet.

"As for Whiggery in general, I can only say, that as no man can be said to be utterly overset until his rump has been higher than his head, so I cannot read in history of any free state which has been brought to slavery until the rascal and uninstructed populace had had their short hour of anarchical government, which naturally leads to the stern repose of military despotism. Property, morals, education, are the proper qualifications for those who should hold political rights, and extending them very widely greatly lessens the chance of these qualifications being found in electors. Look at the sort of persons chosen at elections where the franchise is very general, and you will find either fools who are content to flatter the passions of the mob for a little transient popularity, or knaves who pander to their follies, that they may make their necks a footstool for their own promotion. With these convictions I am very jealous of Whiggery, under all modifications, and I must say my acquaintance with the total want of principle in some of its warmest professors, does not tend to recommend it. Somewhat too much of this. My compliments to the goodwife. Yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Wednesday. [Feb. 1818.]

"Dear Willie,

"I have no idea Usher* will take the sheep land again, nor would I press it on him. As my circumstances stand, immediate revenue is much less my object than the real improvement of this property, which amuses me besides; our wants are amply supplied by my £1600 a-year official income; nor have we a wish or a motive to extend our expenses beyond that of the decencies and hospitality of our station in life; so that my other resources remain for buying land in future, or improving what we have. No doubt Abbotsford, in maintaining our establishment during the summer, may be reckoned £150 or £200 pounds saved on what we must otherwise buy, and if we could arrange to have mutton and beef occasionally, it would be a still greater saving. All this you will consider: for Tom, thoroughly honest and very clever in his way, has no kind of generalizing, and would often like to save sixpence in his own department at the expense of my paying five shillings in another. This is his fault, and when you join to it a Scotch slovenliness which leads him to see things half-finished without pain or anxiety, I do not know any other he has—but such as they are, these must be guarded against. For our housemaid, (for housekeeper we must not call her,) I should like much a hawk of a nest so good as that you mention; but would not such a place be rather beneath her views? Her duty would be to look to scrupulous cleanliness within doors, and employ her leisure in spinning, or plain-work, as wanted. When we came out for a blink, she would be expected to cook a little in a plain way, and play

* Mr. Nicol Mylne of Faldonside. This gentleman's property is a valuable and extensive one, situated immediately to the westward of Abbotsford; and Scott continued, year after year, to dream of adding it also to his own.

† A saw mill had just been erected at Toffield.

‡ A cockland adjoining Abbotsford at the eastern side. His farm is properly *Lochbrest*; but in the neighbourhood he was generally known as *Laird Lauchie*—or *Lauchie Langlegs*. Washington Irving describes him, in his "Abbotsford," with high gusto. He was a most absurd original.

§ An article in one of the early numbers of Blackwood's Magazine, entitled *The Chaldee MS.*, in which the literati and booksellers of Edinburgh were quizzed *en masse*—Scott himself among the rest. It was in this lampoon that Constable first saw himself designated in print by the *sobriquet* of "The Crafty," long before bestowed on him by one of his own most eminent Whig supporters; but nothing nettled him so much as the passages in which he and Blackwood are represented entreating the support of Scott for their respective Magazines, and waved off by "the Great Magician" in the same identical phrases of contemptuous indifference. The description of Constable's visit to Abbotsford may be worth transcribing—for Sir David Wilkie, who was present when Scott read it, says he was almost choked with laughter, and he afterwards confessed that the Chaldean author had given a sufficiently accurate version of what really passed on the occasion:—

"26. But when the Spirits were gone, he (The Crafty) said unto himself, I will arise and go unto a magician, which is of my friends: of a surety he will devise some remedy, and free me out of all my distresses.

"27. So he arose and came unto that great magician, which hath his dwelling in the old fastness, hard by the River Jordan, which is by the Border.

"28. And the magician opened his mouth and said, Lo! my heart wisheth thy good, and let the thing prosper which is in thy hands to do it.

"29. But thou seest that my hands are full of working, and my labour is great. For, lo, I have to feed all the people of my land, and none knoweth whence his food cometh; but each man openeth his mouth, and my hand filleth it with pleasant things.

"30. Moreover, thine adversary also is of my familiars.

"31. The land is before thee: draw thou up thine hosts for the battle on the mount of Proclamation, and defy boldly thine enemy, which hath his camp in the place of Princes; quit ye as men, and let favour be shown unto him which is most valiant.

"32. Yet be thou silent; peradventure will I help thee some little.

"33. But the man which is Crafty saw that the magician loved him not. For he knew him of old, and they had many dealings; and he perceived that he would not assist him in the day of his adversity.

"34. So he turned about, and went out of his fastness. And he shook the dust from his feet, and said, Behold, I have given this magician much money, yet see now, he hath utterly deserted me. Verily, my fine gold hath perished."—CHAP. III.

* John Usher, the ex-proprietor of Toffield, was eventually Scott's tenant on part of those lands for many years. He was a man of far superior rank and intelligence to the rest of the displaced lairds—and came presently to be one of Scott's trusty rural friends, and a frequent companion of his sports.

maid of all works; when we were stationary, she would assist the housemaid and superintend the laundry. Probably your aunt's grand-daughter will have pretensions to something better than this; but as we are to be out on the 12th of March, we will talk it over. Assuredly a well-connected steady person would be of the greatest consequence to us. I like your plan of pitting much, and to compromise betwixt you and Tom, do one half with superior attention, and slit in the others for mere nurses. But I am no friend to that same slitting.

"I adhere to trying a patch or two of larches of a quarter of an acre each upon the Athole plan, by way of experiment. We can plant them up if they do not thrive. On the whole, three and a half feet is, I think, the right distance. I have no fear of the ground being impoverished. Trees are not like arable crops, which necessarily derive their sustenance from the superficial earth—the roots of trees go far and wide, and, if incommoded by a neighbour, they send out suckers to procure nourishment elsewhere. They never hurt each other till their tops interfere, which may be easily prevented by timely weeding.

"I rejoice in the sawmill. Have you settled with Harper? and how does Ogg and Bashan* come on? I cannot tell you how delighted I am with the account Hogg gives me of Mr. Grieve. The great Cameron was chaplain in the house of my great something grandfather, and so I hope Mr. Grieve will be mine. If, as the King of Prussia said to Rousseau, 'a little persecution is necessary to make his home entirely to his mind,' he shall have it; and what persecutors seldom promise, I will stop whenever he is tired of it. I have a pair of thumbikins also ready at his service, if he requires their assistance to glorify God and the Covenant. Sincerely, I like enthusiasm of every kind so well, especially when united with worth of character, that I shall be delighted with this old gentleman. Ever yours,

W. Scott."

The last paragraph of this letter refers to an uncle of Laidlaw's, (the father of Hogg's friend John Grieve,) who at this time thought of occupying a cottage on Scott's estate. He was a preacher of the Cameronian sect, and had long ministered to a very small remnant of "the hill-folk" scattered among the wilds of Ettrick. He was a very good man, and had a most venerable and apostolical benignity of aspect; but his prejudices were as extravagant as those of Cameron his patriarch himself could have been. The project of his removal to Tweedside was never realized.

The following admirable letter was written at the request of Messrs. Constable, who had, on Scott's recommendation, undertaken the publication of Mr. Maturin's novel, "Women, or *Pour et Contre*." The reverend author's "Bertram" had, it may be remembered, undergone some rather rough usage in Coleridge's "Biographia Literaria;" and he was now desirous to revenge himself by a preface of the polemical sort:—

To the Rev. C. R. Maturin, Dublin.

"26th February, 1818.

"Dear Sir,

"I am going to claim the utmost and best privilege of sincere friendship and good-will, that of offering a few words of well-meant advice; and you may be sure that the occasion seems important to induce me to venture so far upon your tolerance. It respects the preface to your work, which Constable and Co. have sent to me. It is as well written as that sort of thing can be; but will you forgive me if I say—it is too much in the tone of the offence which gave rise to it, to be agreeable either to good taste or to general feeling. Coleridge's work has been little read or heard of, and has made no general impression whatever—certainly no impression unfavourable to you or your Play. In the opinion, therefore, of many, you will be resenting an injury of which they are unacquainted with the existence. If I see a man beating another unmercifully, I am apt to condemn him upon the first blush of the business, and hardly excuse him though I may afterwards learn he had ample provocation. Besides, your diatribe is not *hujus loci*. We take up a novel for amusement, and this current of controversy breaks out upon us like a stream of lava out of the side of a beautiful green hill; men will say you should have reserved your disputes for reviews or periodical publications, and they will sympathize less with your anger, because they will not think the time proper for expressing it. We are bad judges, bad physicians, and bad divines, in our own case; but, above all, we are seldom able, when injured or insulted, to judge of the degree of sympathy which the world will bear in our resentment and our retaliation. The instant, however, that such degree of sympathy is exceeded, we hurt ourselves and not our adversary; I am so convinced of this, and so deeply fixed in the opinion, that besides the uncomfortable feelings which are generated in the course of literary debate, a man lowers his estimation in the public eye by engaging in such controversy, that, since I have been dipped in ink, I have suffered no personal attacks (and I have been honoured with them of all descriptions) to provoke me to reply. A man will certainly be vexed on such occasions, and I have wished to have the knaves *where the mutineck was the battie*—or, as *you* would say, *upon the sod*—but I never let the thing cling to my mind, and always adhered to my resolution, that if my writings and tenor of life did not confute such attacks, my words never should. Let me entreat you to view Coleridge's violence as a thing to be contemned, not retaliated—the opinion of a British public may surely be set in honest opposition to that of one disappointed and wayward man. You should also consider, *en bon Chrétien*, that Coleridge has had some room to be spited at the world, and you are, I trust, to continue to be a favourite with the public—so that you should totally neglect and despise criticism, however virulent, which arise out of his bad fortune and your good.

"I have only to add, that Messrs. Constable and Co. are seriously alarmed for the effects of the preface upon the public mind as unfavourable to the work. In this they must be tolerable judges, for their experience as to popular feeling is very great; and as they have met your wishes, in all the course of the transaction, perhaps you will be disposed to give some weight to their opinion upon a point like this. Upon my own part, I can only say, that I have no habits of friendship, and scarce those of acquaintance, with Coleridge—I have not even read his autobiography—but I consider him as a man of genius, struggling with bad habits and difficult circumstances. It is, however, entirely upon your account that I take the liberty of stating an opinion on a subject of such delicacy. I should wish you to give your excellent talents fair play, and to ride this race without carrying any superfluous weight; and I am so well acquainted with my old friend, the public, that I could bet a thousand pounds to a shilling that the preface (if that controversial part of it is not cancelled) will greatly prejudice your novel.

"I will not ask your forgiveness for the freedom I have used, for I am sure you will not suspect me of any motives but those which arise from regard to your talents and person; but I shall be glad to hear (whether you follow my advice or no) that you are not angry with me for having volunteered to offer it.

'My health is, I think, greatly improved; I have had some returns of my spasmodic affection, but tolerable in degree, and yielding to medicine. I hope gentle exercise and the air of my hills will set me up this summer. I trust you will soon be out now. I have delayed reading the sheets in progress after vol. I., that I might enjoy them when collected. Ever yours, &c.,

Walter Scott."

To Mr. Laidlaw.

"Edinburgh, Wednesday. [March, 1818.]

"Dear Willie,

"I am delighted to hear the plantings get on so well. The weather here has been cruelly changeable—fresh one day—frost the next—snow the third. This morning the snow lay three inches thick, and before noon it was gone, and blowing a tempest. Many of the better ranks are ill of the typhus fever, and some deaths. How do your poor folks come on? Let Tom advance you money when it is wanted. I do not propose, like the heroine of a novel, to convert the hovels of want into the abodes of elegant plenty, but we have enough to spare to relieve actual distress, and do not wish to economize where we can find out (which is difficult) where the assistance is instantly useful.

"Don't let Tom forget hedgerow trees, which he is very unwilling to remember; and also to plant birches, oaks, elms, and such-like round-headed trees, along the verges of the Kaeside plantations; they make a beautiful outline, and also a sort of fence, and were not planted last year because the earth at the sunk fences was too newly travelled. This should be mixed with various bushes, as hollies, thorns, so as to make a wild hedge, or thickety obstruction to the inroads of cattle. A few sweetbriers, alders, honeysuckles, laburnums, &c., should be thrown in. A verdant screen may be made in this way of the wildest and most beautiful description, which should never be clipt, only pruned, allowing the loose branches to drop over those that are taken away. Tom is very costive about trees and talks only of 300 poplars. I shall send at

* A yoke of oxen.

least double that number; also some hag-berries, &c. He thinks he is saving me money, when he is starving my projects; but he is a pearl of honesty and good intention, and I like him the better for needing driving where expense is likely. Ever yours,

W. SCOTT."

To John Murray, Esq., Albemarle Street, London.

"Abbotsford, 23d March, 1818.

"Dear Murray,

'Grieve not for me, my dearest dear,
I am not dead, but sleepeth here'——

"I have little to plead for myself, but the old and vile apologies of laziness and indisposition. I think I have been so unlucky of late as to have always the will to work when sitting at the desk hurts me, and the irresistible propensity to be lazy, when I might, like the man whom Hogarth introduces into Bridewell with his hands strapped up against the wall, 'better work than stand thus.' I laid Kirkton* aside half finished, from a desire to get the original edition of the lives of Cameron, &c., by Patrick Walker, which I had not seen since a boy, and now I have got it, and find, as I suspected, that some curious *morceaux* have been cut out by subsequent editors.† I will, without loss of time, finish the article, which I think you will like. Blackwood kidnapped an article for his Magazine on the Frankenstein story,‡ which I intended for you. A very old friend and school companion of mine, and a gallant soldier, if ever there was one, Sir Howard Douglas, has asked me to review his work on Military Bridges. I must get a friend's assistance for the scientific part, and add some balsam of mine own (as printer's devils say) to make up four or five pages. I have no objection to attempt Lord Orford if I have time, and find I can do it with ease. Though far from admiring his character, I have always had a high opinion of his talents, and am well acquainted with his works. The letters you have published are, I think, his very best—lively, entertaining, and unaffected.§ I am greatly obliged to you for these and other literary treasures, which I owe to your goodness from time to time. Although not thankfully acknowledged as they should be in course, these things are never thanklessly received.

"I could have sworn that Beppo was founded on Whistlecraft, as both were on Anthony Hall,‖ who, like Beppo, had more wit than grace.

"I am not, however in spirits at present for treating either these worthies, or my friend Rose,¶ though few have warmer wishes to any of the trio. But this confounded changeable weather has twice within this fortnight brought back my cramp in the stomach. Adieu. My next shall be with a packet. Yours truly,

W. SCOTT."

In the next letter we have Scott's lamentation over the death of Mrs. Murray Keith—the Mrs. Bethune Baliol of his Chronicles of the Canongate. The person alluded to under the designation of "Prince of the Black Marble Islands," was Mr. George Bullock, already often mentioned as, with Terry and Mr. Atkinson, consulted about all the arrangements of the rising house at Abbotsford. Scott gave him this title from the Arabian Nights, on occasion of his becoming the lessee of some marble quarries in the Isle of Anglesea.

To D. Terry, Esq., London.

"April 30th, 1818. Selkirk.

"My dear Terry,

"Your packet arrived this morning. I was much disappointed not to find the Prince of the Black Islands' plan in it, nor have I heard a word from him since anent it, or anent the still more essential articles of doors and windows. I heard from Hector MacDonald Buchanan, that the said doors and windows were packing a fortnight since, but there are no news of them. Surely our friend's heart has grown as hard as his materials; or the spell of the enchantress, which confined itself to the extremities of his predecessor, has extended over his whole person. Mr. Atkinson has kept tryste charmingly, and the cieling of the dining-room will be superb. I have got I know not how many casts from Melrose and other places, of pure Gothic antiquity. I must leave this on the 12th, and I could bet a trifle the doors, &c. will arrive the very day I set out, and be all put up *à la bonne aventure*. Mean time I am keeping open house, not much to my convenience, and I am afraid I shall be stopped in my plastering by the want of these matters. The exposed state of my house has led to a mysterious disturbance. The night before last we were awakened by a violent noise, like drawing heavy boards along the new part of the house. I fancied something had fallen, and thought no more about it. This was about *two* in the morning. Last night, at the same witching hour, the very same noise occurred. Mrs. S., as you know, is rather *timbersome*, so up got I, with Beardie's broadsword under my arm,

'So bolt upright,
And ready to fight."

But nothing was out of order, neither can I discover what occasioned the disturbance. However, I went to bed, grumbling against Tenterden Street* and all its works. If there was no entrance but the key-hole, I should warrant myself against the ghosts. We have a set of idle fellows called workmen about us, which is a better way of accounting for nocturnal noises than any that is to be found in Baxter or Glanville.

"When you see Mr. Atkinson, will you ask him how far he is satisfied with the arch between the amoury and the anteroom, and whether it pleases him as it now stands? I have a brave old oaken cabinet, as black as ebony, 300 years old at least, which will occupy one side of the anteroom for the present. It is seven feet and a half long, about eighteen inches deep, and upwards of six feet high—a fine stand for china, &c.

"You will be sorry to hear that we have lost our excellent old friend, Mrs. Murray Keith. She enjoyed all her spirits and excellent faculties till within two days of her death, when she was seized with a feverish complaint, which eighty-two years were not calculated to resist. Much tradition, and of the very best kind, has died with this excellent old lady; one of the few persons whose spirits and cleanliness, and freshness of mind and body, made old age lovely and desirable. In the general case it seems scarce endurable.

"It seems odd to me that Rob Roy† should have made good fortune; pray let me know something of its history. There is in Jedediah's present work a thing capable of being woven out a Bourgeoise tragedy. I think of contriving that it shall be in your hands some time before the public see it, that you may try to operate upon it yourself. This would not be difficult, as vol. 4, and part of 3d, contain a different story. *Avowedly* I will never write for the stage; if I do, 'call me *horse*.' And indeed I feel severely the want of knowledge of theatrical business and effect: however, something we will do. I am writing in the noise and babble of a head-court of freeholders, therefore my letter is incoherent, and therefore it is written also on long paper; but therefore, moreover, it will move by frank, as the member is here, and stands upon his popularity. Kind compliments to Mrs. Terry and Walter. Yours very truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

On the morning that Mr. Terry received the foregoing letter in London, Mr. William Erskine was breakfasting with him; and the chief subject of their conversation was the sudden death of George Bullock, which had occurred on the same night, and as nearly as they could ascertain, at the very hour when Scott was roused from his sleep by the "mysterious disturbance" here described, and sallied from his chamber with old Beardie's Killiecrankie claymore in his hand. This coincidence, when Scott received Erskine's minute detail of what had happened in Tenterden street, made a much stronger impression on his mind than might be gathered from the tone of an ensuing communication.

To D. Terry, Esq., London.

"Abbotsford, 4th May, 1818.

"Dear Terry,

"I received with the greatest surprise, and the most sincere distress, the news of poor George Bullock's death.

* Scott's article on Kirkton's History of the Church of Scotland, edited by Mr. C. K. Sharpe, appeared in the 56th number of the Quarterly Review. See Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xix. p. 213.

† Scott expressed great satisfaction on seeing the Lives of the Covenanters—Cameron, Peden, Semple, Wellwood, Cargill, Smith, Renwick, &c., reprinted without mutilation in the "Biographia Presbyteriana. Edin. 1827." The publisher of this collection was the late Mr. John Stevenson, long chief clerk to John Ballantyne, and usually styled by Scott "True Jock," in opposition to one of his old master's many *aliases*—viz.: "Leein' Johnnie."

‡ See Scott's Prose Miscellanies, vol. xviii. p. 256.

§ The Letters of Horace Walpole to George Montagne.

‖ *Anthony Hall* is only known as Editor of one of Leland's works: I have no doubt Scott was thinking of *John Hall Stevenson*, author of "Crazy Tales;" the friend, and (it is said) the *Eugenius* of Sterne.

¶ I believe Mr. Rose's "Court and Parliament of Beasts" is here alluded to.

* Bullock's manufactory was in this street.

† A drama founded on the novel of Rob Roy had been produced with great success, on the London stage.

in the full career of honourable industry,—distinguished by his uncommon taste and talent,—esteemed by all who transacted business with him,—and loved by those who had the pleasure of his more intimate acquaintance,—I can scarce conceive a more melancholy summons. It comes as a particular shock to me, because I had, particularly of late, so much associated his idea with the improvements here, in which his kind and enthusiastic temper led him to take such interest; and in looking at every unfinished or projected circumstance, I feel an impression of melancholy which will for some time take away the pleasure I have found in them. I liked George Bullock because he had no trumpery selfishness about his heart, taste, or feelings. Pray let me know about the circumstances of his family, &c. I feel most sincerely interested in all that concerns him. It must have been a dreadful surprise to Mr. Atkinson and you who lived with him so much. I need not, I am sure, beg you to be in no hurry about my things. The confusion must be cruelly great, without any friend adding to it; and in fact, at this moment, I am very indifferent on the subject. The poor kind fellow! He took so much notice of little Charles, and was so domesticated with us all, that I really looked with a schoolboy's anxiety for his being here in the season, to take his own quiet pleasures, and to forward mine. But God's will be done. All that surviving friends can do upon such a loss is, if possible, to love each other still better. I beg to be kindly remembered to Mrs. Terry and Monsieur Walter. Ever most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, 16th May, 1818.

"My dear Terry,

"Mr. Nasmyth* has obligingly given me an opportunity of writing to you a few lines, as he is setting out for London. I cannot tell you how much I continue to be grieved for our kind-hearted and enthusiastic friend Bullock. I trust he has left his family comfortably settled, though with so many plans which required his active and intelligent mind to carry them through, one has natural apprehensions upon that score. When you can with propriety make inquiry how my matters stand, I should be glad to know. Hector Macdonald tells me that my doors and windows were ready packed, in which case, perhaps, the sooner they are embarked the better, not only for safety, but because they can only be in the way, and the money will now be the more acceptable. Poor Bullock had also the measures for my chimney-pieces, for grates of different kinds, and orders for beds, dining-room tables and chairs. But how far these are in progress of being executed, or whether they can now be executed, I must leave to your judgment and inquiry. Your good sense and delicacy will understand the *façon de faire* better than I can point out. I shall never have the pleasure in these things that I expected.

"I have just left Abbotsford to attend the summer session—left it when the leaves were coming out—the most delightful season for a worshipper of the country like me. The Home-bank, which we saw at first green with turnips, will now hide a man somewhat taller than Johnnie Ballantyne in its shades. In fact, the trees cover the ground, and have a very pretty bosky effect; from six years to ten or twelve, I think wood is as beautiful as ever it is afterwards until it figures as aged and magnificent. Your hobby-de-hoy tree of twenty or twenty-five years' standing is neither so beautiful as in its infancy, nor so respectable as in its age.

"Counsellor Erskine is returned much pleased with your hospitality, and giving an excellent account of you. Were you not struck with the fantastical coincidence of our nocturnal disturbances at Abbotsford with the melancholy event that followed? I protest to you the noise resembled half-a-dozen men hard to work putting up boards and furniture, and nothing can be more certain than that there was nobody on the premises at the time. With a few additional touches, the story would figure in Glanville or Aubrey's Collection. In the mean time, you may set it down with poor Dubisson's warnings,† as a remarkable coincidence coming under your own observation. I trust we shall see you this season. I think we could hammer a neat *comedie bourgeoise* out of the Heart of Mid-Lothian. Mrs. Scott and family join in kind compliments to Mrs. Terry; and I am, ever yours truly, WALTER SCOTT."

It appears from one of these letters to Terry, that, so late as the 30th of April, Scott still designed to include two separate stories in the second series of the Tales of my Landlord. But he must have changed his plan soon after that date; since the four volumes, entirely occupied with the Heart of Mid-Lothian, were before the public in the course of June. The story this deferred, in consequence of the extent to which that of Jeanie Deans grew on his hands, was the Bride of Lammermoor.

* Mr. Alexander Nasmyth, an eminent landscape painter of Edinburgh—the father of Mrs. Terry.

† *See ante*, p. 162.

CHAPTER XL.

MAY, 1818—DINNER AT MR. HOME DRUMMOND'S—SCOTT'S EDINBURGH DEN—DETAILS OF HIS DOMESTIC LIFE IN CASTLE STREET—HIS SUNDAY DINNERS—HIS EVENING DRIVES, ETC.—HIS CONDUCT IN THE GENERAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH—DINNERS AT JOHN BALLANTYNE'S VILLA, AND AT JAMES BALLANTYNE'S IN ST. JOHN STREET ON THE APPEARANCE OF A NEW NOVEL—ANECDOTES OF THE BALLANTYNES, AND OF CONSTABLE.

On the 12th of May, as we have seen, Scott left Abbotsford, for the summer session in Edinburgh.

At this moment, his position, take it for all in all, was, I am inclined to believe, what no other man had ever won for himself by the pen alone. His works were the daily food, not only of his countrymen, but of all educated Europe. His society was courted by whatever England could show of eminence. Station, power, wealth, beauty, and genius, strove with each other in every demonstration of respect and worship—and, a few political fanatics and envious poetasters apart, wherever he appeared in town or in country, whoever had Scotch blood in him, "gentle or simple," felt it move more rapidly through his veins when he was in the presence of Scott. To descend to what many looked on as higher things, he considered himself, and was considered by all about him, as rapidly consolidating a large fortune:—the annual profits of his novels alone had, for several years, been not less than £10,000: his domains were daily increased—his castle was rising—and perhaps few doubted that ere long he might receive from the just favour of his Prince some distinction in the way of external rank, such as had seldom before been dreamt of as the possible consequence of a mere literary celebrity. It was about this time that the compiler of these pages first had the opportunity of observing the plain easy modesty which had survived the many temptations of such a career; and the kindness of heart pervading, in all circumstances, his gentle deportment, which made him the rare, perhaps the solitary, example of a man signally elevated from humble beginnings, and loved more and more by his earliest friends and connexions, in proportion as he had fixed on himself the homage of the great, and the wonder of the world

It was during the sitting of the General Assembly of the Kirk in May, 1818, that I first had the honour of meeting him in private society: the party was not a large one, at the house of a much-valued common friend—Mr. Home Drummond of Blair Drummond, the grandson of Lord Kames. Mr. Scott, ever apt to consider too favourably the literary efforts of others, and more especially of very young persons, received me, when I was presented to him, with a cordiality which I had not been prepared to expect from one filling a station so exalted. This, however, is the same story that every individual, who ever met him under similar circumstances, has had to tell. When the ladies retired from the dinner-table, I happened to sit next him; and he, having heard that I had lately returned from a tour in Germany, made that country and its recent literature the subject of some conversation. In the course of it, I told him that when, on reaching the inn at Weimar, I asked the waiter whether Goethe was then in the town, the man stared as if he had not heard the name before; and that on my repeating the question, adding *Goethe der grosse dichter* (the great poet,) he shook his head as doubtfully as before—until the landlady solved our difficulties, by suggesting that perhaps the traveller might mean "the *Herr Geheimer Rath* (Privy-Counsellor) *Von Goethe*." Scott seemed amused with this, and said, "I hope you will come one of these days and see me at Abbotsford; and when you reach Selkirk or Melrose, be sure you ask even the landlady for nobody but *the Sheriff*." He appeared

particularly interested when I described Goethe as I first saw him, alighting from a carriage, crammed with wild plants and herbs which he had picked up in the course of his morning's botanizing among the hills above Jena. "I am glad," said he, "that my old master has pursuits somewhat akin to my own. I am no botanist, properly speaking; and though a dweller on the banks of the Tweed, shall never be knowing about Flora's beauties;* but how I should like to have a talk with him about trees!" I mentioned how much any one must be struck with the majestic beauty of Goethe's countenance—(the noblest certainly by far that I have ever yet seen)—"Well," said he, "the grandest demigod I ever saw was Dr. Carlyle, minister of Musselburgh, commonly called *Jupiter Carlyle*, from having sat more than once for the king of gods and men to Gavin Hamilton—and a shrewd, clever old carle was he, no doubt, but no more a poet than his precentor. As for poets, I have seen, I believe, all the best of our own time and country—and, though Burns had the most glorious eyes imaginable, I never thought any of them would come up to an artist's notion of the character, except Byron." A reverend gentleman present, (I think, Principal Nicoll of St. Andrews,) expressed his regret that he had never seen Lord Byron. "And the prints," resumed Scott, "give one no impression of him—the lustre is there, Doctor, but it is not lighted up. Byron's countenance is *a thing to dream of*. A certain fair lady, whose name has been too often mentioned in connexion with his, told a friend of mine that, when she first saw Byron it was in a crowded room, and she did not know who it was, but her eyes were instantly nailed, and she said to herself *that pale face is my fate*. And poor soul, if a godlike face and godlike powers could have made any excuse for deviltry, to be sure she had one." In the course of this talk, an old friend and schoolfellow of Scott's asked him across the table if he had any faith in the antique busts of Homer? "No, truly," he answered, smiling, "for if there had been either limners or stuccoyers worth their salt in those days, the owner of such a headpiece would never have had to trail the poke. They would have alimented the honest man decently among them for a lay-figure."

A few days after this, I received a communication from the Messrs. Ballantyne, to the effect that Mr. Scott's various avocations had prevented him from fulfilling his agreement with them as to the historical department of the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1816, and that it would be acceptable to him as well as them, if I could undertake to supply it in the course of the autumn. This proposal was agreed to on my part, and I had consequently occasion to meet him pretty often during that summer session. He told me that if the war had gone on, he should have liked to do the historical summary as before; but that the prospect of having no events to record but radical riots, and the passing or rejecting of corn bills and poor bills, sickened him; that his health was no longer what it had been; and that though he did not mean to give over writing altogether—(here he smiled significantly, and glanced his eye towards a pile of MS. on the desk by him)—he thought himself now entitled to write nothing but what would rather be an amusement than a fatigue to him—"*Juniores ad labores.*"

He at this time occupied as his *den* a square small room, behind the dining parlour in Castle Street. It had but a single Venetian window, opening on a patch of turf not much larger than itself, and the aspect of the place was on the whole sombrous. The walls were entirely clothed with books, most of them folios and quartos, and all in that complete state of repair which at a glance reveals a tinge of bibliomania. A dozen volumes or so, needful for immediate purposes of reference, were placed close by him on a small moveable frame—something like a dumb waiter. All the rest were in their proper niches, and wherever a volume had been lent, its room was occupied by a wooden block of the same size, having a card with the name of the borrower and date of the loan, tacked on its front. The old bindings had obviously been retouched and regilt in the most approved manner; the new, when the books were of any mark, were rich but never gaudy—a large proportion of blue morocco—all stamped with his *device* of the portcullis, and its motto *clausus tutus ero*—being an anagram of his name in Latin. Every case and shelf was accurately lettered, and the works arranged systematically; history and biography on one side—poetry and the drama on another—law books and dictionaries behind his own chair. The only table was a massive piece of furniture which he had had constructed on the model of one at Rokeby; with a desk and all its appurtenances on either side, that an amanuensis might work opposite to him when he chose; and with small tiers of drawers, reaching all round to the floor. The top displayed a goodly array of session papers, and on the desk below were, besides the MS. at which he was working, sundry parcels of letters, proof-sheets, and so forth, all neatly done up with red tape. His own writing apparatus was a very handsome old box, richly carved, lined with crimson velvet, and containing inkbottles, taper-stand, &c. in silver—the whole in such order that it might have come from the silversmith's window half an hour before. Besides his own huge elbow chair, there were but two others in the room, and one of these seemed, from its position, to be reserved exclusively for the amanuensis. I observed, during the first evening I spent with him in this *sanctum*, that while he talked, his hands were hardly ever idle. Sometimes he folded letter-covers—sometimes he twisted paper into matches, performing both tasks with great mechanical expertness and nicety; and when there was no loose paper fit to be so dealt with, he snapped his fingers, and the noble Maida aroused himself from his lair on the hearthrug, and laid his head across his master's knees, to be caressed and fondled. The room had no space for pictures except one, an original portrait of Claverhouse, which hung over the chimney-piece, with a Highland target on either side, and broadswords and dirks (each having its own story) disposed star-fashion round them. A few green tin-boxes, such as solicitors keep title-deeds in, were piled over each other on one side of the window; and on the top of these lay a fox's tail, mounted on an antique silver handle, wherewith, as often as he had occasion to take down a book, he gently brushed the dust off the upper leaves before opening it. I think I have mentioned all the furniture of the room, except a sort of ladder, low, broad, well-carpeted, and strongly guarded with oaken rails, by which he helped himself to books from his higher shelves. On the top step of this convenience, Hinse of Hinsfeldt,—(so called from one of the German *Kinder-märchen*,)—a venerable tom-cat, fat and sleek, and no longer very locomotive, usually lay watching the proceedings of his master and Maida with an air of dignified equanimity; but when Maida chose to leave the party, he signified his inclinations by thumping the door with his paw, as violently as ever a fashionable footman handled a knocker in Grosvenor Square; the Sheriff rose and opened it for him with courteous alacrity,—and then Hinse came down purring from his perch, and mounted guard by the foot-stool, *vice* Maida absent upon furlough. Whatever discourse might be passing was broken, every now and then, by some affectionate apostrophe to these four-footed friends. He said they understood every thing he said to them, and I believe they did understand a great deal of it. But at all events, dogs and cats, like children, have some infallible tact for discovering at once who is, and who is not, really fond of their company; and I venture to say, Scott was never five minutes in any room, before the little pets of the family, whether dumb or lisping, had found out his kindness for all their generation.

I never thought it lawful to keep a journal of what passes in private society, so that no one need expect from the sequel of this narrative any detailed record of Scott's familiar talk. What fragments of it have

* "What beauties does Flora disclose,
How sweet are her smiles upon Tweed," &c.
CRAWFORD.

happened to adhere to a tolerably retentive memory, and may be put into black and white without wounding any feelings which my friend, were he alive, would have wished to spare, I shall introduce as the occasion suggests or serves; but I disclaim on the threshold any thing more than this; and I also wish to enter a protest once for all against the general fidelity of several literary gentlemen who have kindly forwarded to me private lucubrations of theirs, designed to *Boswellize* Scott, and which they may probably publish hereafter. To report conversations fairly, it is a necessary prerequisite that we should be completely familiar with all the interlocutors, and understand thoroughly all their minutest relations, and points of common knowledge, and common feeling, with each other. He who does not, must be perpetually in danger of misinterpreting sportive allusion into serious statement; and the man who was only recalling, by some jocular phrase or half-phrase, to an old companion, some trivial reminiscence of their boyhood or youth, may be represented as expressing, upon some person or incident casually tabled, an opinion which he had never framed, or if he had, would never have given words to in any mixed assemblage—not even among what the world calls *friends* at his own board. In proportion as a man is witty and humorous, there will always be about him and his a widening maze and wilderness of cues and catchwords, which the uninitiated will, if they are bold enough to try interpretation, construe, ever and anon, grotesquely amiss—not seldom into arrant falsity. For this one reason, to say nothing of many others, I consider no man justified in journalizing what he sees and hears in a domestic circle where he is not thoroughly at home; and I think there are still higher and better reasons why he should not do so there he is.

Before I ever met Scott in private, I had, of course, heard many people describe and discuss his style of conversation. Every body seemed to agree that it overflowed with hearty good humour, as well as plain unaffected good sense and sagacity; but I had heard not a few persons of undoubted ability and accomplishment maintain, that the genius of the great poet and novelist rarely, if ever, revealed itself in his talk. It is needless to say, that the persons I allude to were all his own countrymen, and themselves imbued, more or less, with the conversational habits derived from a system of education in which the study of metaphysics occupies a very large share of attention. The best table-talk of Edinburgh was, and probably still is, in a very great measure made up of brilliant disquisition—such as might be transferred without alteration to a professor's note-book, or the pages of a critical Review—and of sharp word-catchings, ingenious thrusting and parrying of dialectics, and all the quips and quibblets of bar pleading. It was the talk of a society to which lawyers and lecturers had, for at least a hundred years, given the tone. From the date of the Union, Edinburgh ceased to be the headquarters of the Scotch nobility—and long before the time of which I speak, they had all but entirely abandoned it as a place of residence. I think I never knew above two or three of the Peerage to have houses there at the same time—and these were usually among the poorest and most insignificant of their order. The wealthier gentry had followed their example. Very few of that class ever spent any considerable part of the year in Edinburgh, except for the purposes of educating their children, or superintending the progress of a lawsuit; and these were not more likely than a score or two of comatose and lethargic old Indians, to make head against the established influences of academical and forensic celebrity. Now Scott's tastes and resources had not much in common with those who had inherited and preserved the chief authority in this provincial hierarchy of rhetoric. He was highly amused with watching their dexterous logomachies—but his delight in such displays arose mainly, I cannot doubt, from the fact of their being, both as to subject-matter and style and method, remote studies. *Scævolæ studiis.* He sat by, as he would have done at a stage-play or a fencing-match, enjoying and applauding the skill exhibited, but without feeling much ambition to parade himself as a rival either of the foil or the buskin. I can easily believe, therefore, that in the earlier part of his life—before the blaze of universal fame had overawed local prejudice, and a new generation, accustomed to hear of that fame from their infancy, had grown up—it may have been the commonly adopted creed in Edinburgh, that Scott, however distinguished otherwise, was not to be named as a table-companion in the same day with this or that master of luminous dissertation or quick rejoinder, who now sleeps as forgotten as his grandmother. It was natural enough that persons brought up in the same circle with him, who remembered all his beginnings, and had but slowly learned to acquiesce in the justice of his claim to unrivalled honour in literature, should have clung all the closer for that late acquiescence to their original estimate of him as inferior to themselves in other titles to admiration. It was also natural that their prejudice on that score should be readily taken up by the young aspirants who breathed, as it were, the atmosphere of their professional renown. Perhaps, too, Scott's steady Toryism, and the effect of his genius and example in modifying the intellectual sway of the long dominant Whigs in the north, may have had some share in this matter. However all that may have been, the substance of what I had been accustomed to hear certainly was, that Scott had a marvellous stock of queer stories, which he often told with happy effect, but that, bating these drafts on a portentous memory, set off with a simple old-fashioned *naïveté* of humour and pleasantry, his strain of talk was remarkable neither for depth of remark nor felicity of illustration; that his views and opinions on the most important topics of practical interest were hopelessly perverted by his blind enthusiasm for the dreams of by-gone ages; and that, but for the grotesque phenomenon presented by a great writer of the 19th century gravely uttering sentiments worthy of his own Dundees and Invernahyles, the main texture of his discourse would be pronounced by any enlightened member of modern society rather bald and poor than otherwise. I think the epithet most in vogue was *commonplace*.

It will easily be believed, that, in companies such as I have been alluding to, made up of, or habitually domineered over, by voluble Whigs and political economists, Scott was often tempted to put forth his Tory doctrines and antiquarian prejudices in an exaggerated shape—in colours, to say the truth, altogether different from what they assumed under other circumstances, or which had any real influence upon his mind and conduct on occasions of practical moment. But I fancy it will seem equally credible, that the most sharp-sighted of these social critics may not always have been capable of tracing, and doing justice to, the powers which Scott brought to bear upon the topics which they, not he, had chosen for discussion. In passing from a gas-lit hall into a room with wax candles, the guests sometimes complain that they have left splendour for gloom; but let them try by what sort of light it is most satisfactory to read, write, or embroider, or consider at leisure under which of the two either men or women look their best.

The strongest, purest, and least observed of all lights is, however, daylight; and his talk was commonplace, just as sunshine is, which gilds the most indifferent objects, and adds brilliancy to the brightest. As for the old world anecdotes which these clever persons were condescending enough to laugh at as pleasant extravagances, serving merely to relieve and set off the main stream of debate, they were often enough, it may be guessed, connected with the theme in hand by links not the less apt that they might be too subtle to catch their bedazzled and self-satisfied optics. There might be keener knowledge of human nature than was "dreamt of in their philosophy"—which passed with them for *commonplace*, only because it was clothed in plain familiar household words, not dressed up in some pedantic masquerade of antithesis. There are peo-

ple," says Landor, "who think they write and speak finely, merely because they have forgotten the language in which their fathers and mothers used to talk to them;" and surely there are a thousand homely old proverbs, which many a dainty modern would think it beneath his dignity to quote either in speech or writing, any one of which condenses more wit (take that word in any of its senses) than could be extracted from all that was ever said or written by the *doctrinaires* of the Edinburgh school. Many of those gentlemen held Scott's conversation to be commonplace exactly for the same reason that a child thinks a perfectly limpid stream, though perhaps deep enough to drown it three times over, must needs be shallow. But it will be easily believed that the best and highest of their own idols had better means and skill of measurement: I can never forget the pregnant expression of one of the ablest of that school and party—Lord Cockburn—who, when some glib youth chanced to echo in his hearing the consolatory tenet of local mediocrity, answered quietly—"I have the misfortune to think differently from you—in my humble opinion Walter Scott's *sense* is a still more wonderful thing than his *genius*."

Indeed I have no sort of doubt that, long before 1818, full justice was done to Scott, even in these minor things, by all those of his Edinburgh acquaintance, whether Whig or Tory, on whose personal opinion he could have been supposed to set much value. With few exceptions, the really able lawyers of his own or nearly similar standing had ere that time attained stations of judicial dignity, or were in the springtide of practice; and in either case they were likely to consider general society much in his own fashion, as the joyous relaxation of life, rather than the theatre of exertion and display. Their tables were elegantly, some of them sumptuously spread; and they lived in a pretty constant interchange of entertainments upon a large scale, in every circumstance of which, conversation included, it was their ambition to imitate those voluptuous metropolitan circles, wherein most of them had from time to time mingled, and several of them with distinguished success. Among such prosperous gentlemen, like himself past the *mezzo cammin*, Scott's picturesque anecdotes, rich easy humour, and gay involuntary glances of mother-wit, were, it is not difficult to suppose, appreciated above contributions of a more ambitious stamp; and no doubt his London *reputation de salon* (which had by degrees risen to a high pitch, although he cared nothing for it) was not without its effect in Edinburgh. But still the old prejudice lingered on in the general opinion of the place, especially among the smarter praters of *the Outer-House*, whose glimpses of the social habits of their superiors were likely to be rare, and their gall-bladders to be more distended than their purses.

In truth it was impossible to listen to Scott's oral narrations, whether gay or serious, or to the felicitous fun with which he parried absurdities of all sorts, without discovering better qualities in his talk than *wit*—and of a higher order; I mean especially a power of *vivid painting*—the true and primary sense of what is called *Imagination*. He was like Jacques—though not a "Melancholy Jacques;" and "moralized" a common topic "into a thousand similitudes." Shakspeare and the banished Duke would have found him "full of matter." He disliked mere disquisitions in Edinburgh, and prepared *impromptus* in London; and puzzled the promoters of such things sometimes by placid silence, sometimes by broad merriment. To such men he seemed *commonplace*—not so to the most dexterous masters in what was to some of them almost a science; not so to Rose, Hallam, Moore, or Rogers,—to Ellis, Mackintosh, Croker, or Canning.

Scott managed to give and receive such great dinners as I have been alluding to at least as often as any other private gentleman in Edinburgh; but he very rarely accompanied his wife and daughters to their evening assemblies, which commonly ensued under other roofs—for *early to rise*, unless in the case of spare-fed anchorites, takes for granted *early to bed*. When he had no dinner engagement, he frequently gave a few hours to the theatre; but still more frequently, when the weather was fine, and still more, I believe, to his own satisfaction, he drove out with some of his family, or a single friend, in an open carriage; the favourite rides being either to the Blackford Hills, or to Ravelston, and so home by Corstorphine: or to the beach of Portobello, where *Peter* was always instructed to keep his horses as near as possible to the sea. More than once, even in the first summer of my acquaintance with him, I had the pleasure of accompanying him on these evening excursions; and never did he seem to enjoy himself more fully than when placidly surveying at such sunset or moonlight hours, either the massive outlines of his "own romantic town," or the tranquil expanse of its noble estuary. He delighted, too, in passing, when he could, through some of the quaint windings of the ancient city itself, now deserted, except at mid-day, by the upper world. How often have I seen him go a long way round about, rather than miss the opportunity of halting for a few minutes on the vacant esplanade of Holyrood, or under the darkest shadows of the Castle rock, where it overhangs the Grass-market, and the huge slab that still marks where the gibbet of Porteous and the Covenanters had its station. His coachman knew him too well to move at a Jehu's pace amidst such scenes as these. No funeral hearse crept more leisurely than did his landau up the Canongate or the Cowgate; and not a queer *tottering* gable but recalled to him some long-buried memory of splendour or bloodshed, which, by a few words, he set before the hearer in the reality of life. His image is so associated in my mind with the antiquities of his native place, that I cannot now revisit them without feeling as if I were treading on his gravestone.

Whatever might happen on the other evenings of the week, he always dined at home on Sunday, and usually some few friends were then with him, but never any person with whom he stood on ceremony. These were, it may readily be supposed, the most agreeable of his entertainments. He came into the room rubbing his hands, his face bright and gleesome, like a boy arriving at home for the holidays, his Peppers and Mustards gambolling about his heels, and even the stately Maida grinning and wagging his tail in sympathy. Among the most regular guests on these happy evenings were, in my time, as had long before been the case, Mrs. Maclean Clephane of Torloisk, (with whom he agreed cordially on all subjects except the authenticity of Ossian,) and her daughters, whose guardian he had become, at their own choice. The eldest of them had been for some years married to the Earl Compton, (now Marquis of Northampton,) and was of course seldom in the north; but the others had much of the same tastes and accomplishments which so highly distinguished the late Lady Northampton; and Scott delighted especially in their proficiency in the poetry and music of their native isles. Mr. and Mrs. Skene of Rubislaw were frequent attendants—and so were the Macdonald-Buchanans of Drumakiln, whose eldest daughter, Isabella, was his chief favourite among all his nieces of the Clerk's table—as was, among the nephews, my own dear friend and companion, Joseph Hume, a singularly graceful young man, rich in the promise of hereditary genius, but, alas! cut off in the early bloom of his days. The well-beloved Erskine was seldom absent; and very often Terry or James Ballantyne came with him—sometimes, though less frequently, Constable. Among other persons who now and then appeared at these "dinners without the silver dishes," as Scott called them, I may mention—to say nothing of such old cronies as Mr. Clerk, Mr. Thompson, and Mr. Kirkpatrick Sharpe,—Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck, who had all his father *Bozzy's* cleverness, good humour, and joviality, without one touch of his meaner qualities,—wrote *Jenny dang the Weaver*, and some other popular songs, which he sang capitally—and was moreover a thorough bibliomaniac; the late Sir Alexander Don of Newton, in all courteous and ele-

gan' accomplishments the model of a cavalier; and last, not least, William Allen, R. A., who had shortly before this time returned to Scotland from several years of travel in Russia and Turkey. At one of these plain hearty dinners, however, the company rarely exceeded three or four, besides the as yet undivided family.

Scott had a story of a topping goldsmith on the Bridge who prided himself on being the mirror of Amphitryons, and accounted for his success by stating that it was his invariable custom to set his own stomach at ease, by a beef-steak and a pint of port in his back-shop, half an hour before the arrival of his guests. But the host of Castle Street had no occasion to imitate this prudent arrangement, for his appetite at dinner was neither keen nor nice. Breakfast was his chief meal. Before that came he had gone through the severest part of his day's work, and he then set to with the zeal of Crabbe's Squire Tovell—

"And laid at once a pound upon his plate."

No foxhunter ever prepared himself for the field by more substantial appliances. His table was always provided, in addition to the usually plentiful delicacies of a Scotch breakfast, with some solid article, on which he did most lusty execution—a round of beef—a pastry, such as made Gil Blas's eyes water—or, most welcome of all, a cold sheep's head, the charms of which primitive dainty he has so gallantly defended against the disparaging sneers of Dr. Johnson and his bear-leader.* A huge brown loaf flanked his elbow, and it was placed upon a broad wooden trencher, that he might cut and come again with the bolder knife. Often did the *Clerk's coach*, commonly called among themselves *the Lively*—which trundled round every morning to pick up the brotherhood, and then deposited them at the proper minute in the Parliament Close—often did this lumbering hackney arrive at his door before he had fully appeased what Homer calls "the sacred rage of hunger;" and vociferous was the merriment of the learned *uncles*, when the surprised poet swung forth to join them, with an extemporized sandwich, that looked like a ploughman's luncheon, in his hand. But this robust supply would have served him in fact for the day. He never tasted any thing more before dinner, and at dinner he ate almost as sparingly as Squire Tovell's niece from the boarding-school—

——"Who cut the sanguine flesh in frustums fine,
And marvelled much to see the creatures dine."

The only dishes he was at all fond of were the old-fashioned ones, to which he had been accustomed in the days of Saunders Fairford; and which really are excellent dishes,—such, in truth, as Scotland borrowed from France before Catherine de Medicis brought in her Italian *virtuosi* to revolutionize the kitchen like the court. Of most of these, I believe, he has in the course of his novels found some opportunity to record his esteem. But, above all, who can forget that his King Jamie, amidst the splendours of Whitehall, thinks himself an ill-used monarch unless his first course includes *cockyleekie*?

It is a fact, which some philosophers may think worth setting down, that Scott's organization, as to more than one of the senses, was the reverse of exquisite. He had very little of what musicians call an ear; his smell was hardly more delicate. I have seen him stare about, quite unconscious of the cause, when his whole company betrayed their uneasiness at the approach of an overkept haunch of venison; and neither by the nose nor the palate could he distinguished corked wine from sound. He could never tell Madeira from Sherry—nay, an Oriental friend having sent him a butt of *shyeraz*, when he remembered the circumstance some time afterwards, and called for a bottle to have Sir John Malcolm's opinion of its quality, it turned out that his butler, mistaking the label, had already served up half the bin as *sherry*. Port he considered as physic: he never willingly swallowed more than one glass of it, and was sure to anathematize a second, if offered, by repeating John Home's epigram—

"Bold and erect the Caledonian stood,
Old was his mutton, and his claret good;
Let him drink port, the English statesman cried—
He drank the poison, and his spirit died."

In truth, he liked no wines except sparkling Champagne and claret; but even as to this last he was no connoisseur; and sincerely preferred a tumbler of whisky-toddy to the most precious "liquid ruby" that ever flowed in the cup of a prince. He rarely took any other potation when quite alone with his family; but at the Sunday board he circulated the Champagne briskly during dinner, and considered a pint of claret each man's fair share afterwards. I should not omit, however, that his Bourdeaux was uniformly preceded by a small libation of the genuine *mountain dew*, which he poured with his own hand, *more majorum*, for each guest—making use for the purpose of such a multifarious collection of ancient Highland *quaighs* (little cups of curiously dovetailed wood, inlaid with silver) as no Lowland sideboard but his was ever equipped with—but commonly reserved for himself one that was peculiarly precious in his eyes, as having travelled from Edinburgh to Derby in the canteen of Prince Charlie. This relic had been presented to "the wandering Ascanius" by some very careful follower, for its bottom is of glass, that he who quaffed might keep his eye the while upon the dirk hand of his companion.

The sound of music—(even, I suspect, of any sacred music but psalm-singing)—would be considered indecorous in the streets of Edinburgh on a Sunday night; so, upon the occasions I am speaking of, the harp was silent, and *Otterburne* and *The Bonny House of Airlie* must needs be dispensed with. To make amends, after tea in the drawing-room, Scott usually read some favourite author, for the amusement of his little circle; or Erskine, Ballantyne, or Terry did so, at his request. He himself read aloud high poetry with far greater simplicity, depth, and effect, than any other man I ever heard; and, in Macbeth or Julius Cæsar, or the like, I doubt if Kemble could have been more impressive. Yet the changes of intonation were so gently managed, that he contrived to set the different interlocutors clearly before us, without the least approach to theatrical artifice. Not so the others I have mentioned: they all read cleverly and agreeably, but with the decided trickery of stage recitation. To them he usually gave the book when it was a comedy, or, indeed, any other drama than Shakspeare's or Joanna Baillie's. Dryden's Fables, Johnson's two Satires, and certain detached scenes of Beaumont and Fletcher, especially that in the *Lover's Progress*, where the ghost of the musical innkeeper makes his appearance, were frequently selected. Of the poets, his contemporaries, however, there was not one that did not come in for his part. In Wordsworth, his pet pieces were, I think, the *Song for Brougham Castle*, the *Laodamia*, and some of the early sonnets:—in Southey, *Queen Orraca*, *Fernando Ramirez*, the *Lines on the Holly Tree*—and, of his larger poems, the *Thalaba*. Crabbe was perhaps, next to Shakspeare, the standing resource; but in those days Byron was pouring out his spirit fresh and full; and, if a new piece from his hand had appeared, it was sure to be read by Scott the Sunday evening afterwards, and that with such delighted emphasis, as showed how completely the elder bard had kept all his enthusiasm for poetry at the pitch of youth, and all his admiration of genius free, pure, and unstained by the least drop of literary jealousy. Rare and beautiful example of a happily constituted and virtuously disciplined mind and character!

Very often something read aloud by himself or his friends suggested an old story of greater compass than would have suited a dinner-table—and he told it, whether serious or comical, or, as more frequently happened, part of both, exactly in every respect in the tone and style of the notes and illustrations to his novels. A great number of his best oral nar-

* See Croker's Boswell, (edit. 1831.) vol. iii. p. 28.

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ratives have, indeed, been preserved in those parting lucubrations; and not a few in his letters. Yet very many there were of which his pen has left no record —so many, that, were I to task my memory, I could, I believe, recall the outlines at least of more than would be sufficient to occupy a couple of these volumes. Possibly, though well aware how little justice I could do to such things, rather than think of their perishing for ever, and leaving not even a shadow behind, I may at some future day hazard the attempt.

Let me turn, meanwhile, to some dinner-tables very different from his own, at which, from this time forward, I often met Scott. It is very true of the societies I am about to describe, that he was "among them, not of them;" and it is also most true that this fact was apparent in all the demeanour of his bibliopolical and typographical allies towards him whenever he visited them under their roofs—not a bit less so than when they were received at his own board; but still, considering how closely his most important wordly affairs were connected with the personal character of the Ballantynes, I think it a part, though neither a proud nor a very pleasing part, of my duty as his biographer, to record my reminiscences of them and their doings in some detail.

James Ballantyne then lived in St. John Street, a row of good, old-fashioned, and spacious houses, adjoining the Canongate and Holyrood, and at no great distance from his printing establishment. He had married a few years before the daughter of a wealthy farmer in Berwickshire—a quiet, amiable woman, of simple manners, and perfectly domestic habits: a group of fine young children were growing up about him; and he usually, if not constantly, had under his roof his aged mother, his and his wife's tender care of whom it was most pleasing to witness. As far as a stranger might judge, there could not be a more exemplary household, or a happier one; and I have occasionally met the poet in St. John Street when there were no other guest but Erskine, Terry, George Hogarth,* and another intimate friend or two, and when James Ballantyne was content to appear in his own true and best colours, the kind head of his family, the respectful but honest school-fellow of Scott, the easy landlord of a plain, comfortable table. But when any great event was about to take place in the business, especially on the eve of a new novel, there were doings of a higher strain in St. John Street; and to be present at one of those scenes was truly a rich treat, even—if not especially—for persons who, like myself, had no more *knowledge* than the rest of the world as to the authorship of Waverley. Then were congregated about the printer all his own literary allies, of whom a considerable number were by no means personally familiar with "THE GREAT UNKNOWN:"—who, by the way, owed to him that widely adopted title;—and He appeared among the rest with his usual open aspect of buoyant good-humour—although it was not difficult to trace, in the occasional play of his features, the diversion it afforded him to watch all the procedure of his swelling confidant, and the curious neophytes that surrounded the well-spread board.

The feast was, to use one of James's own favourite epithets, *gorgeous*; an aldermanic display of turtle and venison, with the suitable accompaniments of iced punch, potent ale, and generous Madeira. When the cloth was drawn the burley presses arose, with all he could muster of the port of John Kemble, and spouted with a sonorous voice the formula of Macbeth—

"Fill full!
I drink to the general joy of the whole table!"

This was followed by "the King, God bless him!" and second came—"Gentlemen, there is another toast which never has been nor shall be omitted in this house of mine—I give you the health of Mr. Walter Scott, with three times three!"—All honour having been done to this health, and Scott having briefly thanked the company with some expressions of warm affection to their host, Mrs. Ballantyne retired;—the bottles passed round twice or thrice in the usual way;—and then James rose once more, every vein on his brow distended, his eyes solemnly fixed upon vacancy, to propose, not as before in his stentorian key, but with "'bated breath," in the sort of whisper by which a stage conspirator thrills the gallery—"*Gentlemen, a bumper to the immortal Author of Waverley!*"—The uproar of cheering, in which Scott made a fashion of joining, was succeeded by deep silence, and then Ballantyne proceeded—

"In his Lord-Burleigh-look, serene and serious,
A something of imposing and mysterious"—

to lament the obscurity in which his illustrious but too modest correspondent still chose to conceal himself from the plaudits of the world—to thank the company for the manner in which the *nominis umbra* had been received—and to assure them that the Author of Waverley would, when informed of the circumstance, feel highly delighted—"the proudest hour of his life," &c. &c. The cool, demure fun of Scott's features during all this mummery was perfect; and Erskine's attempt at a gay *nonchalance* was still more ludicrously meritorious. Aldiborontiphoscophornio, however, bursting as he was, knew too well to allow the new novel to be made the subject of discussion. Its name was announced, and success to it crowned another cup; but after that no more of Jedediah. To cut the thread, he rolled out unbidden some one of his many theatrical songs, in a style that would have done no dishonour to almost any orchestra—The *Maid of Lodi*, or, perhaps, *the Boy of Biscay, oh!*—or *The sweet little Cherub that sits up aloft*. Other toasts followed, interspersed with ditties from other performers; old George Thomson, the friend of Burns, was ready for one with *The Moorland Wedding*, or *Willie brew'd a peck o' maut*;—and so it went on, until Scott and Erskine, with any clerical or very staid personage that had chanced to be admitted, saw fit to withdraw. Then the scene was changed. The claret and olives made way for broiled bones and a mighty bowl of punch; and when a few glasses of the hot beverage had restored his powers, James opened *ore rotundo* on the merits of the forthcoming romance. "One chapter—one chapter only"—was the cry. After "*nay, by'r Lady nay!*" and a few more coy shifts, the proof-sheets were at length produced, and James, with many a prefatory hem, read aloud what he considered as the most striking dialogue they contained.

The first I heard so read was the interview between Jeanie Deans, the Duke of Argyle, and Queen Caroline, in Richmond Park; and notwithstanding some spice of the pompous tricks to which he was addicted, I must say he did the inimitable scene great justice. At all events, the effect it produced was deep and memorable, and no wonder that the exulting typographer's *one bumper more to Jedediah Cleishbotham* preceded his parting-stave, which was uniformly *The Last Words of Marmion*, executed certainly with no contemptible rivalry of Braham.

What a different affair was a dinner, although probably including many of the same guests, at the junior partner's. He in those days retained, I think, no private apartments attached to his auction-rooms in Hanover Street, over the door of which he still kept emblazoned "John Ballantyne and Company, Booksellers." At any rate, such of his entertainments as I ever saw Scott partake of, were given at his villa near to the Frith of Forth, by Trinity: a retreat which the little man had named "Harmony Hall," and invested with an air of dainty voluptuous finery, contrasting strikingly enough with the substantial citizen-like snugness of his elder brother's domestic appointments. His house was surrounded by gardens so contrived as to seem

* George Hogarth, Esq., W.S., brother of Mrs. James Ballantyne. This gentleman is now well known in the literary world, especially by a History of Music, of which all who understand that science speak highly.

of considerable extent, having many a shady tuft, trellised alley, and mysterious alcove, interspersed among their bright parterres. It was a fairy-like labyrinth, and there was no want of pretty Armidas, such as they might be, to glide half-seen among its mazes. The sitting-rooms opened upon gay and perfumed conservatories, and John's professional excursions to Paris and Brussels in quest of objects of *virtu*, had supplied both the temptation and the means to set forth the interior in a fashion that might have satisfied the most fastidious *petite maitresse* of Norwood or St. Denis. John too was a married man: he had, however, erected for himself a private wing, the accesses to which, whether from the main building or the bosquet, were so narrow that it was physically impossible for the handsome and portly lady who bore his name to force her person through any one of them. His dinners were in all respects Parisian, for his wasted palate disdained such John Bull luxuries as were all in all with James. The piquant pasty of Strasburg or Perigord was never to seek; and even the *pièce de résistance* was probably a boar's head from Coblentz, or a turkey ready stuffed with truffles from the Palais Royal. The pictures scattered among John's innumerable mirrors, were chiefly of theatrical subjects—many of them portraits of beautiful actresses—the same Peg Woffingtons, Bellamys, Kitty Clives, and so forth, that found their way in the sequel to Charles Matthews's gallery at Highgate. Here that exquisite comedian's own mimicries and parodies were the life and soul of many a festival, and here, too, he gathered from his facetious host not a few of the richest materials for his *at homes* and *monopolylogues*. But, indeed, whatever actor or singer of eminence visited Edinburgh, of the evenings when he did not perform several were sure to be reserved for Trinity. Here Braham quavered, and here Liston drolled his best—here Johnstone, and Murray, and Yates, mixed jest and stave—here Kean revelled and rioted—and here the Roman Kemble often played the Greek from sunset to dawn. Nor did the popular *cantatrice* or *danseuse* of the time disdain to freshen her roses, after a laborious week, amidst these Paphian arbours of Harmony Hall.

Johnny had other tastes that were equally expensive. He had a well-furnished stable, and followed the fox-hounds whenever the cover was within an easy distance. His horses were all called after heroes in Scott's poems or novels; and at this time he usually rode up to his auction on a tall milk-white hunter, yclept *Old Mortality*, attended by a leash or two of greyhounds,—Die Vernon, Jenny Dennison, and so forth, by name. The featherweight himself appeared uniformly, hammer-in hand, in the half-dress of some sporting club—a light gray frock, with emblems of the chase on its silver buttons, white cord breeches, and jockey-boots in Meltonian order. Yet he affected in the pulpit rather a grave address; and was really one of the most plausible and imposing of the Puff tribe. Probably Scott's presence overawed his ludicrous propensities; for the poet was, when sales were going on, almost a daily attendant in Hanover Street, and himself not the least energetic of the numerous competitors for Johnny's uncut *fifteeners*, Venetian lamps, Milanese cuirasses, and old Dutch cabinets. Maida, by the way, was so well aware of his master's habits, that about the time when the Court of Session was likely to break up for the day, he might usually be seen couched in expectation among Johnny's own *tail* of greyhounds at the threshold of the mart.

It was at one of those Trinity dinners this summer, that I first saw Constable. Being struck with his appearance, I asked Scott who he was, and he told me—expressing some surprise that any body should have lived a winter or two in Edinburgh without knowing, by sight at least, a citizen whose name was so familiar to the world. I happened to say that I had not been prepared to find the great bookseller a man of such gentlemanlike and even distinguished bearing. Scott smiled and answered—"Ay, Constable is indeed a grand-looking chield. He puts me in mind of Fielding's apology for Lady Booby—to wit, that Joseph Andrews had an air which, to those who had not seen many noblemen, would give an idea of nobility." I had not in those days been much initiated in the private jokes of what is called, by way of excellence, *the trade*, and was puzzled when Scott, in the course of the dinner, said to Constable, "Will your Czarish Majesty do me the honour to take a glass of Champagne?" I asked the master of the feast for an explanation. "Oh!" said he, "are you so green as not to know that Constable long since dubbed himself *The Czar of Muscovy*, John Murray *The Emperor of the West*, and Longman and his string of partners *The Divan*?"—"And what title," I asked, "has Mr. John Ballantyne himself found in this new *almanac imperial*?"—"Let that flee stick to the wa'," quoth Johnny; "when I set up for a bookseller, The Crafty christened me *The Dey of Alljeers*—but he now considers me as next thing to dethroned." He added—"His majesty the autocrat is too fond of these nicknames. One day a partner of the house of Longman was dining with him in the country, to settle an important piece of business, about which there occurred a good deal of difficulty. 'What fine swans you have in your pond there,' said the Londoner, by way of parenthesis.—'Swans!' cried Constable—'they are only geese, man. There are just five of them, if you please to observe, and their names are Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown.' This skit cost The Crafty a good bargain."

It always appeared to me that James Ballantyne felt his genius rebuked in the presence of Constable; his manner was constrained, his smile servile, his hilarity elaborate. Not so with Johnny: the little fellow never seemed more airily frolicsome than when he capered for the amusement of the Czar.* I never, however, saw these two together, where I am told the humours of them both were exhibited to the richest advantage—I mean at the Sunday dinners with which Constable regaled, among others, his own circle of literary serfs, and when "Jocund Johnny" was very commonly his croupier. There are stories enough of practical jokes upon such occasions, some of them near akin to those which the author of Humphrey Clinker has thought fit to record of his own suburban villa, in the most diverting of young Melford's letters to Sir Watkin Philips. I have heard, for example, a luculent description of poor *Elshender Campbell*, and another drudge of the same class, running a race after dinner for a new pair of breeches, which Mr. David Bridges, tailor in ordinary to this northern potentate—himself a wit virtuoso, and the croupier on that day in lieu of Rigdum—had been instructed to bring with him, and display before the threadbare rivals. But I had these pictures from John Ballantyne, and I daresay they might be overcharged. That Constable was a most bountiful and generous patron to the ragged tenants of Grub Street, there can, however, be no doubt; and as little that John himself acted on all occasions by them in the same spirit, and this too to an extent greatly beyond what prudence (if he had ever consulted that guide in any thing) would have dictated.

When I visited Constable, as I often did at a period somewhat later than that of which I now speak, and for the most part in company with Scott, I found the bookseller established in a respectable country gentleman's seat, some six or seven miles out of Edinburgh, and doing the honours of it with all the ease that might have been looked for had he been the long-descended owner of the place. There was no foppery, no show, no idle luxury, but to all appearance the plain abundance and simple enjoyment of hereditary wealth. His conversation was manly and vigorous, abounding in Scotch anecdotes of the

* "Now, John," cried Constable one evening after he had told one of his best stories—"Now, John, is that true?"—His object evidently was, in Iago's phrase, *to let doton the pegs*; but Rigdum answered coolly, "True, indeed? Not one word of it!—any blockhead may stick to the truth, my hearty—but 'tis a sad hamperer of genius."

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old time, which he told with a degree of spirit and humour only second to his great author's. No man could more effectually control, when he had a mind, either the extravagant vanity which, on too many occasions, made him ridiculous, or the despotic temper, which habitually held in fear and trembling all such as were in any sort dependent on his Czarish Majesty's pleasure. In him I never saw (at this period) any thing but the unobtrusive sense and the calm courtesy of a well-bred gentleman. His very equipage kept up the series of contrasts between him and the two Ballantynes. Constable went back and forward between the town and Polton in a deep-hung and capacious green barouche, without any pretence at heraldic blazonry, drawn by a pair of sleek, black, long tailed horses, and conducted by a grave old coachman in plain blue livery. The Printer of the Cannongate drove himself and his wife about the streets and the suburbs in a snug machine, which did not overburthen one powerful and steady cob; while the gay auctioneer, whenever he left the saddle for the box, mounted a bright blue dogcart, and rattled down the Newhaven road with two high-mettled steeds, prancing *tandem* before him, and most probably—especially if he was on his way to the races at Musselburgh—with some "sweet singer of Israel" flaming, with all feathers, beside him. On such occasions, by the by, Johnny sometimes had a French horn with him, and he played on it with good skill, and with an energy by no means prudent in the state of his lungs.

The Sheriff told with peculiar unction the following anecdote of this spark. The first time he went over to pick up curiosities at Paris, it happened that he met, in the course of his traffickings, a certain brother bookseller of Edinburgh, as unlike him as one man could well be to another—a grave, dry Presbyterian, rigid in all his notions as the buckle of his wig. This precise worthy having ascertained John's address, went to call on him, a day or two afterwards, with the news of some richly illuminated missal, which he might possibly be glad to make prize of. On asking for his friend, a smiling *laquais de place* informed him that *Monsieur* had gone out, but that *Madame* was at home. Not doubting that Mrs. Ballantyne had accompanied her husband on his trip, he desired to pay his respects to *Madame*, and was ushered in accordingly. "But oh, Mr. Scott!" said, or rather groaned the austere elder, on his return from this modern Babylon—"oh, Mr. Scott, there was nae Mrs. John yonder, but a painted Jezabel sittin' up in her bed, wi' a wheen impudent French limmers like hersel', and twa or three whiskered blackguards, takin' their collation o' nicknacks and champagne wine! I ran out o' the house as if I had been shot. What judgment will this wicked warld come to! The Lord pity us!" Scott was a severe enough censor in the general of such levities, but somehow, in the case of Rigdumfunnidos, he seemed to regard them with much the same toleration as the naughty tricks of a monkey in the "Jardin des Plantes."

Why did Scott persist in mixing up all his most important concerns with such people as I have been describing? I asked himself that question too unceremoniously at a long subsequent period, and in due time the reader shall see the answer I received. But it left the main question, to my apprehension, as much in the dark as ever. I shall return to the sad subject hereafter more seriously; but in the meantime let it suffice to say, that he was the most patient, long-suffering, affectionate, and charitable of mankind; that in the case of both the Ballantynes he could count, after all, on a sincerely, nay, a passionately devoted attachment to his person; that, with the greatest of human beings, use is in all but unconquerable power; and that he who so loftily tossed aside the seemingly most dangerous assaults of flattery, the blandishment of dames, the condescension of princes, the enthusiasm of crowds—had still his weak point upon which two or three humble besiegers, and one unwearied, though most frivolous underminer, well knew how to direct their approaches. It was a favourite saw of his own, that the wisest of our race often reserve the average stock of folly to be all expended upon some one flagrant absurdity.

CHAPTER XLII.

PUBLICATION OF THE HEART OF MID-LOTHIAN—ITS RECEPTION IN EDINBURGH AND IN ENGLAND—ABBOTSFORD IN OCTOBER—MELROSE ABBEY—DRYBURGH, ETC.—LION-HUNTERS FROM AMERICA—TRAGEDY OF THE CHEROKEE LOVERS—SCOTT'S DINNER TO THE SELKIRKSHIRE YEOMEN.—1818.

Hoping to be forgiven for a long digression, the biographer willingly returns to the thread of Scott's story. The Heart of Mid-Lothian appeared, as has been mentioned, before the close of June, 1818; and among the letters which he received soon afterwards from the friends by this time in the secret, there is one which (though I do not venture to name the writer) I am tempted to take the liberty of quoting:

"..... Now for it .... I can speak to the purpose, as I have not only read it myself, but am in a house where every body is tearing it out of each other's hands, and talking of nothing else. So much for its success—the more flattering, because it overcomes a prejudice. People were beginning to say the author would wear himself out; it was going on too long in the same key, and no striking notes could possibly be produced. On the contrary, I think the interest is stronger here than in any of the former ones—(always excepting my first-love, Waverley)—and one may congratulate you upon having effected what many have tried to do, and nobody yet succeeded in, making the perfectly good character the most interesting. Of late days, especially since it has been the fashion to write moral and even religious novels, one might almost say of some of the wise good heroines, what a lively girl once said to ***** of her well-meaning aunt—'Upon my word she is enough to make any body wicked.' And though beauty and talents are heaped on the right side, the writer, in spite of himself, is sure to put agreeableness on the wrong; the person, from whose errors he means you should take warning, runs away with your secret partiality in the mean time. Had this very story been conducted by a common hand, Effie would have attracted all our concern and sympathy, Jeanie only cold approbation. Whereas Jeanie, without youth, beauty, genius, warm passions, or any other novel-perfection, is here our object from beginning to end. This is 'enlisting the affections in the cause of virtue' ten times more than ever Richardson did; for whose male and female pedants, all-excelling as they are, I never could care half so much as I found myself inclined to do for Jeanie before I finished the first volume.

"You know I tell you my opinion just as I should do to a third person, and I trust the freedom is not unwelcome. I was a little tired of your Edinburgh lawyers in the introduction; English people in general will be more so, as well as impatient of the passages alluding to Scotch law throughout. Mr. Saddletree will not entertain them. The latter part of the fourth volume unavoidably flags to a certain degree; after Jeanie is happily settled at Roseneath, we have no more to wish for. But the chief fault I have to find relates to the reappearance and shocking fate of the boy. I hear on all sides—'Oh, I do not like that!'—I cannot say what I would have had instead; but I do not like it either; it is a lame, huddled conclusion. I know you so well in it, by the by!—you grow tired yourself, want to get rid of the story, and hardly care how Sir George Staunton finishes his career very fitly: he ought not to die in his bed, and for Jeanie's sake one would not have him hanged. It is unnatural, though, that he should ever have gone within twenty miles of the tolbooth, or shown his face in the streets of Edinburgh, or dined at a public meeting, if the Lord Commissioner had been his brother. Here ends my *per contra* account. The opposite page would make my letter too long, if I entered equally into particulars. Carlisle and Corby-castle's in Waverley did not affect me more deeply than the prison and trial scenes. The end of poor Madge Wildfire is also most pathetic. The meeting at Muschat's cairn tremendous. Dumbiedykes and Rory Bean are delightful. And I shall own that my prejudices were secretly gratified by the light in which you place John of Argyle, whom Mr. Coxe so ran down to please Lord Orford. You have drawn him to the very life. I heard so much of him in my youth, so many anecdotes, so often 'as the Duke of Argyle used to say'—that I really believe I am almost as good a judge as if I had seen and lived with him. The late Lady ***** told me, that when she married, he was still remarkably

handsome; with manners more graceful and engaging than she ever saw in any one else; the most agreeable person in conversation, the best teller of a story. When fifty-seven thus captives eighteen, the natural powers of pleasing must be extraordinary. You have likewise coloured Queen Caroline exactly right—but I was bred up in another creed about Lady Suffolk, of whom, as a very old deaf woman, I have some faint recollection. Lady ····· knew her intimately, and never would allow she had been the King's mistress, though she owned it was currently believed. She said he had just enough liking for her to make the Queen very civil to her, and very jealous and spiteful; the rest remained always uncertain at most, like a similar scandal in our days, where I, for one, imagine love of seeming influence on one side, and love of lounging, of an easy house and a good dinner, on the other, to be all the criminal passions concerned. However, I confess, Lady ····· had that in herself which made her not ready to think the worst of her fellow-women.

"Did you ever hear the history of John Duke of Argyle's marriage, and constant attachment, before and after, to a woman not handsomer or much more elegant than Jeanie Deans, though very unlike her in understanding? I can give it you, if you wish it, for it is at my finger's ends. Now I am ancient myself, I should be a great treasure of anecdote to any body who had the same humour,—but I meet with few who have. They read vulgar tales in books, Wraxal, and so forth, what the footmen and maids only gave credit to at the moment, but they desire no farther information. I dare swear many of your readers never heard of the Duke of Argyle before. 'Pray, who was Sir Robert Walpole,' they ask me, 'and when did he live?'—or perhaps—'Was not the great Lord Chatham in Queen Anne's days?'

"We have, to help us, an exemplification on two legs in our country apothecary, whom you have painted over and over without the honour of knowing him; an old, dry, arguing, prosing, obstinate Scotchman, very shrewd, rather sarcastic, a sturdy Whig and Presbyterian, *tirant un peu sur le democrat*. Your books are birdlime to him, however; he hovers about the house to obtain a volume when others have done with it. I long to ask his whether douce Davie was any way *sib* to him. He acknowledges he would not *now* go to Muschat's Cairn at night for any money—he had such a horror of it 'sixty years ago' when a laddie. But I am come to the end of my fourth page, and will not tire you with any more scribbling.". . . . . .

"P. S.—If I had known nothing, and the whole world had told me the contrary, I should have found you out in that one parenthesis,—'for the man was mortal, and had been a schoolmaster.'"

This letter was addressed from a great country house in the south; and may, I presume, be accepted as a fair index of the instantaneous English popularity of Jeanie Deans. From the choice of localities, and the splendid blazoning of tragical circumstances that had left the strongest impression on the memory and imagination of every inhabitant, the reception of this tale in Edinburgh was a scene of all-engrossing enthusiasm, such as I never witnessed there on the appearance of any other literary novelty. But the admiration and delight were the same all over Scotland. Never before had he seized such really noble features of the national character as were canonized in the person of his homely heroine: no art had ever devised a happier running contrast than that of her and her sister—or interwoven a portaiture of lowly manners and simple virtues, with more graceful delineations of polished life, or with bolder shadows of terror, guilt, crime, remorse, madness, and all the agony of the passions.

In the introduction and notes to the Heart of Mid-Lothian, drawn up in 1830, we are presented with details concerning the suggestion of the main plot, and the chief historical incidents made use of, to which I can add nothing of any moment.

The 12th of July restored the author as usual to the supervision of his trees and carpenters; but he had already told the Ballantynes, that the story which he had found it impossible to include in the recent series of Jedediah should be forthwith taken up as the opening one of a third; and instructed John to embrace the first favourable opportunity of offering Constable the publication of this, on the footing of 10,000 copies again forming the first edition; but now at length without any more stipulations connected with the unfortunate "old stock" of the Hanover Street Company.

Before he settled himself to his work, however, he made a little tour of the favourite description with his wife and children—halting for a few days at Drumlanrig, thence crossing the Border to Carlisle and Rokeby, and returning by way of Alnwick. On the 17th August, he writes thus to John Ballantyne from Drumlanrig:—"This is heavenly weather, and I am making the most of it, as I shall have a laborious autumn before me. I may say of my head and fingers as the farmer of his mare, when he indulged her with an extra feed—

'Ye ken that Maggie winna sleep
For that or Simmer.'

We have taken our own horses with us, and I have my poney, and ride when I find it convenient."

The following seems to have been among the first letters he wrote after his return.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M. P. Rokeby.

"Abbotsford, 10th Sept. 1818.

"My dear Morritt,

"We have been cruising to and fro since we left your land of woods and streams. Lord Melville wished me to come and stay two days with him at Melville Castle, which has broken in upon my time a little, and interrupted my purpose of telling you as how we arrived safe at Abbotsford, without a drop of rain, thus completing a tour of three weeks in the same fine weather in which we commenced it—a thing which never fell to my lot before. Captain Ferguson is inducted into the office of Keeper of the Regalia, to the great joy, I think, of all Edinburgh. He has entered upon a farm (of eleven acres) in consequence of this advancement, for you know it is a general rule, that whenever a Scotsman gets his head *above water*, he immediately turns it *to land*. As he has already taken all the advice of all the *notables* in and about the good village of Darnick, we expect to see his farm look like a tailor's book of patterns, a snip of every several opinion which he has received occupying its appropriate corner. He is truly what the French call *un drole de corps*.

"I wish you would allow your coachman to look out for me among your neighbours a couple of young colts (rising three would be the best age) that would match for a carriage some two years hence. I have plenty of grass for them in the mean while, and should never know the expense of their keep at Abbotsford. He seemed to think he could pick them up at from £25 to £30, which would make an immense saving hereafter. Peter Matheson and he had arranged some sort of plan of this kind. For a pair of very ordinary carriage-horses in Edinburgh they ask £140 or more; so it is worth while to be a little provident. Even then you only get one good horse, the other being usually a brute. Pray you excuse all this palaver—

'These little things are great to little men.'

Our harvest is almost all in, but as farmers always grumble about something, they are now growling about the lightness of the crop. All the young part of our household are wrapt up in uncertainty concerning the Queen's illness—for—if her Majesty parts cable, there will be no Forest Ball, and that is a terrible prospect. On Wednesday (when no post arrives from London) Lord Melville chanced to receive a letter with a black seal by express, and as it was of course argued to contain the expected intelligence of poor Charlotte, it sold a good many ells of black cloth and stuffs before it was ascertained to contain no such information. Surely this came within the line of high treason, being an imagining of the Queen's death. Ever yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—Once more *anent* the colts. I am indifferent about colour; but, *caeteris paribus*, would prefer black or brown to bright bay or gray. I mention two off—as the age at which they can be best judged of by the buyer."

Of the same date I find written in pencil, on what must have been the envelope of some sheriff's-process, this note, addressed to Mr. Charles Erskine, the sheriff-substitute of Selkirkshire.—

"September 10, 1818.

"Dear Charles,

"I have read these papers with all attention this morning—but think you will agree with me that there must be an Eke to the Condescendence. Order the Eke against next day. Tom leaves with this packet a blackcock, and (more's the pity) a gray hen. Yours,

W. S."

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And again he thus writes by post to James Ballantyne:—

"Abbotsford, September 10, 1818.

"Dear James,

"I am quite satisfied with what has been done as to the London bills. I am glad the presses move. I have been interrupted sadly since my return by tourist gazers—this day a confounded pair of Cambridge boys have robbed me of two good hours, and you of a sheet of copy—though whether a good sheet or no, deponent saith not. The story is a dismal one, and I doubt sometimes whether it will bear working out to much length after all. Query, if I shall make it so effective in two volumes as my mother does in her quarter of an hour's crack by the fireside. But *nil desperandum*. You shall have a bunch to-morrow or next day—and when the proofs come in, my pen must and shall step out. By the by, I want a supply of pens—and ditto of ink. Adieu for the present, for I must go over to Toftfield, to give orders *anent* the dam and the footpath, and see *item* as to what should be done *anent* steps at the Rhymer's Waterfall, which I think may be made to turn out a decent bit of a linn, as would set True Thomas his worth and dignity. Ever yours,

W. S."

It must, I think, be allowed that these careless scraps, when combined, give a curious picture of the man who was brooding over the first chapters of the Bride of Lammermoor. One of his visitors of that month was Mr. R. Cadell, who was of course in all the secrets of the house of Constable; and observing how his host was harassed with lion-hunters, and what a number of hours he spent daily in the company of his work-people, he expressed, during one of their walks, his wonder that Scott should ever be able to write books at all while in the country. "I know," he said, "that you contrive to get a few hours in your own room, and that may do for the mere pen-work; but when is it that you think?" "O," said Scott, "I lie *simmering* over things for an hour or so before I get up—and there's the time I am dressing to overhaul my half-sleeping half-waking *project de chapitre*—and when I get the paper before me, it commonly runs off pretty easily. Besides, I often take a dose in the plantations, and, while Tom marks out a dyke or a drain as I have directed, one's fancy may be running its ain riggs in some other world."

It was in the month following that I first saw Abbotsford. He invited my friend John Wilson (now Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh) and myself to visit him for a day or two on our return from an excursion to Mr. Wilson's beautiful villa on the Lake of Windermere, but named the particular day (October 8th) on which it would be most convenient for him to receive us; and we discovered on our arrival, that he had fixed it from a good-natured motive. We found him walking in one of his plantations, at no great distance from the house, with five or six young people, and his friends Lord Melville and Captain Ferguson. Having presented us to the First Lord of the Admiralty, he fell back a little and said, "I am glad you came to-day, for I thought it might be of use to you both, some time or other, to be known to my old schoolfellow here, who is, and I hope will long continue to be, the great giver of good things in the Parliament House. I trust you have had enough of certain pranks with your friend Ebony, and if so, Lord Melville will have too much sense to remember them."* We then walked round the plantation, as yet in a very young state, and came back to the house by a formidable work which he was constructing for the defence of his *haugh* against the wintry violences of the Tweed; and he discoursed for some time with keen interest upon the comparative merits of different methods of embankment, but stopped now and then to give us the advantage of any point of view in which his new building on the eminence above pleased his eye. It had a fantastic appearance—being but a fragment of the existing edifice—and not at all harmonizing in its outline with "Mother Retford's" original tenement to the eastward. Scott, however, expatiated *con amore* on the rapidity with which, being chiefly of darkish granite, it was assuming a "time-honoured" aspect. Ferguson, with a grave and respectful look, observed, "yes, it really has much the air of some old fastness hard by the river Jordan." This allusion to the Chaldee MS., already quoted, in the manufacture of which Ferguson fancied Wilson and myself to have had a share, gave rise to a burst of laughter among Scott's merry young folks and their companions, while he himself drew in his nether lip, and rebuked the Captain with "Toots, Adam! toots, Adam!" He then returned to his embankment, and described how a former one had been entirely swept away in one night's flood. But the Captain was ready with another verse of the Chaldee MS., and groaned out, by way of echo—"Verily my fine gold hath perished!" Whereupon the "Great Magician" elevated his huge oaken staff as if to lay it on the waggish soldier's back—but flourished it gaily over his own head, and laughed louder than the youngest of the company. As we walked and talked, the Pepper and Mustard terriers kept snuffing about among the bushes and heather near us, and started every five minutes a hare, which scudded away before them and the ponderous staghound Maida—the Sheriff and all his tail hollowing and cheering in perfect confidence that the dogs could do no more harm to poor puss than the venerable tom-cat, Hinse of Hinsfeldt, who pursued the vain chase with the rest.

At length we drew near *Peterhouse*, and found sober Peter himself and his brother-in-law, the facetious factotum Tom Purdie, superintending, pipe in mouth, three or four sturdy labourers busy in laying down the turf for a bowling-green. "I have planted hollies all round it, you see," said Scott, "and laid out an arbour on the right-hand side for the laird; and here I mean to have a game at bowls after dinner every day in fine weather—for I take that to have been among the indispensables of our old *vis de chateau*." But I must not forget the reason he gave me some time afterwards for having fixed on that spot for his bowling-green. "In truth," he then said, "I wished to have a smooth walk and a canny seat for myself within ear-shot of Peter's evening psalm." The coachman was a devout Presbyterian, and many a time have I in after-years accompanied Scott on his evening stroll, when the principal object was to enjoy, from the bowling-green, the unfailing melody of this good man's family worship—and heard him repeat, as Peter's manly voice led the humble choir within, that beautiful stanza of Burns's Saturday Night:—

> "They chaunt their artless notes in simple guise;
> They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim," &c.

It was near the dinner-hour before we reached the house, and presently I saw assembled a larger company than I should have fancied to be at all compatible with the existing accommodations of the place; but it turned out that Captain Ferguson, and the friends whom I have not as yet mentioned, were to find quarters elsewhere for the night. His younger brother, Captain John Ferguson of the Royal Navy, (a favourite lieutenant of Lord Nelson's,) had come over from Huntly Burn; there were present also, Mr. Scott of Gala, whose residence is within an easy distance; Sir Henry Hay MacDougal of Mackerstone, an old baronet, with gay, lively, and highly polished manners, related in the same degree to both Gala and the Sheriff; Sir Alexander Don, the member for Roxburghshire, whose elegant social qualities have been alluded to in the preceding chapter; and Dr. Scott of Darnlee, a modest and intelligent gentleman, who having realized a fortune in the East India Company's medical service, had settled within two or three miles of Abbotsford, and though no longer practising his profession, had kindly employed all the resources of his skill in the endeavour to counteract his neighbour's recent liability to attacks of cramp.—Our host and one or two others appeared, as was in those days a common

* *Ebony* was Mr. Blackwood's own usual designation in the *jeux d'esprit* of his young Magazine, in many of which the persons thus addressed by Scott were conjoint culprits. They both were then, as may be inferred, sweeping the boards of the Parliament House as "briefless barristers."

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fusion with country gentlemen, in the lieutenancy uniform of their county. How fourteen or fifteen people contrived to be seated in the then dining-room of Abbotsford I know not—for it seemed quite full enough when it contained only eight or ten; but so it was—nor, as Sir Harry Macdougal's fat valet, warned by former experience, did not join the train of attendants, was there any perceptible difficulty in the detail of the arrangements. Every thing about the dinner was, as the phrase runs, in excellent style; and in particular, the *potage à la Meg Merrilees*, announced as an attempt to imitate a device of the Duke of Buccleuch's celebrated cook—by name Monsieur Florence—seemed, to those at least who were better acquainted with the Kaim of Dernclench than with the *cuisine* of Bowhill,* a very laudable specimen of the art. The champagne circulated nimbly—and I never was present at a gayer dinner. It had advanced a little beyond the soup when it received an accompaniment which would not, perhaps, have improved the satisfaction of Southern guests, had any such been present. A tall and stalwart bagpiper, in complete Highland costume, appeared pacing to and fro on the green before the house, and the window being open, it seemed as if he might as well have been straining his lungs within the parlour. At a pause of his strenuous performance, Scott took occasion to explain that *John of Skye* was a recent acquisition to the rising hamlet of Abbotstown; that the man was a capital hedger and ditcher, and only figured with the pipe and phi-labeg on high occasions in the after-part of the day; "but indeed," he added, laughing, "I fear John will soon be discovering that the hook and mattock are unfavourable to his chanter hand." When the cloth was drawn, and the never-failing salver of *quaighs* introduced, John of Skye, upon some well-known signal, entered the room, but *en militaire*, without removing his bonnet, and taking his station behind the landlord, received from his hand the largest of the Celtic bickers brimful of Glenlivet. The man saluted the company in his own dialect, tipped off the contents (probably a quarter of an English pint of raw aquavitæ) at a gulp, wheeled about as solemnly as if the whole ceremony had been a movement on parade, and forthwith recommenced his pibrochs and gatherings, which continued until long after the ladies had left the table, and the autumnal moon was streaming in upon us so brightly as to dim the candles.

I had never before seen Scott in such buoyant spirits as he showed this evening—and I never saw him in higher afterwards; and no wonder, for this was the first time that he, Lord Melville, and Adam Ferguson, daily companions at the High-school of Edinburgh, and partners in many joyous scenes of the early volunteer period, had met since the commencement of what I may call the serious part of any of their lives. The great poet and novelist was receiving them under his own roof, when his fame was at its *acmé*, and his fortune seemed culminating to about a corresponding height—and the generous exuberance of his hilarity might have overflowed without moving the spleen of a Cynic. Old stories of *the Yards* and *the Crosscauseway* were relieved by sketches of real warfare, such as none but Ferguson (or Charles Matthews, had he been a soldier) could ever have given; and they toasted the memory of *Greenbreeks* and the health of *the Beau* with equal devotion.

When we rose from table, Scott proposed that we should all ascend his western turret, to enjoy a moonlight view of the valley. The younger part of his company were too happy to do so: some of the seniors, who had tried the thing before, found pretexts for hanging back. The stairs were dark, narrow, and steep; but the Sheriff piloted the way, and at length there were as many on the top as it could well afford footing for. Nothing could be more lovely than the panorama; all the harsher and more naked features being lost in the delicious moonlight; the Tweed and the Gala winding and sparkling beneath our feet; and the distant ruins of Melrose appearing, as if carved of alabaster, under the black mass of the Eildons. The poet, leaning on his battlement, seemed to hang over the beautiful vision as if he had never seen it before. "If I live," he exclaimed, "I will build me a higher tower, with a more spacious platform, and a staircase better fitted for an old fellow's scrambling." The piper was heard returning his instrument below, and he called to him for *Lochaber no more*. John of Skye obeyed, and as the music rose, softened by the distance, Scott repeated in a low key the melancholy words of the song of exile.

On descending from the tower, the whole company were assembled in the new dining-room, which was still under the hands of the carpenters, but had been brilliantly illuminated for the occasion. Mr. Bruce took his station, and old and young danced reels to his melodious accompaniment until they were weary, while Scott and the Dominie looked on with glad-some faces, and beat time now and then, the one with his staff, the other with his wooden leg. A tray with mulled wine and whisky punch was then introduced, and Lord Melville proposed a bumper, with all the honours, to the *Roof-tree*. Captain Ferguson having sung *Johnnie Cope*, called on the young ladies for *Kenmure's on and awa'*; and our host then insisted that the whole party should join, standing in a circle hand-in-hand *more majorum*, in the hearty chorus of

> "Weel may we a' be,
> Ill may we never see,
> God bless the king and the gude companie!"

—which being duly performed, all dispersed. Such was *the handsel*, for Scott protested against its being considered as *the house-heating*, of the new Abbotsford.

When I began this chapter, I thought it would be a short one, but it is surprising how, when one digs into his memory, the smallest details of a scene that was interesting at the time, shall by degrees come to light again. I now recall, as if I had seen and heard them yesterday, the looks and words of eighteen years ago. Awaking between six and seven next morning, I heard Scott's voice close to me, and looking out of the little latticed window of the then detached cottage called *the chapel*, saw him and Tom Purdie pacing together on the green before the door, in earnest deliberation over what seemed to be a rude daub of a drawing, and every time they approached my end of their parade I was sure to catch the words *Blue Bank*. It turned out in the course of the day, that a field of clay near Toftfield went by this name, and that the draining of it was one of the chief operations then in hand. My friend Wilson, mean while, who lodged also in the chapel, tapped at my door, and asked me to rise and take a walk with him by the river, for he had some angling project in his head. He went out and joined in the consultation about the Blue Bank, while I was dressing; presently Scott hailed me at the casement, and said he had observed a volume of a new edition of Goethe on my table—would I lend it him for a little? He carried off the volume accordingly, and retreated with it to his den. It contained the Faust, and, I believe, in a more complete shape than he had before seen that masterpiece of his old favourite. When we met at breakfast a couple of hours after, he was full of the poem—dwelt with enthusiasm on the airy beauty of its lyrics, the terrible pathos of the scene before the *Mater Dolorosa*, and the deep skill shown in the various subtle shadings of character between Mephistophiles and poor Margaret. He remarked, however, of the Introduction, (which I suspect was new to him,) that blood would out—that, consummate artist as he was, Goethe was a German, and that nobody but a German would even have provoked a comparison with the book of Job, "the grandest poem that ever was written." He added, that he suspected the end of the story had been left in

* I understand that this new celebrated soup was *extemporized* by M. Florence on Scott's first visit to Bowhill after the publication of Guy Mannering. Florence had *served*—and Scott having on some sporting party made his personal acquaintance, he used often afterwards to gratify the Poet's military propensities by sending up magnificent representations in pastry of citadels taken by the Emperor, &c.

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obscure, from despair to match the closing scene of our own Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Mr. Wilson mentioned a report that Coleridge was engaged on a translation of the Faust. "I hope it is so," said Scott; "Coleridge made Schiller's Wallenstein far finer than he found it, and so he will do by this. No man has all the resources of poetry in such profusion, but he cannot manage them so as to bring out any thing of his own on a large scale at all worthy of his genius. He is like a lump of coal rich with gas, which lies expending itself in puffs and gleams, unless some shrewd body will clap it into a cast-iron box, and compel the compressed element to do itself justice. His fancy and diction would have long ago placed him above all his contemporaries, had they been under the direction of a sound judgment and a steady will."* I don't now expect a great original poem from Coleridge, but he might easily make a sort of fame for himself as a poetical translator, that would be a thing completely unique and *sui generis*."

While this criticism proceeded, Scott was cutting away at his brown loaf and a plate of kippered salmon in a style which strongly reminded me of Dandie Dinmont's luncheon at Mump's Hall; nor was his German topic at all the predominant one. On the contrary, the sentences which have dwelt on my memory dropt from him now and then, in the pauses, as it were, of his main talk; for though he could not help recurring, ever and anon, to the subject, it would have been quite out of his way to make any literary matter the chief theme of his conversation, when there was a single person present who was not likely to feel much interested in its discussion.—How often have I heard him quote on such occasions Mr. Vellum's advice to the butler in Addison's excellent play of *the Drummer*—"Your conjuror, John, is indeed a twofold personage—but he *eats and drinks like other people!*"

I may, however, take this opportunity of observing, that nothing could have been more absurdly unfounded than the statement which I have seen repeated in various sketches of his Life and Manners, that he habitually abstained from conversation on literary topics. In point of fact, there were no topics on which he talked more openly or more earnestly; but he, when in society, lived and talked for the persons with whom he found himself surrounded, and if he did not always choose to enlarge upon the subjects which his companions for the time suggested, it was simply because he thought or fancied that these had selected, out of deference or flattery, subjects about which they really cared little more than they knew. I have already repeated, over and again, my conviction that Scott considered literature *per se*, as a thing of far inferior importance to the high concerns of political or practical life; but it would be too ridiculous to question that literature nevertheless engrossed, at all times and seasons, the greater part of his own interest and reflection: nor can it be doubted, that his general preference of the society of men engaged in the active business of the world, rather than that of so called literary people, was grounded substantially on his feeling that literature, worthy of the name, was more likely to be fed and nourished by the converse of the former than by that of the latter class.

Before breakfast was over the post-bag arrived, and its contents were so numerous, that Lord Melville asked Scott what election was on hand—not doubting that there must be some very particular reason for such a shoal of letters. He answered that it was much the same most days, and added, "though no one has kinder friends in the franking line, and though Freeling and Croker especially are always ready to stretch the point of privilege in my favour, I am nevertheless, a fair contributor to the revenue, for I think my bill for letters seldom comes under £150 a-year; and as to coach-parcels, they are a perfect ruination." He then told with high merriment a disaster that had lately befallen him. "One morning last spring," he said, "I opened a huge lump of a despatch, without looking how it was addressed, never doubting that it had travelled under some omnipotent frank like the First Lord of the Admiralty's, when, lo and behold, the contents proved to be a MS. play, by a young lady of New York, who kindly requested me to read and correct it, equip it with prologue and epilogue, procure for it a favourable reception from the manager of Drury Lane, and make Murray or Constable bleed handsomely for the copyright; and on inspecting the cover I found that I had been charged five pounds odd for the postage. This was bad enough—but there was no help, so I groaned and submitted. A fortnight or so after another packet, of not less formidable bulk, arrived, and I was absent enough to break its seal too without examination. Conceive my horror when out jumped the same identical tragedy of *The Cherokee Lovers*, with a second epistle from the authoress, stating that, as the winds had been boisterous, she feared the vessel intrusted with her former communication might have foundered, and therefore judged it prudent to forward a duplicate."

Scott said he must retire to answer his letters, but that the sociable and the ponies would be at the door by one o'clock, when he proposed to show Melrose and Dryburgh to Lady Melville and any of the rest of the party that chose to accompany them; adding, that his son Walter would lead any body who preferred a gun to the likeliest place for a black-cock, and that Charlie Purdie (Tom's brother) would attend upon Mr. Wilson and whoever else chose to try a cast of the salmon-rod. He withdrew when all this was arranged, and appeared at the time appointed, with perhaps a dozen letters sealed for the post, and a coach-parcel addressed to James Ballantyne, which he dropt at the turnpike-gate as we drove to Melrose. Seeing it picked up by a dirty urchin, and carried in a hedge pothouse, where half-a-dozen nondescript wayfarers were smoking and tippling, I could not but wonder that it had not been the fate of some one of those innumerable packets to fall into unscrupulous hands, and betray the grand secret. That very morning we had seen two post-chaises drawn up at his gate, and the enthusiastic travellers, seemingly decent tradesmen and their families, who must have been packed in a manner worthy of Mrs. Gilpin, lounging about to catch a glimpse of him at his going forth. But it was impossible in those days to pass between Melrose and Abbotsford without encountering some odd figure, armed with a sketch-book, evidently bent on a peep at the Great Unknown; and it must be allowed that many of these pedestrians looked as if they might have thought it very excusable to make prize, by hook or by crook, of a MS. chapter of the Tales of my Landlord.

Scott showed us the ruins of Melrose in detail; and as we proceeded to Dryburgh, descanted learnedly and sagaciously on the good effects which must have attended the erection of so many great monastic establishments in a district so peculiarly exposed to the inroads of the English in the days of the Border wars. "They were now and then violated," he said, "as their aspect to this hour bears witness; but for once that they suffered, any lay property similarly situated must have been *harried* a dozen times. The bold Dacres, Liddells, and Howards, that could get easy absolution at York or Durham for any ordinary breach of a truce with the Scots, would have had *to dree a heary dole* had they confessed plundering from the fat brothers, of the same order perhaps, whose lines had fallen to them

* In the Introduction to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 1830, Sir Walter says, "Were I ever to take the unbecoming freedom of censuring a man of Mr. Coleridge's extraordinary talents, it would be on account of the caprice and indolence with which he has thrown from him, as in mere wantonness, those unfinished scraps of poetry, which, like the Torso of antiquity, defy the skill of his poetical brethren to complete them. The charming fragments which the author abandons to their fate, are surely too valuable to be treated like the proofs of careless engravers, the sweepings of whose studios often make the fortune of some painstaking collector." And in a note to *The Abbot*, alluding to Coleridge's beautiful and tantalizing fragment of Christabel, he adds, "Has not our own imaginative poet cause to fear that future ages will desire to summon him from his place of rest, as Milton longed

'To call up him who left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold.'"

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on the wrong side of the Cheviot." He enlarged soo on the heavy penalty which the Crown of Scotland had paid for its rash acquiescence in the wholesale robbery of the church at the Reformation. "The proportion of the soil in the hands of the clergy had," he said, "been very great—too great to be continued. If we may judge by their share in the public burdens, they must have had nearly a third of the land in their possession. But this vast wealth was now distributed among a turbulent nobility, too powerful before; and the Stuarts soon found that in the bishops and lord abbots they had lost the only means of balancing their factions, so as to turn the scale in favour of law and order; and by and by the haughty barons themselves, who had scrambled for the worldly spoil of the church, found that the spiritual influence had been concentrated in hands as haughty as their own, and connected with no feelings likely to buttress their order any more than the Crown—a new and sterner monkery, under a different name, and essentially plebeian. Presently the Scotch were on the verge of republicanism, in state as well as kirk, and, I have sometimes thought, it was only the accession of King Jamie to the throne of England that could have given monarchy a chance of prolonging its existence here." One of his friends asked what he supposed might have been the annual revenue of the abbey of Melrose in its best day. He answered that he suspected, if all the sources of their income were now in clever hands, the produce could hardly be under £100,000 a-year; and added, "making every allowance for modern improvements, there can be no question that the sixty brothers of Melrose divided a princely rental. The superiors were often men of very high birth, and the great majority of the rest were younger brothers of gentleman's families. I fancy they may have been, on the whole, pretty near akin to your Fellows of All Souls—who, according to their statute, must be *bene nati, bene vestiti, et mediocriter docti*. They had a good house in Edinburgh, where, no doubt, my lord abbot and his chaplains maintained a hospitable table during the sittings of Parliament." Some one regretted that we had no lively picture of the enormous revolution in manners that must have followed the downfall of the ancient Church in Scotland. He observed that there were, he fancied, materials enough for constructing such a one, but that they were mostly scattered in records —"of which," said he, "who knows any thing to the purpose except Tom Thomson and John Riddell? It is common to laugh at such researches, but they pay the good brains that meddle with them; and had Thomson been as diligent in setting down his discoveries as he has been in making them, he might, long before this time of day, have placed himself on a level with Ducange or Camden. The change in the country-side," he continued, "must indeed have been terrific; but it does not seem to have been felt very severely by a certain Boniface of St. Andrews, for when somebody asked him, on the subsidence of the storm, what he though of all that had occurred, 'Why,' answered mine host, 'it comes to this, that the moderautor sits in my meikle chair, where the dean sat before, and in place of calling for the third stoup of Bourdeaux, bids Jenny bring ben anither bowl of toddy.'"

At Dryburgh Scott pointed out to us the sepulchral aisle of his Haliburton ancestors, and said he hoped, in God's appointed time, to lay his bones among their dust. The spot was, even then, a sufficiently interesting and impressive one; but I shall not say more of it at present.

On returning to Abbotsford, we found Mrs. Scott and her daughters doing penance under the merciless curiosity of a couple of tourists who had arrived from Selkirk soon after we set out for Melrose. They were rich specimens—tall, lanky young men, both of them rigged out in new jackets and trowsers of the Macgregor tartan; the one, as they had revealed, being a lawyer, the other a Unitarian preacher, from New England. These gentlemen, when told on their arrival that Mr. Scott was not at home, had shown such signs of impatience, that the servant took it for granted they must have serious business, and asked if they would wish to speak a word with his lady. They grasped at this, and so conducted themselves in the interview, that Mrs. Scott never doubted they had brought letters of introduction to her husband, and invited them accordingly to partake of her luncheon. They had been walking about the house and grounds with her and her daughters ever since that time, and appeared at the porch, when the Sheriff and his party returned to dinner, as if they had been already fairly enrolled on his visiting list. For the moment he too was taken in—he fancied that his wife must have received and opened their credentials—and shook hands with them with courteous cordiality. But Mrs. Scott, with all her overflowing good-nature, was a sharp observer; and she, before a minute had elapsed, interrupted the ecstatic compliments of the strangers, by reminding them that her husband would be glad to have the letters of the friends who had been so good as to write by them. It then turned out that there were no letters to be produced;—and Scott, signifying that his hour for dinner approached, added, that as he supposed they meant to walk to Melrose, he could not trespass further on their time. The two lion-hunters seemed quite unprepared for this abrupt escape; but there was about Scott, in perfection, when he chose to exert it, the power of civil repulsion; he bowed the overwhelmed originals to his door, and on re-entering the parlour, found Mrs. Scott complaining very indignantly that they had gone so far as to pull out their note-book, and beg an exact account, not only of his age—but of her own. Scott already half relenting, laughed heartily at this misery. He observed, however, that, "if he were to take in all the world, he had better put up a sign-post at once—

> 'Porter, ale, and British spirits,
> Painted bright between twa trees;'

and that no traveller of respectability could ever be at a loss for such an introduction as would ensure his best hospitality." Still he was not quite pleased with what had happened—and as we were about to pass, half an hour afterwards, from the drawing-room to the dining-room, he said to his wife, "Hang the Yahoos, Charlotte—but we should have bid them stay dinner." "Devil a bit," quoth Captain John Ferguson, who had again come over from Huntly Burn, and had been latterly assisting the lady to amuse her Americans—"Devil a bit, my dear, they were quite in a mistake I could see. The one asked Madame whether she deigned to call her new house Tullyveolan or Tillytudlem—and the other, when Maida happened to lay his nose against the window, exclaimed *pro-di-gi-ous!* In short, they evidently meant all their humbug not for you, but for the culprit of Waverley, and the rest of that there rubbish." "Well, well, Skipper," was the reply,—"for a' that, the loons would hae been nane the waur o' their kail."

From this banter it may be inferred that the younger Ferguson had not as yet been told the Waverley secret—which to any of that house could never have been any mystery. Probably this, or some similar occasion soon afterwards, led to his formal initiation; for during the many subsequent years that the veil was kept on, I used to admire the tact with which, when in their topmost high-jinks humour, both "Captain John" and "The Auld Captain" eschewed any the most distant allusion to the affair.

And this reminds me that, at the period of which I am writing, none of Scott's own family, except of course his wife, had the advantage in that matter of the Skipper. Some of them too were apt, like him, so long as no regular confidence had been reposed in them, to avail themselves of the author's reserve for their own sport among friends. Thus one morning, just as Scott was opening the door of the parlour, the rest of the party being already seated at the breakfast table, the Dominie was in the act of helping himself to an egg, marked with a peculiar hieroglyphic by Mrs. Thomas Purdie, upon which Anne Scott, than a lively rattling girl of sixteen,

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lisped out, "That's a mysterious looking egg, Mr. Thomson—what if it should have been meant for *the Great Unknown?*" Ere the Dominie could reply, her father advanced to the foot of the table, and having seated himself and deposited his stick on the carpet beside him, with a sort of whispered whistle —"What's that Lady Anne's* saying," quoth he; "I thought it had been well known that the *kelavined egg* must be a soft one for *the Sherra?*" And so he took his egg, and while we all smiled in silence, poor Anne said gayly, in the midst of her blushes, "Upon my word, papa, I thought Mr. John Ballantyne might have been expected." This allusion to Johnny's glory in being considered as the accredited representative of Jedediah Cleishbotham, produced a laugh—at which the Sheriff frowned—and then laughed too.

I remember nothing particular about our second day's dinner, except that it was then I first met my dear and honoured friend William Laidlaw. The evening passed rather more quietly than the preceding one. Instead of the dance in the new dining-room, we had a succession of old ballads sung to the harp and guitar by the young ladies of the house; and Scott, when they seemed to have done enough, found some reason for taking down a volume of Crabbe, and read us one of his favourite tales—

"Grave Jonas Kindred, Sybil Kindred's sire,
Was six feet high, and looked six inches higher," &c.

But jollity revived in full vigour when the supper-tray was introduced; and to cap all merriment, Captain Ferguson dismissed us with the *Laird of Cockpen*. Lord and Lady Melville were to return to Melville Castle next morning, and Mr. Wilson and I happened to mention, that we were engaged to dine and sleep at the seat of my friend and relation, Mr. Pringle of Torwoodlee, on our way to Edinburgh. Scott immediately said that he would send word in the morning to the Laird, that he and Adam Ferguson meant to accompany us—such being the unceremonious style in which country neighbours in Scotland visit each other. Next day accordingly we all rode over together to Mr. Pringle's beautiful seat—the "*distant Torwoodlee*" of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, but distant not above five or six miles from Abbotsford—coursing hares as we proceeded, but inspecting the antiquities of the *Catrail* to the interruption of our sport. We had another joyous evening at Torwoodlee. Scott and Ferguson returned home at night, and the morning after, as Wilson and I mounted for Edinburgh, our kind old host, his sides still sore with laughter, remarked, that "the Sheriff and the Captain together were too much for any company."

There was much talk between the Sheriff and Mr. Pringle about the Selkirkshire Yeomanry Cavalry, of which the latter had been the original commandant. Young Walter Scott had been for a year or more Cornet in the corps, and his father was consulting Torwoodlee about an entertainment which he meant to give them on his son's approaching birthday. It was then that the new dining-room was to be first *heated* in good earnest; and Scott very kindly pressed Wilson and myself, at parting, to return for the occasion—which, however, we found it impossible to do. The reader must therefore be satisfied with what is said about it in one of the following letters:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M. P. Rokeby.

"Abbotsford, 5th Nov. 1818.

"My dear Morritt,

"Many thanks for your kind letter of 29th October. The matter of the colts being as you state, I shall let it lie over until next year, and than avail myself of your being in the neighbourhood to get a good pair of four-year-olds, since it would be unnecessary to buy them a year younger, and incur all the risks of disease and accident, unless they could have been had at a proportional under value.

"* * * * * * leaves us this morning after a visit of about a week. He improves on acquaintance, and especially seems so pleased with every thing, that it would be very hard to quarrel with him. Certainly, as the Frenchman said, *il a un grand talent pour le silence*. I take the opportunity of his servant going direct to Rokeby to charge him with this letter, and a plaid which my daughters entreat you to accept of as a token of their *warm* good wishes. Seriously, you will find it a good bosom friend in an easterly wind, a black frost, or when your country avocations lead you to face a *dry wap of snow*. I find it by far the lightest and most comfortable integument which I can use upon such occasions.

"We had a grand jollification here last week: the whole troop of Forest Yeomanry dining with us. I assure you the scene was gay and even grand, with glittering sabres, waving standards, and screaming bagpipes; and that it might not lack spectators of taste, who should arrive in the midst of the hurricane, but Lord and Lady Compton, whose presence gave a great zest to the whole affair. Every thing went off very well, and as cavalry have the great advantage over infantry that their *legs* never get drunk, they retired in decent disorder about ten o'clock. I was glad to see Lord and Lady Compton so very comfortable, and surrounded with so fine a family, the natural bond of mutual regard and affection. She has got very jolly, but otherwise has improved on her travels. I had a long chat with her, and was happy to find her quite contented and pleased with the lot she has drawn in life. It is a brilliant one in many respects to be sure; but still I have seen the story of the poor woman, who, after all rational subjects of distress had been successively remedied, tormented herself about the screaming of a neighbour's peacock—I say I have seen this so often realized in actual life, that I am more afraid of my friends making themselves uncomfortable, who have only imaginary evils to indulge, than I am for the peace of those who, battling magnanimously with real inconvenience and danger, find a remedy in the very force of the exertions to which their lot compels them.

"I sympathize with you for the *dole* which you are *dreeing* under the inflictions of your honest proser. Of all the boring machines ever devised, your regular and determined storyteller is the most peremptory and powerful in his operations. This is a rainy day, and my present infliction is an idle cousin, a great amateur of the pipes, who is performing incessantly in the next room for the benefit of a probationary minstrel, whose pipes scream *à la distance*, as the young hoarse cock-chicken imitates the gallant and triumphant screech of a veteran Sir Chanticleer. Yours affectionately,

W. Scott."

* When playing, in childhood, with the young ladies of the Buccleuch family, she had been overheard saying to her namesake Lady Anne Scott, "Well, I do wish I were Lady Anne too—it is so much prettier than Miss;" thenceforth she was commonly addressed in the family by the coveted title.

CHAPTER XLIII.

DECLINING HEALTH OF CHARLES DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—LETTER ON THE DEATH OF QUEEN CHARLOTTE—PROVINCIAL ANTIQUITIES, ETC.—EXTENSIVE SALE OF COPYRIGHTS TO CONSTABLE AND CO.—DEATH OF MR CHARLES CARPENTER—SCOTT RECEIVES AND ACCEPTS THE OFFER OF A BARONETCY—HE DECLINES TO RENEW HIS APPLICATION FOR A SEAT ON THE EXCHEQUER BENCH—LETTERS TO MORRITT—RICHARDSON—MISS BAILLIE—THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—LORD MONTAGU—CAPT. ADAM FERGUSON—ROB ROY PLAYED AT EDINBURGH—LETTER FROM JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM, TO MR. CHARLES MACKAY.—1818—1819.

I HAVE now to introduce a melancholy subject—one of the greatest afflictions that ever Scott encountered. The health of Charles Duke of Buccleuch was by this time beginning to give way, and Scott thought it his duty to intimate his very serious apprehensions to his noble friend's brother.

To the Right Hon. Lord Montagu, Ditton Park, Windsor.

"Edinburgh, 12th Nov., 1818.

"My dear Lord,

"I am about to write to you with feelings of the deepest anxiety. I have hesitated for two or three days whether I should communicate to your Lordship the sincere alarm which I entertain on account of the Duke's present state of health, but I have come to persuade myself, that it will be discharging a part of the duty which I owe to him to mention my own most distressing apprehensions. I was at the cattle-show on the 6th, and executed the delegated task of toastmaster, and so forth. I was told by * * * that the Duke is under the influence of the muriatic bath, which occasions a good deal of uneasiness when the me-

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disease is in possession of the system. The Duke observed the strictest diet, and remained only a short time at table, leaving me to do the honours, which I did with a sorrowful heart, endeavouring, however, to persuade myself that * * *'s account, and the natural depression of spirits incidental to his finding himself unable for the time to discharge the duty to his guests, which no man could do with so much grace and kindness, were sufficient to account for the alteration of his manner and appearance. I spent Monday with him quietly and alone, and I must say that all I saw and heard was calculated to give me the greatest pain. His strength is much less, his spirits lower, and his general appearance far more unfavourable, than when I left him at Drumlanrig a few weeks before. What * * *, and, indeed, what the Duke himself says of the medicine, may be true—but * * * is very sanguine, and like all the personal physicians attached to a person of such consequence, he is too much addicted to the *placebo*—at least I think so—too apt to fear to give offence by contradiction, or by telling that sort of truth which may controvert the wishes or habits of his patient. I feel I am communicating much pain to your Lordship, but I am sure that, excepting yourself, there is not a man in the world whose sorrow and apprehension could exceed mine in having such a task to discharge; for, as your Lordship well knows, the ties which bind me to your excellent brother are of a much stronger kind than usually connect persons so different in rank. But the alteration in voice and person, in features, and in spirits, all argue the decay of natural strength, and the increase of some internal disorder, which is gradually triumphing over the system. Much has been done in these cases by change of climate. I hinted this to the Duke at Drumlanrig, but I found his mind totally averse to it. But he made some inquiries at Harden, (just returned from Italy,) which seemed to imply that at least the idea of a winter in Italy or the south of France was not altogether out of his consideration. Your Lordship will consider whether he can or ought to be pressed upon this point. He is partial to Scotland, and feels the many high duties which bind him to it. But the air of this country, with its alternations of moisture and dry frost, although excellent for a healthy person, is very trying to a valetudinarian.

"I should not have thought of volunteering to communicate such unpleasant news, but that the family do not seem alarmed. I am not surprised at this, because, where the decay of health is very gradual, it is more easily traced by a friend who sees the patient from interval to interval, than by the affectionate eyes which are daily beholding him.

"Adieu, my dear Lord. God knows you will scarce read this letter with more pain than I feel in writing it. But it seems indispensable to me to communicate my sentiments of the Duke's present situation to his nearest relation and dearest friend. His life is invaluable to his country and to his family, and how dear it is to his friends can only be estimated by those who know the soundness of his understanding, the uprightness and truth of his judgment, and generosity and warmth of his feelings. I am always, my dear Lord, most truly yours,

"WALTER SCOTT."

Scott's letters of this and the two following months are very much occupied with the painful subject of the Duke of Buccleuch's health; but those addressed to his Grace himself are, in general, in a more jocose strain than usual. His friend's spirits were sinking, and he exerted himself in this way, in the hope of amusing the hours of languor at Bowhill. These letters are headed "Edinburgh Gazette Extraordinary," No. 1, No. 2, and so on; but they deal so much in laughable gossip about persons still living, that I find it difficult to make any extracts from them. The following paragraphs, however, from the Gazette of November the 20th, give a little information as to his own minor literary labours:—

"The article on Gourgaud's Narrative' *is* by a certain *Vieux Routier* of your Grace's acquaintance, who would willingly have some military hints from you for the continuation of the article, if at any time you should feel disposed to amuse yourself with looking at the General's most marvellous performance. His lies are certainly like the father who begot them. Do not think that at any time the little trumpery intelligence this place affords can interrupt my labours, while it amuses your Grace. I can scribble as fast in the Court of Sessions as any where else, without the least loss of time or hinderance of business. At the same time, I cannot help laughing at the miscellaneous trash I have been putting out of my hand, and the various motives which made me undertake the jobs. An article for the Edinburgh Review'—this for the love of Jeffrey, the editor—the first for ten years. Do., being the article Drama for the Encyclopedia—this for the sake of Mr. Constable, the publisher. Do., for the Blackwoodian Magazine—this for love of the cause I espoused. Do., for the Quarterly Review†—this for the love of myself, I believe, or, which is the same thing, for the love of £100, which I wanted for some odd purpose. As all these folks fight like dog and cat among themselves, my situation is much like the *Suave mare magno*, and so forth. . . . . .

"I hope your Grace will never think of answering the Gazettes at all, or even replying to letters of business, until you find it quite convenient and easy. The Gazette will continue to appear as materials occur. Indeed I expect, in the end of next week, to look in upon Bowhill, per the Selkirk mail, about eight at night, with the hope of spending a day there, which will be more comfortable than at Abbotsford, where I should feel like a mouse below a firlot. If I find the Court can spare so important a person for one day, I shall order my pony up to meet me at Bowhill, and, supposing me to come on Friday night, I can easily return by the Blucher on Monday, dining and sleeping at Huntly Burn on the Sunday. So I shall receive all necessary reply in person."

Good Queen Charlotte died on the 17th of this month; and in writing to Mr. Morritt on the 21st, Scott thus expresses what was, I believe, the universal feeling at the moment:—

"So we have lost the old Queen. She has only had the sad prerogative of being kept alive by nursing for some painful weeks, whereas perhaps a subject might have closed the scene earlier. I fear the effect of this event on public manners—were there but a weight at the back of the drawing-room door, which would slam it in the face of w——s, its fall ought to be lamented; and I believe that poor Charlotte really adopted her rules of etiquette upon a feeling of duty. If we should suppose the Princess of Wales to have been at the head of the matronage of the land for these last ten years, what would have been the difference on public opinion! No man of experience will ever expect the breath of a court to be favourable to correct morals—*sed si non caste caute tamen*. One half of the mischief is done by the publicity of the evil, which corrupts those which are near its influence, and fills with disgust and apprehension those to whom it does not directly extend. Honest old Evelyn's account of Charles the Second's court presses on one's recollection, and prepares the mind for anxious apprehensions."

Towards the end of the month, Scott received from his kind friend Lord Sidmouth, then Secretary of State for the Home Department, the formal announcement of the Prince Regent's desire (which had been privately communicated some months earlier through the Lord Chief Commissioner Adam) to confer on him the rank of Baronet. When Scott first heard of the Regent's gracious intention, he had signified considerable hesitation about the prudence of his accepting any such accession of rank; for it had not escaped his observation, that such airy sounds, however modestly people may be disposed to estimate them, are apt to entail in the upshot additional cost upon their way of living, and to affect accordingly the plastic fancies, feelings, and habits of their children. But Lord Sidmouth's letter happened to reach him a few days after he had heard of the sudden death of his wife's brother, Charles Carpenter, who had bequeathed the reversion of his fortune to his sister's family; and this circumstance disposed Scott to waive his scruples, chiefly with a view to the professional advantage of his eldest son, who had by this time fixed on the life of a soldier. As is usually the case, the estimate of Mr. Carpenter's property transmitted at the time to England proved to have been an exaggerated one; as nearly as my present information goes, the amount was doubled. But as to the only question of any interest, to wit, how Scott himself felt on all these matters at the moment, the following letter to one whom he had long leaned to as a brother, will be more satisfactory than any thing else it is in my power to quote:—

* Article on General Gourgaud's Memoirs, in Blackwood's Magazine for November, 1818.

† Article on Childe Harold, Canto IV. (Misc. Prose Works, Vol. xvii.)

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M. P., Rokeby.

" Edinburgh, 7th December, 1818.

" My dear Morritt,

" I know you are indifferent to nothing that concerns us, and therefore I take an early opportunity to acquaint you with the mixture of evil and good which has very lately befallen us. On Saturday last we had the advice of the death of my wife's brother Charles Carpenter, commercial resident at Salem, in the Madras Establishment. This event has given her great distress. She has not, that we know of, a single blood-relation left in the world, for her uncle, the Chevalier de la Volere, colonel of a Russian regiment, is believed to have been killed in the campaign of 1813.* My wife has been very unwell for two days, and is only now sitting up and mixing with us. She has that sympathy which we are all bound to pay, but feels she wants that personal interest in her sorrow which could only be grounded on a personal acquaintance with the deceased.

" Mr. Carpenter has, with great propriety, left his property in life-rent to his wife—the capital to my children. It seems to amount to about £40,000. Upwards of £30,000 is in the British funds, the rest, to an uncertain value, in India. I hope this prospect of independence will not make my children different from that which they have usually been—docile, dutiful, and affectionate. I trust it will not. At least, the first expression of their feelings was honourable, for it was a unanimous wish to give up all to their mother. This I explained to them was out of the question; but that if they should be in possession at any time of this property, they ought, among them, to settle an income of £400 or £500 on their mother for her life, to supply her with a fund at her own uncontrolled disposal, for any indulgence or useful purpose that might be required. Mrs. Scott will stand in no need of this, but it is a pity to let kind affections run to waste; and if they never have it in their power to pay such a debt, their willingness to have done so will be a pleasant reflection. I am Scotchman enough to hate the breaking up of family ties, and the too close adherence to personal property. For myself, this event makes me neither richer nor poorer *directly*, but indirectly it will permit me to do something for my poor brother Tom's family, besides pleasing myself in '*plantings*, and *policies*, and *biggings*,'† with a safe conscience.

" There is another thing I have to whisper to your faithful ear. Our fat friend being desirous to honour Literature in my unworthy person, has intimated to me, by his organ the Doctor, that, with consent ample and unanimous of all the potential voices of all his ministers, each more happy than another of course on so joyful an occasion, he proposes to dub me Baronet. It would be easy saying a parcel of fine things about my contempt of rank, and so forth; but although I would not have gone a step out of my way to have asked, or bought, or begged, or borrowed a distinction, which to me personally will rather be inconvenient than otherwise, yet, coming as it does directly from the source of feudal honours, and as an honour, I am really gratified with it;—especially as it is intimated, that it is his Royal Highness's pleasure to heat the oven for me expressly, without waiting till he has some new *batch* of Baronets ready in dough. In plain English, I am to be gazetted *per se*. My poor friend Carpenter's bequest to my family has taken away a certain degree of *impecuniosity*, a necessity of saving cheese-parings and candle-ends, which always looks inconsistent with any little pretension to rank. But as things now stand, Advance banners in the name of God and Saint Andrew. Remember, I anticipate the jest, 'I like not such grinning honours, as Sir Walter hath.'‡ After all, if one must speak for themselves, I have my quarters and emblazonments, free of all stain but Border theft and High Treason, which I hope are gentlemanlike crimes; and I hope Sir Walter Scott will not sound worse than Sir Humphry Davy, though my merits are as much under his, in point of utility, as can well be imagined. But a name is something, and mine is the better of the two. Set down this flourish to the account of national and provincial pride, for you must know we have more Messieurs de Sotenvilles in our Border counties than any where else in the Lowlands—I cannot say for the Highlands. The Duke of Buccleuch, greatly to my joy, resolves to France for a season. Adam Ferguson goes with him, to glad him by the way. Charlotte and the young folks join in kind compliments. Most truly yours.

WALTER SCOTT."

* I know nothing of the history or fate of this gentleman, except that he was an ardent royalist, and emigrated from France early in the Revolution.

† I believe this is a quotation from some old Scotch chronicler on the character of King James V.

‡ Sir Walter Blunt—1 King Henry IV., Act V. Scene 2.

§ See Moliere's " George Dandin."

A few additional circumstances are given in a letter of the same week to Joanna Baillie. To her, after mentioning the testamentary provisions of Mr. Carpenter, Scott says,—

" My dear Friend, I am going to tell you a little secret. I have changed my mind, or rather existing circumstances have led to my altering my opinions in a case of sublimary honour. I have now before me Lord Sidmouth's letter, containing the Prince's gracious and unsolicited intention to give me a Baronetcy. It will neither make me better nor worse than I feel myself—in fact, it will be an incumbrance rather than otherwise; but it may be of consequence to Walter, for the title is worth something in the army, although not in a learned profession. The Duke of Buccleuch and Scott of Hardon, who, as the heads of my clan and the sources of my gentry, are good judges of what I ought to do, have both given me their earnest opinion to accept of an honour directly derived from the source of honour, and neither begged nor bought, as is the usual fashion. Several of my ancestors bore the title in the 17th century; and were it of consequence, I have no reason to be ashamed of the decent and respectable persons who connect me with that period when they carried into the field, like Madoc—

' The crescent, at whose gleam the *Cambrian* off,
Cursing his perilous tenure, wound his horn'—

so that, as a gentleman, I may stand on as good a footing as other new creations. Respecting the reasons peculiar to myself which have made the Prince show his respect for general literature in my person, I cannot be a good judge, and your friendly zeal will make you a partial one. the purpose is fair, honourable, and creditable to the sovereign, even though it should number him among the monarchs who made blunders in literary patronage. You know Pope says—

' The Hero William, and the Martyr Charles,
One knighted Blackmore, and one pension'd Quarles.'

So let the intention sanctify the error, if there should be one, on this great occasion. The time of this grand affair is uncertain; it is coupled with an invitation to London, which it would be inconvenient to me to accept, unless it should happen that I am called to come up by the affairs of poor Carpenter's estate. Indeed, the prospects of my children form the principal reason for a change of arrangements upon this flattering offer, joined to my belief that, though I may still be a scribbler from inveterate habit, I shall hardly engage again in any work of consequence.

" We had a delightful visit from the Richardsons, only rather too short; he will give you a picture of Abbotsford, but not as it exists in my mind's eye, waving with all its future honours. The pinasters are thriving very well, and in a year or two more Joanna's Bower will be worthy of the name. At present it is like Sir Roger de Coverley's portrait, which hovered between its resemblance to the good knight and to a Saracen. Now the said bower has still such a resemblance to its original character of a gravel pit, that it is not fit to be shown to ' bairns and fools,' who, according to our old canny proverb, should never see half done work; but Nature, if she works slowly, works surely, and your laurels at Abbotsford will more flourish as fair as those you have won on Parnassus. I rather fear that a quantity of game which was shipped awhile ago at Inverness for the Doctor, never reached him: it is rather a transitory commodity in London; there were ptarmigan, grouse, and black game. I shall be grieved if they have miscarried. My health, thank God, continues as strong as at any period in my life: only I think I rule and diet more than I used to do, and observe as much as in me lies the advice of my friendly physician, who took such kind care of me; my best respects attend him. Mrs. Baillie, and Mrs. Agnes. Ever, my dear friend, most faithfully yours,

W. S."

In the next of these letters Scott alludes, among other things, to a scene of innocent pleasure which I often witnessed afterwards. The whole of the ancient ceremonial of the *daft days*, as they are called in Scotland, obtained respect at Abbotsford. He said it was *uncanny*, and would certainly have felt it very uncomfortable, not to welcome the new year in the midst of his family and a few old friends, with the immemorial libation of a *het pint*; but of all the consecrated ceremonies of the time none gave him such delight as the visit which he received as *Laird* from all the children on his estate, on the last morning of every December—when, in the words of an obscure poet often quoted by him,

* Imitations of Horace, B. II. Ep. I. v. 268.

"The cottage barns sing blythe and gay,
At the ha' door for *hogmanay*."

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Abbotsford, 1st January, 1819.

"My dear Friend,

"Many thanks for your kind letter: ten brace of ptarmigan sailed from Inverness about the 24th, directed for Dr. Baillie; if they should have reached, I hope you would seize some for yourself and friends, as I learn the Doctor is on duty at Windsor. I do not know the name of the vessel, but they were addressed to Dr. Baillie, London, which I trust was enough, for there are not *two*. The Doctor has been exercising his skill upon my dear friend and chief, the Duke of Buccleuch, to whom I am more attached than to any person beyond the reach of my own family, and has advised him to do what, by my earnest advice, he ought to have done three years ago—namely, to go to Lisbon: he left this vicinity with much reluctance to go to Thoulouse, but if he will be advised, should not stop save in Portugal or the south of Spain. The Duke is one of those retired and high-spirited men who will never be known until the world asks what became of the huge oak that grew on the brow of the hill, and sheltered such an extent of ground. During the late distress, though his own immense rents remained in arrears, and though I know he was pinched for money, as all men were, but more especially the possessors of entailed estates, he absented himself from London in order to pay with ease to himself the labourers employed on his various estates. These amounted (for I have often seen the roll and helped to check it) to nine hundred and fifty men, working at day wages, each of whom on a moderate average might maintain three persons, since the single men have mothers, sisters, and aged or very young relations to protect and assist. Indeed it is wonderful how much even a small sum, comparatively, will do in supporting the Scottish labourer, who is in his natural state perhaps one of the best, most intelligent, and kind-hearted of human beings; and in truth I have limited my other habits of expense very much since I fell into employing mine honest people. I wish you could have seen about a hundred children, being almost entirely supported by their fathers' or brothers' labour, come down yesterday to dance to the pipes, and get a piece of cake and bannock, and pence a-piece (no very deadly largess) in honour of *hogmanay*. I declare to you, my dear friend, that when I thought the poor fellows who kept these children so neat, and well taught, and well behaved, were slaving the whole day for eighteen-pence or twenty-pence at the most, I was ashamed of their gratitude, and of their becks and bows. But after all, one does what one can, and it is better twenty families should be comfortable according to their wishes and habits, than half that number should be raised above their situation. Besides, like Fortunio in the fairy tale, I have my gifted men—the best wrestler and cudgel-player—the best runner and leaper—the best shot in the little district; and as I am partial to all manly and athletic exercises, these are great favourites, being otherwise decent persons, and bearing their faculties meekly. All this smells of sad egotism, but what can I write to you about save what is uppermost in my own thoughts; and here am I, thinning old plantations and planting newones; now undoing what has been done, and now doing what I suppose no one would do but myself, and accomplishing all my magical transformations by the arms and legs of the aforesaid genii, conjured up to my aid at eighteen-pence a-day. There is no one with me but my wife, to whom the change of scene and air, with the facility of easy and uninterrupted exercise, is of service. The young people remain in Edinburgh to look after their lessons, and Walter, though passionately fond of shooting, only staid three days with us, his mind running entirely on mathematics and fortification, French and German. One of the excellencies of Abbotsford is very bad pens and ink; and besides, this being New Year's Day, and my writing-room above the servants' hall, the progress of my correspondence is a little interrupted by the Piper singing Gaelic songs to the servants, and their applause in consequence. Adieu, my good and indulgent friend: the best influences of the New Year attend you and yours, who so well deserve all that they can bring. Most affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

Before quitting the year 1818, I ought to have mentioned that among Scott's miscellaneous occupations in its autumn, he found time to contribute some curious materials toward a new edition of Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland, which had been undertaken by his old acquaintance, Mr. Robert Jameson. During the winter session he appears to have made little progress with his novel; his painful seizures of cramp were again recurring frequently, and he probably thought it better to allow the story of Lammermoor to lie over until his health should be re-established. In the mean time he drew up a set of topographical and historical essays, which originally appeared in the successive numbers of the splendidly illustrated work, entitled Provincial Antiquities of Scotland.* But he did this merely to gratify his own love of the subject, and because, well or ill, he must be doing something. He declined all pecuniary recompense; but afterwards, when the success of the publication was secure, accepted from the proprietors some of the beautiful drawings by Turner, Thomson, and other artists, which had been prepared to accompany his text. These drawings are now in the little breakfast room at Abbotsford—the same which had been constructed for his own den, and which I found him occupying as such in the spring of 1819.

In the course of December, 1818, he also opened an important negotiation with Messrs. Constable, which was completed early in the ensuing year. The cost of his building had, as is usual, exceeded his calculation; and he had both a large addition to it, and some new purchases of land in view. Moreover, his eldest son had now fixed on the cavalry, in which service every step infers very considerable expense. The details of this negotiation are remarkable; Scott considered himself as a very fortunate man when Constable, who at first offered £10,000 for all his then existing copyrights, agreed to give for them £12,000. Meeting a friend in the street, just after the deed had been executed, he said he wagered no man could guess at how large a price Constable had estimated his "eild kye" (cows barren from age.) The copyrights thus transferred were, as specified in the instrument—

"The said Walter Scott, Esq.'s, present share, being the entire copyright, of Waverley.

Do.	do.	Guy Mannering.
Do.	do.	Antiquary.
Do.	do.	Rob Roy.
Do.	do.	Tales of my Landlord, 1st series.
Do.	do.	do. 2d series.
Do.	do.	do. 3d series.
Do.	do.	Bridal of Triermain.
Do.	do.	Harold the Dauntless.
Do.	do.	Sir Tristrem.
Do.	do.	Roderick Collection.
Do.	do.	Paul's Letters.
Do.	being one eighth of the Lay of the Last Minstrel.	
Do.	being one half of the Lady of the Lake.	
Do.	being one half of Rokeby.	
Do.	being one half of the Lord of the Isles."	

The instrument contained a clause binding Messrs. Constable never to divulge the name of the Author of Waverley during his life under a penalty of £2000.

I may observe, that had these booksellers fulfilled their part of this agreement, by paying off prior to their insolvency in 1826, the whole bonds for £12,000, which they signed on the 2d of February, 1819, no interest in the copyrights above specified could have been expected to revert to the Author of Waverley; but more of this in due season.

He alludes to the progress of the treaty in the following letter to Captain Adam Ferguson, who had, as has already appeared, left Scotland with the Duke of Buccleuch. His Grace hearing, when in London, that one of the Barons of Exchequer at Edinburgh meant speedily to resign, the Captain had, by his desire, written to urge on Scott the propriety of renewing his application for a seat on that bench; which, however, Scott at once refused to do. There were several reasons for this abstinence; among others, he thought such a promotoin at this time would interfere with a project which he had formed of joining "the Chief and the Aid-de-camp" in the course of the spring, and accomplishing in their society the tour of Portugal and Spain—perhaps of Italy also. Some such excursion had been strongly recommended to him by his own physicians, as the likeliest means of interrupting those habits of sedulous exertion at the desk, which they all regarded as the true source of his recent ailments, and the

* These charming essays are now reprinted in his Miscellaneous Prose Works, (Edit. 1834,) Vol. vii.

only serious obstacle to his cure; and his standing as a Clerk of Session, considering how largely he had laboured in that capacity for infirm brethren, would have easily secured him a twelvemonth's leave of absence from the Judges of his Court. But the principal motive was, as we shall see, his reluctance to interfere with the claims of the then Sheriff of Mid-Lothian, his own and Ferguson's old friend and school-fellow, Sir William Rae—who, however, accepted the more ambitious post of Lord Advocate, in the course of the ensuing summer.

To Captain Adam Ferguson, Ditton Park, Windsor.

"15th January, 1819.

"Dear Adam,

"Many thanks for your kind letter, this moment received. I would not for the world stand in Jackie (I beg his pardon, Sir John) Peartree's way.* He has merited the cushion *en haut*, and besides he needs it. To me it would make little difference in point of income. The *otium cum dignitate*, if it ever come, will come as well years after this as now. Besides, I am afraid the opening will be soon made, through the death of our dear friend the Chief Baron, of whose health the accounts are unfavourable. Immediate promotion would be inconvenient to me, rather than otherwise, because I have the desire, like an old fool as I am, *courir un peu le monde*. I am beginning to draw out from my literary commerce. Constable has offered me £10,000 for the copyrights of published works which have already produced more than twice the sum. I stand out for £12,000. Tell this to the Duke; he knows how I managed to keep the hen till the rainy day was past. I will write two lines to Lord Melville, just to make my bow for the present, resigning any claims I have through the patronage of my kindest and best friend, for I have no other, till the next opportunity. I should have been truly vexed if the Duke had thought of writing about this. I don't wish to hear from him till I can have his account of the lines of Torres Vedras. I care so little how or where I travel, that I am not sure at all whether I shall not come to Lisbon and surprise you, instead of going to Italy by Switzerland; that is providing the state of Spain would allow me, without any unreasonable danger of my throat, to get from Lisbon to Madrid, and thence to Gibraltar. I am determined to roll a little about, for I have lost much of my usual views of summer pleasure here. But I trust we shall have one day the Maid of Lorn (recovered of her lameness,) and Charlie Stuart (reconciled to bogs,) and Sybil Grey (no longer retrograde,) and the Duke set up by a southern climate, and his military and civil aides-de-camp, with all the rout of younkers and dogs, and a brown hill side, introductory to a good dinner at Bowhill or Drumlanrig, and a merry evening. Amen, and God send it. As to my mouth being stopped with the froth of the title, that is, as the learned Partridge says, *a non sequitur*. You know the schoolboy's expedient of first asking mustard for his beef, and then beef for his mustard. Now, as they put the mustard on my plate, without my asking it, I shall consider myself, time and place serving, as entitled to ask a slice of beef; that is to say, I would do so if I cared much about it; but as it is, I trust it to time and chance, which, as you, dear Adam, know, have (added to the exertions of kind friends) been wonderful allies of mine. People usually wish their letters to come to hand, but I hope you will not receive this in Britain. I am impatient to hear you have sailed. All here are well and hearty. The Baronet† and I propose to go up to the Castle to-morrow to fix on the most convenient floor of the Crown House for your mansion, in hopes you will stand treat for gin-grog and Cheshire cheese on your return, to reward our labour. The whole expense will fall within the Treasury order, and it is important to see things made convenient. I will write a long letter to the Duke to Lisbon. Yours ever,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P.S.—No news here, but that the goodly hulk of conceit and tallow, which was called Macculloch, of the Royal Hotel, Prince's Street, was put to bed dead-drunk on Wednesday night, and taken out the next morning dead-by-itself-dead. Mair skaith at Sheriffmuir."

To J. Richardson, Esq., Fludyer Street, Westminster.

"Edinburgh, 18th January, 1819.

"My dear Richardson,

"Many thanks to you for your kind letter. I own I did mystify Mrs. * * * * a little about the report you mention; and I am glad to hear the finesse succeeded. She came up to me with a great overflow of gratitude for the delight and pleasure, and so forth, which she owed to me on account of these books. Now, as she knew very well that I had never owned myself the author, this was not *polite* politeness, and she had no right to force me up into a corner and compel me to tell her a word more than I chose, upon a subject which concerned no one but myself—and I have no notion of being pumped by any old dowager Lady of Session, male or female. So I gave in dilatory defences, under protestation to add and eke; for I trust, in learning a new slang, you have not forgot the old. In plain words, I denied the charge, and as she insisted to know who else *could* write these novels, I suggested Adam Ferguson as a person having all the information and capacity necessary for that purpose. But the inference that he *was* the author was of her own deducing; and thus ended her attempt, notwithstanding her having primed the pump with a good dose of flattery. It is remarkable, that among all my real friends to whom I did not choose to communicate this matter, not one ever thought it proper or delicate to tease me about it. Respecting the knighthood, I can only say, that coming as it does, and I finding myself and my family in circumstances which will not render the *petit titre* ridiculous, I think there would be more vanity in declining than in accepting what is offered to me by the express wish of the Sovereign as a mark of favour and distinction. Will you be so kind as to enquire and let me know what the fees, &c., of a baronetcy amount to—for I must provide myself accordingly, not knowing exactly when this same title may descend upon me. I am afraid the sauce is rather smart. I should like also to know what is to be done respecting registration of arms, and so forth. Will you make these inquiries for me *sotto voce*? I should not suppose, from the persons who sometimes receive this honour, that there is any inquiry about descent or genealogy; mine were decent enough folks, and enjoyed the honour in the seventeenth century, so I shall not be first of the title; and it will sound like that of a Christian knight, as Sir Sidney Smith said.

"I had a letter from our immortal Joanna some fortnight since, when I was enjoying myself at Abbotsford. Never was there such a season, flowers springing, birds singing, grubs eating the wheat—as if it was the end of May. After all, nature had a grotesque and inconsistent appearance, and I could not help thinking she resembled a withered beauty who persists in looking youthy, and dressing conform thereto. I thought the loch should have had its blue frozen surface, and russet all about it, instead of an unnatural gayety of green. So much are we the children of habit, that we cannot always enjoy thoroughly the alterations which are most for our advantage. They have filled up the historical chair here. I own I wish it had been with our friend Campbell, whose genius is such an honour to his country. But he has cast anchor I suppose in the south. Your friend, Mrs. Scott, was much cast down with her brother's death. His bequest to my family leaves my own property much at my own disposal, which is pleasant enough. I was foolish enough sometimes to be vexed at the prospect of my library being sold *sub hasta*, which is now less likely to happen. I always am, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

On the 15th of February, 1819, Scott witnessed the first representation, on the Edinburgh boards, of the most meritorious and successful of all the *Terrifications*, though Terry himself was not the manufacturer. The drama of *Rob Roy* will never again be got up so well, in all its parts, as it then was by William Murray's company; the manager's own *Captain Thornton* was excellent—and so was the *Dugald Creature* of a Mr. Duff—there was also a good *Mattie*—(about whose equipment, by the by, Scott felt such interest that he left his box between the acts to remind Mr. Murray that she "must have a mantle with her lanthorn");—but the great and unrivalled attraction was the personification of *Bailie Jarvie* by Charles Mackay, who, being himself a native of Glasgow, entered into the minutest peculiarities of the character with high *gusto*, and gave the west country dialect in its most racy perfection. It was extremely diverting to watch the play of Scott's features during this admirable realization of his conception; and I must add, that the behaviour of the Edinburgh audience on all such occasions, while the secret of the novels was preserved, reflected great honour on their good taste and delicacy of feeling. He seldom, in those days, entered his box without receiving some mark of general respect and admiration; but I never heard of any pretext being laid hold of to connect these demonstrations with the piece he had come to witness, or, in short,

* *Jackie Peartree* had, it seems, been Sir William Rae's nickname at the High School. He probably owed it to some exploit in an orchard.

† Mr. William Clerk.

‡ The wife of one of the Edinburgh Judges is alluded to.

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to do or say any thing likely to interrupt his quiet enjoyment of the evening in the midst of his family and friends. The *Rob Roy* had a continued run of forty-one nights, during February and March; and it was played once a week, at least, for many years afterwards.* Mackay, of course, always selected it for his benefit; and I now print from Scott's MS. a letter, which, no doubt, reached the mimic Bailie in the handwriting of one of the Ballantynes, on the first of these occurrences.

To Mr. Charles Mackay, Theatre-Royal, Edinburgh.
Private.

"Friend Mackay,

"My lawful occasions having brought me from my residence at Gandercleuch to this great city, it was my lot to fall into company with certain friends, who impetrated from me a consent to behold the stage-play, which hath been framed forth of an history entitled Rob (*seu potius* Robert) Roy, which history, although it existeth not in mine erudite work, entitled Tales of my Landlord, hath nathless a near relation in style and structure to those pleasant narrations. Wherefore, having surmounted those arguments whilk were founded upon the unseemliness of a personage in my place and profession appearing in an open stage-play house, and having buttoned the terminations of my cravat into my bosom, in order to preserve mine incognito, and indued an outer coat over mine usual garments, so that the hue thereof might not betray my calling, I did place myself (much elbowed by those who little knew whom they did incommode) in that place of the theatre called the two-shilling gallery, and beheld the show with great delectation, even from the rising of the curtain to the fall thereof.

"Chiefly, my facetious friend, was I enamoured of the very lively representation of Bailie Nicol Jarvie, insomuch that I became desirous to communicate to thee my great admiration thereof, nothing doubting that it will give thee satisfaction to be apprised of the same. Yet further, in case thou shouldst be of that numerous class of persons who set less store by good words than good deeds, and understanding that there is assigned unto each stage-player a special night, called a benefit, (it will do thee no harm to know that the phrase cometh from two Latin words, *bene* and *facio*,) on which their friends and patrons show forth their benevolence, I now send thee mine in the form of a five-ell web (*hoc jocose*, to express a note for £5) as a meet present for the Bailie, himself a weaver, and the son of a worthy deacon of that craft. The which propine I send thee in token that it is my purpose, business and health permitting, to occupy the central place of the pit on the night of thy said beneficiary or benefit.

"Friend Mackay! from one, whose profession it is to teach others, thou must excuse the freedom of a caution. I trust thou wilt remember that, as excellence in thine art cannot be attained without much labour, so neither can it be extended, or even maintained, without constant and unremitted exertion; and farther, that the decorum of a performer's private character (and it gladdeth me to hear that thine is respectable) addeth not a little to the value of his public exertions.

"Finally, in respect there is nothing perfect in this world—at least I have never received a wholly faultless version from the very best of my pupils—I pray thee not to let Rob Roy twirl thee around in the ecstacy of thy joy, in regard it oversteps the limits of nature, which otherwise thou so sedulously preservest in thine admirable national portraiture of Bailie Nicol Jarvie.—I remain thy sincere friend and well-wisher,

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM."

* "Between February 16th, 1819, and March 14th, 1837, Rob Roy was played in the Theatre-Royal, Edinburgh, 256 times." *Letter from Mr. W. Murray.*

CHAPTER XLIV.

RECURRENCE OF SCOTT'S ILLNESS—DEATH OF THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—LETTERS TO CAPTAIN FERGUSON—LORD MONTAGU—MR. SOUTHEY—AND MR. SHORTREED—SCOTT'S SUFFERINGS WHILE DICTATING THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR—ANECDOTES BY JAMES BALLANTYNE, ETC.—APPEARANCE OF THE THIRD SERIES OF TALES OF MY LANDLORD—ANECDOTE OF THE EARL OF BUCHAN.—MARCH—JUNE, 1819.

It had been Scott's purpose to spend the Easter vacation in London, and receive his baronetcy; but this was prevented by the serious recurrence of the malady which so much alarmed his friends in the early part of the year 1817, and which had continued ever since to torment him at intervals. The subsequent correspondence will show that afflictions of various sorts were accumulated on his head at the same period:—

To the Lord Montagu, Ditton Park, Windsor.

"Edinburgh, 4th March, 1819.

"My dear Lord,

"The Lord President tells me he has a letter from his son, Captain Charles Hope, R. N., who had just taken leave of our High Chief, upon the deck of the Liffey. He had not seen the Duke for a fortnight, and was pleasingly surprised to find his health and general appearance so very much improved. For my part, having watched him with such unremitting attention, I feel very confident in the effect of a change of air and of climate. It is with great pleasure that I find the Duke has received an answer from me respecting a matter about which he was anxious, and on which I could make his mind quite easy. His Grace wished Adam Ferguson to assist him as his confidential secretary; and with all the scrupulous delicacy that belongs to his character, he did not like to propose this, except through my medium as a common friend. Now, I can answer for Adam, as I can for myself, that he will have the highest pleasure in giving assistance in every possible way the Duke can desire; and if forty years' intimacy can entitle one man to speak for another, I believe the Duke can find no where a person so highly qualified for such a confidential situation. He was educated for business, understands it well, and was long a military secretary—his temper and manners your Lordship can judge as well as I can, and his worth and honour are of the very first water. I confess I should not be surprised if the Duke should wish to continue the connexion even afterwards, for I have often thought that two hours' letter-writing, which is his Grace's daily allowance, is rather worse than the duty of a Clerk of Session, because there is no vacation. Much of this might surely be saved by an intelligent friend on whose style of expression, prudence, and secrecy, his Grace could put perfect reliance. Two words marked on any letter by his own hand, would enable such a person to refuse more or less positively—to grant directly or conditionally—or, in short, to maintain the exterior forms of the very troublesome and extensive correspondence which his Grace's high situation entails upon him. I think it is Mons. Le Duc de Saint Simon who tells us of one of Louis XIV.'s ministers *qui l' avoit la plume*—which he explains, by saying, it was his duty to imitate the King's handwriting so closely, as to be almost undistinguishable, and make him on all occasions *parler très noblement*. I wonder how the Duke gets on without such a friend. In the mean time, however, I am glad I can assure him of Ferguson's willing and ready assistance while abroad; and I am happy to find still farther that he had got that assurance before they sailed, for tedious hours occur on board of ship, when it will serve as a relief to talk over any of the private affairs which the Duke wishes to intrust to him.

"I have been very unwell from a visitation of my old enemy the cramp in my stomach, which much resembles, as I conceive, the process by which *the diet* would make one's *king's-hood* (into a *spleuchan*,* according to the anathema of Burns. Unfortunately, the opiates which the medical people think indispensable to relieve spasms, bring on a habit of body which has to be counteracted by medicines of a different tendency, so as to produce a most disagreeable see-saw—a kind of pull-devil, pull-baker, contention, the field of battle being my unfortunate *præcordia*. Or, to say truth, it reminds me of a certain Indian king I have read of in an old voyage, to whom the captain of an European ship generously presented a lock and key, with which the sable potentate was so much delighted, that to the great neglect, both of his household duties and his affairs of state, he spent a whole month in the repeated operation of locking and unlocking his back-door. I am better to-day, and I trust shall be able to dispense with these alternations, which are much less agreeable in my case than in that of the Sachem aforesaid; and I still hope to be in London in April.

"I will write to the Duke regularly, for distance of place acts in a contrary ratio on the mind and on the eye; trifles, instead of being diminished, as in prospect, become important and interesting, and therefore he shall have a budget of them. Hogg is here busy with his Jacobite songs. I wish he may get handsomely through, for he is profoundly ignorant of history, and it is an awkward thing to read in order that you may write.† I give him all the

* *King's-hood*—"The second of the four stomachs of ruminating animals." JAMIESON.—*Spleuchan*—The Gaelic name of the Highlander's tobacco-pouch.

† "I am sure I produced two volumes of Jacobite Relics, such as no man in Scotland or England could have produced but myself." So says Hogg, *apos*—see his *Autobiography*, 1832, p. 98.

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help I can, but his sometimes poses me. For instance, he came yesterday, open mouth, inquiring what great dignified clergyman had distinguished himself at Killiecrankie—not exactly the scene where one would have expected a churchman to shine—and I found with some difficulty, that he had mistaken Major-General Canon, called, in Kennedy's Latin song, *Canonicus Gallovidiensis*, for the canon of a cathedral. *Ex ungue leonem.* Ever, my dear Lord, your truly obliged and faithful

WALTER SCOTT."

Before this letter reached Lord Montagu, his brother had sailed for Lisbon. The Duke of Wellington had placed his house in that capital (the Palace *das Necessidades*) at the Duke of Buccleuch's disposal; and in the affectionate care and cheerful society of Captain Ferguson, the invalid had every additional source of comfort that his friends could have wished for him. But the malady had gone too far to be arrested by a change of climate; and the letter which he had addressed to Scott, when about to embark at Portsmouth, is endorsed with these words—"*The last I ever received from my dear friend the Duke of Buccleuch.—Alas! alas!*" The principal object of this letter was to remind Scott of his promise to sit to Raeburn for a portrait, to be hung up in that favourite residence where the Duke had enjoyed most of his society. "My prodigious undertaking," writes his Grace, "of a west wing at Bowhill, is begun. A library of forty-one feet by twenty-one, is to be added to the present drawing-room. A space for one picture is reserved over the fire-place, and in this warm situation I intend to place the Guardian of Literature. I should be happy to have my friend Maida appear. It is now almost proverbial, 'Walter Scott and his Dog.' Raeburn should be warned that I am as well acquainted with my friend's hands and arms as with his nose—and Vandyke was of my opinion. Many of R.'s works are shamefully finished—the face studied, but every thing else neglected. This is a fair opportunity of producing something really worthy of his skill."

I shall insert by and by Scott's answer, which never reached the Duke's hand—with another letter of the same date to Captain Ferguson; but I must first introduce one, addressed a fortnight earlier to Mr. Southey, who had been distressed by the accounts he received of Scott's health from an American traveller, Mr. George Ticknor of Boston—a friend, and worthy to be such, of Mr. Washington Irving. The Poet Laureate, by the way, had adverted also to an impudent trick of a London bookseller, who shortly before this time announced certain volumes of Grub Street manufacture, as "A New Series of the Tales of my Landlord," and who, when John Ballantyne, as the "agent for the Author of Waverley," published a declaration that the volumes thus advertised were not from the writer's pen, met John's declaration by an audacious rejoinder—impeaching his authority, and asserting that nothing, but the personal appearance in the field of the gentleman for whom Ballantyne pretended to act, could shake his belief that he was himself in the confidence of the true Simon Pure. This affair gave considerable uneasiness at the time, and for a moment the dropping of Scott's mask seems to have been pronounced advisable by both Ballantyne and Constable. But he was not to be worked upon by such means as these. He calmly replied, "The author who lends himself to such a trick must be a blockhead—let them publish, and that will serve our purpose better than any thing we ourselves could do." I have forgotten the names of the "tales," which, being published accordingly, fell stillborn from the press. Mr. Southey had likewise dropped some allusions to another newspaper story of Scott's being seriously engaged in a dramatic work; a rumour which probably originated in the assistance he had lent to Terry in some of the recent highly popular adaptations of his novels to the purposes of the stage—though it is not impossible that some hint of the *Devorgoil* may have transpired. "It is reported," said the Laureat, "that you are about to bring forth a play, and I am greatly in hopes it may be true; for I am verily persuaded that in this course you might run as brilliant a career as you have already done in narrative—both in prose and rhyme;—for as for believing that you have a double in the field—not I! Those same powers would be equally certain of success in the drama, and were you to give them a dramatic direction, and reign for a third seven years upon the stage, you would stand alone in literary history. Indeed already I believe that no man ever afforded so much delight to so great a number of his contemporaries in this or any other country. God bless you, my dear Scott, and believe me ever yours affectionately, R. S." Mr. Southey's letter had further announced his wife's safe delivery of a son; the approach of the conclusion of his History of Brazil; and his undertaking of the Life of Wesley.

To Robert Southey, Esq. Keswick, Cumberland.

"Abbotsford, 4th April, 1819.

"My dear Southey,

"Tidings from you must be always acceptable, even were the bowl in the act of breaking at the fountain—and my health is at present very *totterish*. I have gone through a cruel succession of spasms and sickness, which have terminated in a special fit of the jaundice, so that I might sit for the image of Plutus, the god of specie, so far as complexion goes. I shall like our American acquaintance the better that he has sharpened your remembrance of me, but he is also a wondrous fellow for romantic lore and antiquarian research, considering his country. I have now seen four or five well-lettered Americans, ardent in pursuit of knowledge, and free from the ignorance and forward presumption which distinguish many of their countrymen. I hope they will inoculate their country with a love of letters, so nearly allied to a desire of peace and a sense of public justice, virtues to which the great Transatlantic community is more strange than could be wished. Accept my best and most sincere wishes for the health and strength of your latest pledge of affection. When I think what you have already suffered, I can imagine with what mixture of feelings this event must necessarily affect you; but you need not to be told that we are in better guidance than our own. I trust in God this late blessing will be permanent, and inherit your talents and virtues. When I look around me, and see how many men seem to make it their pride to misuse high qualifications, can I be less interested than I truly am, in the fate of one who has uniformly dedicated his splendid powers to maintaining the best interests of humanity? I am very angry at the time you are to be in London, as I must be there in about a fortnight, or so soon as I can shake off this depressing complaint, and it would add not a little that I should meet you there. My chief purpose is to put my eldest son into the army. I could have wished he had chosen another profession, but have no title to combat a choice which would have been my own had my lameness permitted. Walter has apparently the dispositions and habits fitted for the military profession, a very quiet and steady temper, an attachment to mathematics and their application, good sense and uncommon personal strength and activity, with address in most exercises, particularly horsemanship.

"—I had written thus far last week when I was interrupted, first by the arrival of our friend Ticknor with Mr. Cogswell, another well-accomplished Yankee—(by the by, we have them of all sorts, *e. g.* one Mr. *******, rather a fine man, whom the girls have christened, with some humour, the Yankee Doodle *Dandie*.) They have had Tom Drum's entertainment, for I have been seized with one or two successive *crises* of my cruel malady, lasting in the utmost anguish from eight to ten hours. If I had not the strength of a team of horses, I could never have fought through it, and through the heavy fire of medical artillery, scarce less exhausting—for bleeding, blistering, calomel, and ipecacuanha, have gone on without intermission—while, during the agony of the spasms, laudanum became necessary in the most liberal doses, though inconsistent with the general treatment. I did not lose my senses, because I resolved to keep them, but I thought once or twice they would have gone overboard, top and top-gallant. I should be a great fool, and a most ungrateful wretch, to complain of such inflictions as these. My life has been, in all its private and public relations, as fortunate perhaps as was ever lived, up to this period; and whether pain or misfortune may lie behind the dark curtain of futurity, I am already a sufficient debtor to the bounty of Providence to be resigned to it. Fear is an evil

I never saw the Shepherd so elated as he was on the appearance of a very severe article on this book in the Edinburgh Review; for, to his exquisite delight, the hostile critic selected for *exceptive* encomium one "old Jacobite strain," viz. "Donald M'Gillavry," which Hogg had fabricated the year before. Scott, too, enjoyed this joke almost as much as the Shepherd.

that has never mixed with my nature, nor has even unwonted good fortune rendered my love of life tenacious; and so I can look forward to the possible conclusion of these scenes of agony with reasonable equanimity, and suffer chiefly through the sympathetic distress of my family.

———"Other ten days have passed away, for I would not send this Jeremiad to teaze you, while its termination seamed doubtful. For the present,

'The game is done—I've won, I've won,
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.'

I am this day, for the first time, free from the relics of my disorder, and, except in point of weakness, perfectly well. But no broken-down hunter had ever so many sprung sinews, wheiks, and bruises. I am like Sancho after the doughty affair of the Yanguesian Carriers, and all through the unnatural twisting of the muscles under the influence of that *Goule* the cramp. I must be swathed in Goulard and Rosemary spirits—*probatum est*.

"I shall not fine and renew a lease of popularity upon the theatre. To write for low, ill-informed, and conceited actors, whom you must please, for your success is necessarily at their mercy, I cannot away with. How would you, or how do you think I should, relish being the object of such a letter as Keant wrote t'other day to a poor author, who, though a pedantic blockhead, had at least the right to be treated like a gentleman by a copper-laced, twopenny tear mouth, rendered mad by conceit and success? Besides, if this objection were out of the way, I do not think the character of the audience in London is such that one could have the least pleasure in pleasing them. One half come to prosecute their debaucheries so openly, that it would degrade a bagnio. Another set to snooze off their beef-steaks and port wine; a third are critics of the fourth column of the newspaper; fashion, wit, or literature there is not; and, on the whole, I would far rather write verses for mine honest friend Punch and his audience. The only thing that could tempt me to be so silly, would be to assist a friend in such a degrading task who was to have the whole profit and shame of it.

"Have you seen decidedly the most full and methodized collection of Spanish romances (ballads) published by the industry of Depping (Altenburgh, and Leipsic,) 1817? It is quite delightful. Tickner had set me agog to see it, without affording me any hope it could be had in London, when by one of those fortunate chances which have often marked my life, a friend, who had been lately on the Continent, came unexpectedly to inquire for me, and plucked it forth *par manière de cadeau*. God prosper you, my dear Southey, in your labours; but do not work too hard—*experto crede*. This conclusion, as well as the confusion of my letter, like the Bishop of Grenada's sermon, savours of the apoplexy. My most respectful compliments attend Mrs. S. Yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S. I shall long to see the conclusion of the Brazil history, which, as the interest comes nearer, must rise even above the last noble volume. Wesley you alone can touch; but will you not have the hive about you? When I was about twelve years old, I heard him preach more than once, standing on a chair, in Kelso churchyard. He was a most venerable figure, but his sermons were vastly too colloquial for the taste of Saunders. He told many excellent stories. One I remember, which he said had happened to him at Edinburgh. 'A drunken dragoon (said Wesley) was commencing an assertion in military fashion, G—d eternally d———n me, just as I was passing. I touched the poor man on the shoulder, and when he turned round fiercely, said calmly, you mean *God bless you*.' In the mode of telling the story he failed not to make us sensible how much his patriarchal appearance, and mild yet bold rebuke, overawed the soldier, who touched his hat, thanked him, and, I think, came to chapel that evening."

To Robert Shortreed, Esq., Sheriff Substitute, &c., Jedburgh.

"Abbotsford, 13th April, 1819.

"Dear Bob,

"I am very desirous to procure, and as soon as possible, Mrs. Shortreed's excellent receipt for making yeast. The Duke of Buccleuch complains extremely of the sour yeast at Lisbon as disagreeing with his stomach, and I never tasted half such good bread as Mrs. Shortreed has baked at home. I am sure you will be as anxious as I am that the receipt should be forwarded to his Grace as soon as possible. I remember Mrs. Shortreed giving a most distinct account of the whole affair. It should be copied over in a very distinct hand, lest Mons. Florence makes blunders.

"I am recovering from my late indisposition, but as weak as water. To write these lines is a fatigue. I scarce think I can be at the circuit at all—certainly only for an hour or two. So on this occasion I will give Mrs. Shortreed's kind hospitality a little breathing time. I am tired even with writing these few lines. Yours ever,

WALTER SCOTT."*

To His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c., Lisbon.

"Abbotsford, 15th April, 1819

"My dear Lord Duke,

"How very strange it seems that this should be the first letter I address your Grace, and you so long absent from Scotland, and looking for all the news and nonsense of which I am in general such a faithful reporter. Alas I have been ill—very—very ill—only Dr. Baillie says there is nothing of consequence about my malady *except the pain*—a pretty exception—said pain being intense enough to keep me roaring as loud as your Grace's ci-devant John of Lorn, and of, generally speaking, from six to eight hours' incessant duration, only varied by intervals of deadly sickness. Poor Sophia was alone with me for some time, and managed a half distracted pack of servants with spirit, and sense, and presence of mind, far beyond her years, never suffering her terror at seeing me in a state so new to her and so alarming to divert her mind an instant from what was fit and proper to be done. Pardon this side compliment to your Grace's little Jacobite, to whom you have always been so kind. If sympathy could have cured me, I should not have been long ill. Gentle and simple were all equally kind, and even old Tom Watson crept down from Falshope to see how I was coming on, and to ejaculate 'if any thing ailed the Shirra, it would be sair on the Duke.' The only unwelcome resurrection was that of old " ", whose feud with me (or rather dryness) I had well hoped was immortal; but he came jinking over the moor with daughters and ponies, and God knows what, to look after my precious health. I cannot tolerate that man; it seems to me as if I hated him for things not only past and present, but for some future offence which is as yet in the womb of fate.

"I have had as many remedies sent me for cramp and jaundice as would set up a quack doctor—three from Mrs. Plummer, each better than the other—one at least from every gardener in the neighbourhood—besides all sort of recommendations to go to Cheltenham, to Harrowgate, to Jericho for aught I know. Now if there is one thing I detest more than another, it is a watering-place, unless a very pleasant party be previously formed, when, as Tony Lumpkin says, 'a gentleman may be in a concatenation.' The most extraordinary recipe was that of my Highland piper, John Bruce, who spent a whole Sunday in selecting twelve stones from twelve *south-running* streams, with the purpose that I should sleep upon them, and be whole. I caused him to be told that the recipe was infallible, but that it was absolutely necessary to success that the stones should be wrapt up in the petticoat of a widow who had never wished to marry again, upon which the piper renounced all hope of completing the charm. I had need of a softer couch than Bruce had destined me, for so general was the tension of the nerves all over the body, although the pain of the spasms in the stomach did not suffer the other to be felt, that my whole left leg was covered with swelling and inflammation, arising from the unnatural action of the muscles, and I had to be carried about like a child. My right leg escaped better, the muscles there having less irritability, owing to its lame state. Your grace may imagine the energy of pain in the nobler parts, when cramps in the extremities sufficient to produce such effects, were unnoticed by me during their existence. But enough of so disagreeable a subject.

"Respecting the portrait, I shall be equally proud and happy to sit for it, and hope it may be so executed as to be in some degree worthy of the preferment to which it is destined.† But neither my late golden hue, for I was covered with jaundice, nor my present silver complexion (looking much more like a spectre than a man) will present any idea of my quondam beef-eating physiognomy. I must wait till the *age of brass*, the true juridical bronze of my profession, shall again appear on my frontal. I hesitate a little about Raeburn, unless your Grace is quite determined. He has very much to do; works just now chiefly for cash, poor fellow, as he can have but a few

* These lines are from Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*.

† The reader will find something about this actor's quarrel with Mr. Bucke, author of "The Italians," in Barry Cornwall's *Life of Kean*, vol. ii. p. 178.

* "Sir Walter got not only the recipe for making bread from us—but likewise learnt the best mode of cutting it 'in a family way.' The bread board and large knife used at Abbotsford at breakfast-time, were adopted by Sir Walter, after seeing them 'work well' in our family."—*Note by Mr. Andrew Shortreed.*

† The position in the Library at Bowhill, originally destined by the late Duke of Buccleuch for a portrait that never was executed, is now filled by that which Raeburn painted in 1818 for Constable, and which has been engraved for the first volume of this work.

years to make modey; and has twice already made a very chowder-headed person of me. I should like much (always with your approbation) to try Allan, who is a man of real genius, and has made one or two glorious portraits, though his predilection is to the historical branch of the art. We did rather a handsome thing for him, considering that in Edinburgh we are neither very wealthy nor great amateurs. A hundred persons subscribed ten guineas a-piece to raffle* for his fine picture of the Circassian Chief selling slaves to the Turkish Pacha—a beautiful and highly poetical picture. There was another small picture added by way of second prize, and, what is curious enough, the only two peers on the list, Lord Wemyss and Lord Fife, both got prizes. Allan has made a sketch which I shall take to town with me when I can go, in hopes Lord Stafford, or some other picture-buyer, may fancy it, and order a picture. The subject is the murder of Archbishop Sharp on Magus Moor, prodigiously well treated. The savage ferocity of the assassins, crowding one on another to strike at the old prelate on his knees—contrasted with the old man's figure—and that of his daughter endeavouring to interpose for his protection, and withheld by a ruffian of milder mood than his fellows:—the dogged fanatical severity of Rathillet's countenance, who remained on horseback witnessing, with stern fanaticism, the murder he did not choose to be active in, lest it should be said that he struck out of private revenge—are all amazingly well combined in the sketch. I question if the artist can bring them out with equal spirit in the painting which he meditates. Sketches give a sort of fire to the imagination of the spectator, who is apt to fancy a great deal more for himself than the pencil, in the finished picture, can possibly present to his eye afterwards. Constable has offered Allan three hundred pounds to make sketches for an edition of the Tales of My Landlord, and other novels of that cycle, and says he will give him the same sum next year, so from being pinched enough, this very deserving artist suddenly finds himself at his ease. He was long at Odessa with the Duke of Richelieu, and is a very entertaining person.

"I saw with great pleasure Wilkie's sketch of your Grace, and I think when I get to town I shall coax him out of a copy, to me invaluable. I hope, however, when you return, you will sit to Lawrence. We should have at least one picture of your Grace from the real good hand. Sooth to speak, I cannot say much for the juvenile representations at Bowhill and in the library at Dalkeith. Return, however, with the original features in good health, and we shall not worry you about protraits. The library at Bowhill will be a delightful room, and will be some consolation to me who must, I fear, lose for some time the comforts of the eating-room, and substitute panada and toast and water for the bonny haunch and buxom bottle of claret. Truth is, I must make great restrictions on my creature-comforts, at least till my stomach recovers its tone and ostrich-like capacity of digestion. Our spring here is slow, but not unfavourable: the country looking very well, and my plantings for the season quite completed. I have planted quite up two little glens, leading from the Aid-de-Camp's habitation up to the little loch, and expect the blessings of posterity for the shade and shelter I shall leave, where, God knows, I found none.

"It is doomed this letter is not to close without a request. I conclude your Grace has already heard from fifty applicants that the kirk of Middleble is vacant, and I come forward as the fifty-first (always barring prior engagements and better claims) in behalf of George Thomson, a son of the minister of Melrose, being the grinder of my boys, and therefore deeply entitled to my gratitude and my good offices, as far as they can go. He is nearer Parson Abraham Adams than any living creature I ever saw—very learned, very religious, very simple, and extremely absent. His father, till very lately, had but a sort of half stipend, during the incumbency of a certain notorious Mr. MacLagan, to whom he acted only as assistant. The poor devil was brought to the grindstone, (having had the want of precaution to beget a large family,) and became the very figure of a fellow who used to come upon the stage to sing, 'Let us all be unhappy together.' This poor lad George was his saving angel, not only educating himself, but taking on him the education of two of his brothers, and maintaining them out of his own scanty pittance. He is a sensible lad, and by no means a bad preacher, a staunch Anti-Gallican, and orthodox in his principles. Should your Grace find yourself at liberty to give countenance to this very innocent and deserving creature, I need not say it will add to the many favours you have conferred on me, but I hope the parishioners will have also occasion to say, 'Weel bobbit, George of Middleble.' Your Grace's Aide-de-camp, who knows young Thomson well, will give you a better idea of him than I can do. He lost a leg by an accident in his boyhood, which spoiled as bold and fine looking a grenadier as ever charged bayonet against a Frenchman's throat. I think your Grace will not like him the worse for having a spice of military and loyal spirit about him. If you knew the poor fellow, your Grace would take uncommon interest in him, were it but for the odd mixture of sense and simplicity, and spirit and good morals. Somewhat too much of him.

"I conclude you will go to Mafra, Cintra, or some of these places, which Baretti describes so delightfully, to avoid the great heats, when the Palace de las Necessidades must become rather oppressive. By the by, though it were only for the credit of the name, I am happy to learn it has that useful English comfort, a water closet. I suppose the armourer of the Liffey has already put it in complete repair. Your Grace sees the most secret passages respecting great men cannot be hidden from their friends. There is but little news here but death in the clan. Harden's sister is dead—a cruel blow to Lady Die,† who is upwards of eighty-five, and accustomed to no other society. Again, Mrs. Frank Scott, his uncle's widow, is dead, unable to survive the loss of two fine young men in India, her sons, whose death closely followed each other. All this is sad work; but it is a wicked and melancholy world we live in. God bless you, my dear Lord. Take great care of your health, for the sake of all of us. You are the breath of our nostrils, useful to thousands, and to many of these thousands indispensable. I will write again very soon, when I can keep my breast longer to the desk without pain, for I am not yet without frequent relapses, when they souse me into scalding water without a moment's delay, where I lie, as my old *grieve* Tom Purdie said last night, being called to assist at the operation, 'like a *haulded saumon*.' I write a few lines to the Aide-de-Camp, but I am afraid of putting this letter beyond the bounds of Lord Montagu's frank. When I can do any thing for your Grace here, you know I am most pleased and happy. Ever respectfully and affectionately your Grace's

WALTER SCOTT."

To Captain Adam Ferguson, &c., &c., &c.

"Abbotsford, April 16, 1819.

"My dear Adam,

"Having only been able last night to finish a long letter to the Chief, I now add a few lines for the Aide-de-Camp. I have had the pleasure to hear of you regularly from Jack,† who is very regular in steering this way when packets arrive; and I observe with great satisfaction that you think our good Duke's health is on the mending hand. Climate must operate as an alterative, and much cannot perhaps be expected from it at first.—Besides, the great heat must be a serious drawback. But I hope you will try by and by to get away to Cintra, or some of those sequestered retreats where there are shades and cascades to cool the air. I have an idea the country there is eminently beautiful. I am afraid the Duke has not yet been able to visit Torres Vedras, but *you* must be meeting with things every where to put you in mind of former scenes. As for the Senhoras, I have little doubt that the difference betwixt your military hard fare and Florence's high sauces and jellies will make them think that time has rather improved an old friend then otherwise. Apropos of these ticklish subjects. I am a suitor to the Duke, with little expectation of success, (for I know his engagements,) for the kirk of Middleble to George Thomson, the very Abraham

* Three pictures were ultimately raffled for; and the following note, dated April the 1st, 1819, shows how keenly and practically Scott, almost in the crisis of his malady, could attend to the details of such a business:—

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq., Advocate, Edinburgh.

"I have been dreadfully ill since I wrote to you, but I think I have now got the turn fairly. It was quite time, for though the doctors say the disease is not dangerous, yet I could not have endured six days more agony. I have a summons from the ingenious Mr. David Bridges to attend to my interests at his shop next Saturday, or send some qualified person to act on my behalf. I suppose this mysterious missive alludes to the plan about Allan's pictures, and at any rate I hope you will act for me. I should think a raffle with dice would give more general satisfaction than a lottery. You would be astonished what unhandsome suspicions well educated and sensible persons will take into their heads, when a selfish competition awakens the mean and evil passions of our nature. Let each subscriber throw the dice in person or by proxy, leaving out all who throw under a certain number, and let this be repeated till the number is so far reduced that the three who throw highest may hold the prizes. I have much to say to you, and should you spare me a day about the end of next week, I trust you will find me pretty *bobbish*. Always yours affectionately, W. S.

The Mr. David Bridges here mentioned has occurred already.—See *ante*, p. 293. The jokers in Blackwood made him happy, by dubbing him "The Director-General of the Fine Arts for Scotland."

† See *ante*, p. 87.

‡ Captain John Ferguson, R. N.

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Adams of Presbytery. If the Duke mentions him to you (not otherwise) pray lend him a lift. With a kirk and a manse the poor fellow might get a good farmer's daughter, and beget grenadiers for his Majesty's service. But as I said before, I daresay all St. Hubert's black pack are in full cry upon the living, and that he has little or no chance. It is something, however, to have tabled him, as better may come of it another day.

"All at Huntly Burn well and hearty, and most kind in their attentions during our late turmoils. Bauby* came over to offer her services as sick-nurse, and I have drunk scarce any thing but delicious ginger beer of Miss Bell's brewing, since my troubles commenced. They have been, to say the least, damnable; and I think you would hardly know me. When I crawl out on Sybil Grey, I am the very image of Death on the pale horse, lanthorn-jawed, decayed in flesh, stooping as if I meant to eat the pomey's ears, and unable to go above a foot-pace. But although I have had, and must expect, frequent relapses, yet the attacks are more slight, and I trust I shall mend with the good weather. Spring sets in very pleasantly and in a settled fashion. I have planted a number of shrubs, &c. at Huntly Burn, and am snodding up the drive of the old farm house, enclosing the Toftfield, and making a good road from the parish road to your gate. This I tell you to animate you to pick up a few seeds both of forest trees, shrubs, and vegetables; we will rear them in the hot-house, and divide honourably. *Avis au lecteur.* I have been a good deal intrusted to the care of Sophia, who is an admirable sick-nurse. Mamma has been called to town by two important avocations, to get a cook—no joking matter—and to see Charles, who was but indifferent, but has recovered. You must have heard of the death of Joseph Hume, David's only son. Christ! what a calamity—just entering life with the fairest prospects—full of talent, and the heir of an old and considerable family—a fine career before him. All this he was one day, or rather one hour—or rather in the course of five minutes—so sudden was the death—and then a heap of earth. His disease is unknown; something about the heart, I believe; but it had no alarming appearance, nothing worse than a cold and sore throat, when convulsions came, and death ensued. It is a complete smash to poor David, who had just begun to hold his head up after his wife's death. But he bears it stoutly, and goes about his business as usual. A woful case. London is now out of the question with me; I have no prospect of being now able to stand the journey by sea or land; but the best is, I have no pressing business there. The Commiet takes charge of Walter's matters—cannot, you know, be in better hands; and Lord Melville talks of gazetting *quam primum*. I will write a long letter very soon, but my back, fingers, and eyes ache with these three pages. All here send love and fraternity. Yours ever most truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—By the by, old Kennedy, the tinker, swam for his life at Jedburgh, and was only, by the sophisticated and timid evidence of a seceding doctor, who differed from all his brethren, saved from a well-deserved gibbet. He goes to botanize for fourteen years. Pray tell this to the Duke, for he was

'An old soldier of the Duke's,
And the Duke's old soldier.'

Six of his brethren, I am told, were in court, and kith and kin without end. I am sorry so many of the clan are left. The cause of quarrel with the murdered man was an old feud between two gipsey clans, the Kennedies and Irvings, which, about forty years since, gave rise to a desperate quarrel and battle on Hawick Green, in which the grandfathers of both Kennedy, and Irving whom he murdered, were engaged."

In the next of these letters there is allusion to a drama on the story of the Heart of Mid-Lothian, of which Mr. Terry had transmitted the MS. to Abbotsford—and which ultimately proved very successful. Terry had, shortly before this time, become the acting manager of the Haymarket Theatre.

To D. Terry, Esq., Haymarket, London.

"Abbotsford, 18th April, 1819.

"Dear Terry,

"I am able (though very weak) to answer your kind inquiries. I have thought of you often, and been on the point of writing or dictating a letter, but till very lately I could have had little to tell you of but distress and agony, with constant relapses into my unhappy malady, so that for weeks I seemed to lose rather than gain ground, all food nauseating on my stomach, and my clothes hanging about me like a potato-bogle,* with from five or six to ten hours of mortal pain every third day; latterly the fits have been much milder, and have at last given way to the hot bath without any use of opiates; an immense point gained, as they hurt my general health extremely. Conceive my having taken, in the course of six or seven hours, six grains of opium, three of hyoscyamus, near 200 drops of laudanum, and all without any sensible relief of the agony under which I laboured. My stomach is now getting confirmed, and I have great hopes the bout is over; it has been a dreadful set-to. I am sorry to hear Mrs. Terry is complaining; you ought not to let her labour, neither at Abbotsford sketches nor at any thing else, but study to keep her mind amused as much as possible. As for Walter, he is a shoot of an *Aik*,† and I have no fear of him; I hope he remembers Abbotsford and his soldier namesake.

"I send the MS.—I wish you had written for it earlier. My touching or even thinking of it was out of the question; my corrections would have smelled as cruelly of the cramp, as the Bishop of Grenada's homily‡ did of the apoplexy. Indeed I hold myself inadequate to estimate those criticisms which rest on stage effect, having been of late very little of a play-going person. Would to Heaven these sheets could do for you what Rob Roy has done for Murray; he has absolutely netted upwards of £3000: to be sure the man who played the Bailie made a piece of acting equal to whatever has been seen in the profession. For my own part I was actually electrified by the truth, spirit, and humour which he threw into the part. It was the living Nicol Jarvie—conceited, pragmatical, cautious, generous, proud of his connexion with Rob Roy, frightened for him at the same time, and yet extremely desirous to interfere with him as an adviser. The tone in which he seemed to give him up for a lost man after having provoked him into some burst of Highland violence—'Ah Rab, Rab!'—was quite inimitable. I do assure you I never saw a thing better played. It is like it may be his only part, for no doubt the Patavinity and knowledge of the provincial character may have aided him much; but still he must be a wonderful fellow; and the houses he drew were tremendous.

"I am truly glad you are settled in London—a 'rolling stone'—the proverb is something musty: it is always difficult to begin a new profession; I could have wished you quartered nearer us, but we shall always hear of you. The becoming stage-manager at the Haymarket, I look upon as a great step; well executed, it cannot but lead to something of the same kind elsewhere. You must be aware of stumbling over a propensity which easily besets you from the habit of not having your time fully employed—I mean what the women very expressively call *dawdling*. Your motto must be *Hoc age*. Do instantly whatever is to be done, and take the hours of reflection or recreation after business, and never before it. When a regiment is under march, the rear is often thrown into confusion because the front do not move steadily and without interruption. It is the same thing with business. If that which is first in hand is not instantly, steadily, and regularly despatched, other things accumulate behind till affairs begin to press all at once, and no human brain can stand the confusion; pray mind this—it is one of your few weak points—ask Mrs. Terry else. A habit of the mind it is which is very apt to beset men of intellect and talent, especially when their time is not regularly filled up, but left at their own arrangement. But it is like the ivy round the oak, and ends by limiting, if it does not destroy, the power of manly and necessary exertion. I must love a man so well to whom I offer such a word of advice, that I will not apologize for it, but expect to hear you are become as regular as a Dutch clock—hours, quarters, minutes, all marked and appropriated. This is a great cast in life, and must be played with all skill and caution.

"We wish much to have a plan of the great bed, that we may hang up the tester. Mr. Atkinson offered to have it altered or exchanged; but with the expense of land-carriage and risk of damage, it is not to be thought of. I enclose a letter to thank him for all his kindness. I should like to have the invoice when the things are shipped. I hope they will send them to Leith and not to Berwick. The plasterer has broke a pane in the armoury. I enclose a sheet with the size, the black lines being traced within the lead, and I add a rough drawing of the arms, which are those of my mother. I should like it replaced as soon as possible, for I will set the expense against the careless rascal's account.

"I have got a beautiful scarlet paper inlaid with gold (rather crimson than scarlet) in a present from India, which will hang the parlour to a T; but we shall want some articles from town to enable us to take possession of the parlour—namely, a *carpet*—you mentioned a *wainscot pattern*, which would be delightful—item, *grates* for

* Bauby—*i. e.* Barbara, was a kind old housekeeper of the Miss Fergusons.

† The Lord Chief Commissioner Adam.

* Anglice—Scarecrow. † Ditto—an Oak. ‡ Sermon—p 307

said parlour and armoury—a plain and unexpensive pattern, resembling that in my room, (which vents most admirably,) and suited for half-dogs for burning wood. The sideboard and chairs you have mentioned. I see Mr. Bullock (George's brother) advertises his museum for sale. I wonder if a good set of *real tilting* armour could be got cheap there. James Ballantyne got me one very handsome bright steel cuirassier of Queen Elizabeth's time, and two less perfect, for £20—dog cheap; they make a great figure in the armoury. Hangings, curtains, &c., I believe we shall get as well in Edinburgh as in London; it is in your joiner and cabinet work that your infinite superiority lies.

"Write to me if I can do aught about the play—though I fear not: much will depend on Dumbiedykes, in whom Liston will be strong. Sophia has been chiefly my nurse, as an indisposition of little Charles called Charlotte to town. She returned yesterday with him. All beg kind compliments to you and Mrs. Terry and little Walter. I remain your very feeble but convalescent to command,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—We must not forget the case for the leaves of the table while out of use; without something of the kind, I am afraid they will be liable to injury, which is a pity, as they are so very beautiful."*

The accounts of Scott's condition circulated in Edinburgh in the course of this April were so alarming, that I should not have thought of accepting his invitation to revisit Abbotsford, unless John Ballantyne had given me better tidings, about the end of the month. He informed me that his "illustrious friend" (for so both the Ballantynes usually spoke of him) was so much recovered as to have resumed his usual literary tasks, though with this difference, that he now, for the first time in his life, found it necessary to employ the hand of another. I have now before me a letter of the 8th April, in which Scott says to Constable, "Yesterday I began to dictate, and did it easily and with comfort. This is a great point—but I must proceed by little and little; last night I had a slight return of the enemy—but baffled him;" and he again writes to the bookseller on the 11th,—"John Ballantyne is here, and returns with copy, which my increasing strength permits me to hope I may now furnish regularly."

The copy (as MS. for the press is technically called) which Scott was thus dictating, was that of the Bride of Lammermoor; and his amanuenses were William Laidlaw and John Ballantyne, of whom he preferred the latter, when he could be at Abbotsford, on account of the superior rapidity of his pen; and also because John kept his pen to the paper without interruption, and though with many an arch twinkle in his eyes, and now and then an audible smack of his lips, had resolution to work on like a well-trained clerk; whereas good Laidlaw entered with such keen zest into the interest of the story as it flowed from the author's lips, that he could not suppress exclamations of surprise and delight—"Gude keep us a'!—the like o' that!—eh sirs! eh sirs!"—and so forth—which did not promote despatch. I have often, however, in the sequel, heard both these secretaries describe the astonishment with which they were equally affected when Scott began this experiment. The affectionate Laidlaw beseeching him to stop dictating, when his audible suffering filled every pause. "Nay, Willie," he answered, "only see that the doors are fast. I would fain keep all the cry as well as all the wool to ourselves; but as to giving over work, that can only be when I am in woollen." John Ballantyne told me that after the first day he always took care to have a dozen of pens made before he seated himself opposite to the sofa on which Scott lay, and that though he often turned himself on his pillow with a groan of torment, he usually continued the sentence in the same breath. But when dialogue of peculiar animation was in progress, spirit seemed to triumph altogether over matter—he arose from his couch and walked up and down the room, raising and lowering his voice, and as it were acting the parts. It was in this fashion that Scott produced the far greater portion of The Bride of Lammermoor—the whole of the Legend of Montrose—and almost the whole of Ivanhoe. Yet, when his health was fairly re-established, he disdained to avail himself of the power of dictation, which he had thus put to the sharpest test, but resumed, and for many years resolutely adhered to, the old plan of writing every thing with his own hand. When I once, some time afterwards, expressed my surprise that he did not consult his ease, and spare his eyesight at all events, by occasionally dictating, he answered, "I should as soon think of getting into a sedan chair while I can use my legs."

On one of the envelopes in which a chapter of the Bride of Lammermoor reached the printer in the Canongate about this time—(May 2, 1819)—there is this note in the author's own handwriting:—

"Dear James,—These matters will need more than your usual carefulness. Look sharp—double sharp—my trust is constant in thee:—

'Tarry woo, tarry woo,
Tarry woo is ill to spin;
Card it weel, card it weel,
Card it weel ere ye begin.
When 'tis carded, row'd, and spun,
Then the work is haffins done;
But when woven, drest, and clean,
It may be cleading for a queen.'

So be it.—W. S."

But to return—I rode out to Abbotsford with John Ballantyne towards the end of the spring vacation, and though he had warned me of a sad change in Scott's appearance, it was far beyond what I had been led to anticipate. He had lost a great deal of flesh—his clothes hung loose about him—his countenance was meagre, haggard, and of the deadliest yellow of the jaundice—and his hair, which a few weeks before had been but slightly sprinkled with gray, was now almost literally snow-white. His eye, however, retained its fire unquenched; indeed it seemed to have gained in brilliancy from the new languor of the other features; and he received us with all the usual cordiality, and even with little perceptible diminishment in the sprightliness of his manner. He sat at table while we dined, but partook only of some rice pudding; and after the cloth was drawn, while sipping his toast and water, pushed round the bottles in his old style, and talked with easy cheerfulness of the stout battle he had fought, and which he now seemed to consider as won.

"One day there was," he said, "when I certainly began to have great doubts whether the mischief was not getting at my mind—and I'll tell you how I tried to reassure myself on that score. I was quite unfit for any thing like original composition; but I thought if I could turn an old German ballad I had been reading into decent rhymes, I might dismiss my worst apprehensions—and you shall see what came of the experiment." He then desired his daughter Sophia to fetch the MS. of *The Noble Moringer*, as it had been taken down from his dictation, partly by her and partly by Mr. Laidlaw, during one long and painful day while he lay in bed. He read it to us as it stood, and seeing that both Ballantyne and I were much pleased with the verses, he said he should copy them over,—make them a little "tighter about the joints,"—and give me them to be printed in the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1816, to consult him about which volume had partly been the object of my visit; and this promise he redeemed before I left him.

The reading of this long ballad, however—(it consists of forty-three stanzas)*—seemed to have exhausted him: he retired to his bed-room; and an hour or two after, when we were about to follow his example, his family were distressed by the well-known symptoms of another sharp recurrence of his affliction. A large dose of opium and the hot bath were immediately put in requisition. His good neighbour, Dr. Scott of Darnlee, was sent for, and soon attended; and in the course of three or four hours we learned that he was once more at ease. But I can never forget the groans which, during that

* The Duke of Buccleuch had given Scott some old oak-roots from Drumlanrig, out of which a very beautiful set of dinner-tables had been manufactured by Messrs. Bullock.

* See Scott's Poetical Works, (edition, 1834,) Vol. vi. p. 363.

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space, his agony extorted from him. Well knowing the iron strength of his resolution, to find him confessing its extremity, by cries audible not only all over the house, but even to a considerable distance from it—(for Ballantyne and I, after he was put into his bath, walked forth to be out of the way, and heard him distinctly at the bowling-green)—it may be supposed that this was sufficiently alarming, even to my companion—how much more to me, who had never before listened to that voice, except in the gentle accents of kindness and merriment.

I told Ballantyne that I saw this was no time for my visit, and that I should start for Edinburgh again at an early hour—and begged he would make my apologies—in the propriety of which he acquiesced. But as I was dressing, about seven next morning, Scott himself tapped at my door, and entered, looking better, I thought, than at my arrival the day before. "Don't think of going," said he; "I feel hearty this morning, and if my devil does come back again, it won't be for three days at any rate.. For the present, I want nothing to set me up except a good trot in the open air, to drive away the accursed vapours of the laudanum I was obliged to swallow last night. You have never seen Yarrow, and when I have finished a little job I have with Jocund Johnny, we shall all take horse and make a day of it." When I said something about a ride of twenty miles being rather a bold experiment after such a night, he answered, that he had ridden more than forty, a week before, under similar circumstances, and felt nothing the worse. He added that there was an election on foot, in consequence of the death of Sir John Riddell of Riddell, Member of Parliament for the Selkirk district of Burghs, and that the bad health and absence of the Duke of Buccleuch rendered it quite necessary that he should make exertions on this occasion. "In short," said he, laughing, "I have an errand which I shall perform—and as I must pass Newark, you had better not miss the opportunity of seeing it under so excellent a Cicerone as the old minstrel,

> 'Whose withered cheek and tresses gray
> Shall yet see many a better day.'"

About eleven o'clock, accordingly, he was mounted, by the help of Tom Purdie, upon a staunch, active pob, yclept *Sybil Grey*,—exactly such a creature as is described in Mr. Dinmont's *Dumple*—while Ballantyne sprung into the saddle of noble *Old Mortality*, and we proceeded to the town of Selkirk, where Scott halted to do business at the Sheriff-Clerk's, and begged us to move onward at a gentle pace until he should overtake us. He came up by and by at a canter, and seemed in high glee with the tidings he had heard about the canvass. And so we rode by Philiphaugh, Carterhaugh, Bowhill, and Newark, he pouring out all the way his picturesque anecdotes of former times—more especially of the fatal field where Montrose was finally overthrown by Leslie. He described the battle as vividly as if he had witnessed it; the passing of the Ettrick at daybreak by the Covenanting General's heavy cuirassiers, many of them old soldiers of Gustavus Adolphus, and the wild confusion of the Highland host when exposed to their charge on an extensive *haugh* as flat as a bowling-green. He drew us aside at *Slain-men's-lee*, to observe the green mound that marks the resting-place of the slaughtered royalists; and pointing to the apparently precipitous mountain, Minchmoor, over which Montrose and his few cavaliers escaped, mentioned that, rough as it seemed, his mother remembered passing it in her early days in a coach and six, on her way to a ball at Peebles—several footmen marching on either side of the carriage to prop it up, or drag it through bogs, as the case might require. He also gave us, with all the dramatic effect of one of his best chapters, the history of a worthy family who, inhabiting at the time of the battle a cottage on his own estate, had treated with particular kindness a young officer of Leslie's army quartered on them for a night or two before. When parting from them to join the troops, he took out a purse of gold, and told the good woman that he had a presentiment he should not see another sun set, and in that case would wish his money to remain in her kind hands; but, if he should survive, he had no doubt she would restore it honestly. The young man returned mortally wounded, but lingered awhile under her roof, and finally bequeathed to her and hers his purse and his blessing. "Such," he said, "was the origin of the respectable lairds of ——, now my good neighbours."

The prime object of this expedition was to talk over the politics of Selkirk with one of the Duke of Buccleuch's great store-farmers, who, as the Sheriff had learned, possessed private influence with a doubtful bailie or deacon among the Souters. I forget the result, if ever I heard it. But next morning, having, as he assured us, enjoyed a good night in consequence of this ride, he invited us to accompany him on a similar errand across Bowden Moor, and up the Valley of the Ayle; and when we reached a particularly bleak and dreary point of that journey, he informed us that he perceived in the waste below a wreath of smoke, which was the appointed signal that a *wavering* Souter of some consequence had agreed to give him a personal interview where no Whiggish eyes were likely to observe them;—and so, leaving us on the road, he proceeded to thread his way westward, across moor and bog, until we lost view of him. I think a couple of hours might have passed before he joined us again, which was, as had been arranged, not far from the village of Lilliesleaf. In that place, too, he had some negotiation of the same sort to look after; and when he had finished it, he rode with us all around the ancient woods of Riddell, but would not go near the house; I suppose lest any of the afflicted family might still be there. Many were his lamentations over the catastrophe which had just befallen them. "They are," he said, "one of the most venerable races in the south of Scotland—they were here long before these glens had ever heard the name of Soulis or of Douglas—to say nothing of Buccleuch: they can show a Pope's bull of the tenth century, authorizing the then Riddell to marry a relation within the forbidden degrees. Here they have been for a thousand years at least; and now all the inheritance is to pass away, merely because one good worthy gentleman would not be contented to enjoy his horses, his hounds, and his bottle of claret, like thirty or forty predecessors, but must needs turn scientific agriculturist, take almost all his fair estate into his own hand, superintend for himself perhaps a hundred ploughs, and try every new nostrum that has been tabled by the quackish *improvers* of the time. And what makes the thing ten times more wonderful is, that he kept a day-book and leger, and all the rest of it, as accurately as if he had been a cheesemonger in the Grassmarket." Some of the most remarkable circumstances in Scott's own subsequent life have made me often recall this conversation—with more wonder than he expressed about the ruin of the Riddells.

I remember he told us a world of stories, some tragical, some comical, about the old lairds of this time-honoured lineage; and among others, that of the seven Bibles and the seven bottles of ale, which he afterwards inserted in a note to *The Bride of Lammermoor*.* He was also full of anecdotes

* "It was once the universal custom to place ale, wine, or some strong liquor, in the chamber of an honoured guest, to assuage his thirst should he feel any on awakening in the night, which, considering that the hospitality of that period often reached excess, was by no means unlikely. The author has met some instances of it in former days, and in old-fashioned families. It was, perhaps, no poetic fiction that records how

> 'My cummer and I lay down to sleep
> With two pint stoups at our bed feet;
> And aye when we waken'd we drank them dry;
> What think you o' my cummer and I?'

"It is a current story in Teviotdale, that in the house of an ancient family of distinction, much addicted to the Presbyterian cause, a Bible was always put into the sleeping apartment of the guests, along with a bottle of strong ale. On some occasion there was a meeting of clergymen in the vicinity of the castle, all of whom were invited to dinner by the worthy Baronet, and several abode all night. According to the fashion of the times, seven of the reverend guests were allotted to one large barrack-room, which was used on such occasions of extended hospitality. The butler took

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about a friend of his father's, a minister of Lilliesleaf, who reigned for two generations the most popular preacher in Teviotdale; but I forget the orator's name. When the original of Saunders Fairford congratulated him in his latter days on the undiminished authority he still maintained—every kirk in the neighbourhood being left empty when it was known he was to mount the *tent* at any country sacrament—the shrewd divine answered, "Indeed, Mr. Walter, I sometimes think it's vera surprising. There's aye a talk of this or that wonderfully gifted young man frae the college; but whenever I'm to be at the same *occasion* with ony o' them, I e'en mount the white horse in the Revelations, and he dings them a'."

Thus Scott amused himself and us as we jogged homewards: and it was the same the following day, when (no election matters pressing) he rode with us to the western peak of the Eildon hills, that he might show me the whole panorama of his Teviotdale, and expound the direction of the various passes by which the ancient forayers made their way into England, and tell the names and the histories of many a monastic chapel and baronial peel, now mouldering in glens and dingles that escape the eye of the traveller on the highways. Among other objects on which he descanted with particular interest were the ruins of the earliest residence of the Kerrs of Cessford, so often opposed in arms to his own chieftains of Branksome, and a desolate little kirk on the adjoining moor, where the Dukes of Roxburghe are still buried in the same vault with the hero who fell at Turnagain. Turning to the northward, he showed us the crags and tower of Smailholme, and behind it the shattered fragment of Erceldoune—and repeated some pretty stanzas ascribed to the last of the real wandering minstrels of this district, by name *Burn*:—

"Sing Erceldoune, and Cowdenknowes,
Where Homes had ance commanding,
And Drygrange, wi' the milk-white ewes,
'Twixt Tweed and Leader standing.
The bird that flees through Redpath trees
And Gledswood banks each morrow,
May chant and sing—*sweet Leader's haughs*
And *Bonny bowms of Yarrow*.

"But Minstrel Burn cannot assuage
His grief, while life endureth,
To see the changes of this age
Which fleeting time procureth;
For mony a place stands in hard case,
Where blythe folks kent nae sorrow,
With Homes that dwelt on Leader side,
And Scotts that dwelt on Yarrow."

That night he had again an attack of his cramp, but not so serious as the former. Next morning he was again at work with Ballantyne at an early hour; and when I parted from him after breakfast, he spoke cheerfully of being soon in Edinburgh for the usual business of his Court. I left him, however, with dark prognostications; and the circumstances of this little visit to Abbotsford have no doubt dwelt on my mind the more distinctly, from my having observed and listened to him throughout under the painful feeling that it might very probably be my last.

On the 5th day of May he received the intelligence of the death of the Duke of Buccleuch, which had occured at Lisbon on the 20th April; and next morning he wrote as follows to his Grace's brother:—

To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c., Ditton Park, Windsor.

"Abbotsford, 6th May, 1819.

"My dear Lord,

"I heard from Lord Melville, by yesterday's post, the calamitous news which your Lordship's very kind letter this moment confirmed, had it required confirmation. For this fortnight past my hopes have been very faint indeed, and on Wednesday, when I had occasion to go to Yarrow, and my horse turned from habit to go up the avenue at Bowhill, I felt deeply impressed that it was a road I should seldom travel for a long time at least. To your Lordship, let me add to myself, this is an irreparable loss, for such a fund of excellent sense, high principle, and perfect honour, have been rarely combined in the same individual To the country the inestimable loss will be soon felt, even by those who were insensible to his merits, or wished to detract from them, when he was amongst us. In my opinion he never recovered his domestic calamity. He wrote to me a few days after that cruel event, a most affectionate and remarkable letter, explaining his own feelings, and while he begged that I would come to him, assuring me that I should find him the same he would be for the future years of his life. He kept his word; but I could see a grief of that calm and concentrated kind which claims the hours of solitude and of night for its empire, and gradually wastes the springs of life.

"Among the thousand painful feelings which this melancholy event had excited, I have sometimes thought of his distance from home. Yet this was done with the best intention, and upon the best advice, and was perhaps the sole chance which remained for re-establishment. It has pleased God that it has failed, but the best means were used under the best direction, and mere mortality can do no more. I am very anxious about the dear young ladies, whose lives were so much devoted to their father, and shall be extremely desirous of knowing how they are. The Dutchess has so much firmness of mind, and Lady M. so much affectionate prudence, that they will want no support that example and kindness can afford. To me the world seems a sort of waste without him. We had many joint objects, constant intercourse, and unreserved communication, so that through him and by him I took interest in many things altogether out of my own sphere, and it seems to me as if the horizon were narrowed and lowered around me. But God's will be done: it is all that brother or friend can or dare say. I have reluctance to mention the trash which is going on here. Indeed, I think little is altered since I wrote your Lordship fully, excepting that last night late, Chisholm* arrived at Abbotsford from Lithgow, recalled by the news which had somehow reached Edinburgh—as I suspect by some officiousness of . . . . . He left Lithgow in such a state that there is no doubt he will carry that burgh, unless Pringle† gets Selkirk. He is gone off this morning to try the possible and impossible to get the single vote which he wants, or to prevail on one person to stand neuter. It is possible he may succeed, though this event, when it becomes generally known, will be greatly against his efforts. I should care little more about the matter, were it not for young Walter,‡ and for the despite I feel at the success of speculations which were formed on the probability of the event which has happened. Two sons of "·····" came here yesterday, and with their father's philosophical spirit of self-accommodation, established themselves for the night. Betwixt them and Chisholm's noise, my head and my stomach suffered so much, (under the necessity of drowning feelings which I could not express,) that I had a return of the spasms, and I felt as if a phantasmagoria was going on around me. Quiet, and some indulgence of natural and solitary sorrow, have made me well. To-day I will ride up to Selkirk and see the magistrates, or the chief of them. It is necessary they should not think the cause deserted. If it is thought proper to suspend the works at Bowhill, perhaps the measure may be delayed till the decision of this matter.

"I am sure, my dear Lord, you will command me in all I can do. I have only to regret it is so little. But to show that my gratitude has survived my benefactor, would be the pride and delight of my life. I never thought it possible that a man could have loved another so much where the distance of rank was so very great. But why recur to things so painful? I pity poor Adam Ferguson, whose affections were so much engaged by the Duke's kindness, and who has with his gay temper a generous and feeling heart. The election we may lose, but not our own credit, and that of the family—that you may rest assured of. My best respects and warmest sympathy attend the dear young ladies, and Lady Montagu. I shall be anxious to know how the Duchess-Dowager does under this great calamity. The poor boy—what a slippery world is before him, and how early a dangerous, because a splendid, lot, is presented to him! But he has your personal protection. Believe me, with a deep participation in your present distress, your Lordship's most faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT."

* Mr. Chisholm was the Tory Candidate for the Selkirk burghs.
† Mr. Pringle of Clifton, the Whig candidate.
‡ Walter Francis, the present Duke of Buccleuch.

care that the divines were presented, according to custom, each with a Bible and a bottle of ale. But after a little consultation among themselves, they are said to have recalled the domestic as he was leaving the apartment. 'My friend,' said one of the venerable guests, 'you must know, when we meet together as brethren, the youngest minister reads aloud a portion of Scripture to the rest;—only one Bible, therefore, is necessary; take away the other six, and in their place bring six more bottles of ale.'

"This synod would have suited the 'hermit sage' of Johnson, who answered a pupil who inquired for the real road to happiness, with the celebrated line.

'Come, my lad, and drink some beer!'"

—See *Waverly Novels*, Edit. 1834, Vol. xiv. p. 91.

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Scott drew up for Ballantyne's newspaper of that week the brief character of Charles, Duke of Buccleuch, which has since been included in his Prose Miscellanies (vol. iv.); and the following letter accompanied a copy of it to Ditton Park.

To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c. &c.

"My dear Lord,

"I send you the newspaper article under a different cover. I have studied so much to suppress my own feelings, and to give a just, calm, and temperate view of the excellent subject of our present sorrow, such as I conceive might be drawn by one less partially devoted to him, that it has to my own eye a cold and lifeless resemblance of an original so dear to me. But I was writing to the public, and to a public less acquainted with him than a few years' experience would have made them. Even his own tenantry were but just arrived at the true estimation of his character. I wrote, therefore, to insure credit and belief, in a tone greatly under my own feelings. I have ordered twenty-five copies to be put in a different shape, of which I will send your Lordship twenty. It has been a painful task, but I feel it was due from me. I am just favoured with your letter. I beg your Lordship will not write more frequently than you find quite convenient, for you must have now more than enough upon you. The arrangement respecting Boughton* is what I expected—the lifeless remains will be laid where the living thoughts had long been. I grieve that I shall not see the last honours, yet I hardly know how I could have gone through the scene.

"Nothing in the circumstances could have given me the satisfaction which I receive from your Lordship's purpose of visiting Scotland, and bringing down the dear young ladies, who unite so many and such affecting ties upon the regard and affection of every friend of the family. It will be a measure of the highest necessity for the political interests of the family, and your Lordship will have an opportunity of hearing much information of importance, which really could not be made subject of writing. The extinction of fire on the hearths of this great house would be putting out a public light, and a public beacon in the time of darkness and storms. Ever your most faithful

W. S."

On the 11th of May Scott returned to Edinburgh, and was present next day at the opening of the Court of Session; when all who saw him were as much struck as I had been at Abbotsford with the lamentable change his illness had produced in his appearance. He was unable to persist in attendance at the Clerk's table—for several weeks afterwards I think he seldom if ever attempted it;—and I well remember that, when the Third Series of Tales of My Landlord at length came out (which was on the 10th of June), he was known to be confined to bed, and the book was received amidst the deep general impression that we should see no more of that parentage. On the 13th he wrote thus to Captain Ferguson, who had arrived in London with the remains of the Duke of Buccleuch:—

To Captain Adam Ferguson, &c. &c. Montagu House, Whitehall.

"My dear Adam, I am sorry to say I have had another eight days' visit of my disorder, which has confined me chiefly to my bed. It is not attended with so much acute pain as in spring, but with much sickness and weakness. It will perhaps shade off into a mild chronic complaint—if it returns frequently with the same violence I shall break up by degrees, and follow my dear Chief. I do not mean that there is the least cause for immediate apprehension, but only that the constitution must be injured at last, as well by the modes of cure, or rather of relief, as by the pain. My digestion as well as my appetite are for the present quite gone—a change from former days of Leith and Newhaven parties. I thank God I can look at this possibility without much anxiety, and without a shadow of fear.

"Will you, if your time serves, undertake two little commissions for me? One respects a kind promise of Lord Montagu to put George Thomson's name on a list for kirk preferment. I don't like to trouble him with letters—he must be overwhelmed with business, and has his dear brother's punctuality in replying even to those which require none. I would fain have that Scottish Abr. Adams provided for if possible. My other request is, that you will, if you can, see Terry, and ask him what is doing about my dining-room chairs, and especially about the carpet, for I shall not without them have the use of what Slender calls 'mine own great parlour,' this season. I should write to him, but I am really unable. I hope you will soon come down—a sight of you would do me good at the worst turn I have yet had. The Baronet† is very kind, and comes and sits by me. Every body likes the Regalia, and I have heard of no one grudging their *hogt*—but you must get something better. I have been writing to the Commie‡ about this. He has been inexpressibly kind in Walter's matter, and the Duke of York has promised an early commission. When you see our friend, you can talk over this, and may perhaps save him the trouble of writing particular directions what further is to be done. Iago's rule, I suppose—'put money in thy purse.' I wish in passing you would ask how the ladies are in Piccadilly. Yours ever

W. Scott."

The Bride of Lammermoor, and the Legend of Montrose, would have been read with indulgence, had they needed it; for the painful circumstances under which they must have been produced were known wherever an English newspaper made its way; but I believe that, except in numerous typical errors, which sprung of necessity from the author's inability to correct any proof-sheets, no one ever affected to perceive in either tale the slightest symptom of his malady. Dugald Dalgetty was placed by acclamation in the same rank with Bailie Jarvie—a conception equally new, just, and humorous, and worked out in all the details, as if it had formed the luxurious entertainment of a chair as easy as was ever shaken by Rabelais; and though the character of Montrose himself seemed hardly to have been treated so fully as the subject merited, the accustomed rapidity of the novelist's execution would have been enough to account for any such defect. Of Caleb Balderstone—(the hero of one of the many ludicrous delineations which he owed to the late Lord Haddington, a man of rare pleasantry, and one of the best tellers of old Scotch stories that I ever heard)—I cannot say that the general opinion was then, nor do believe it ever since has been, very favourable. It was pronounced at the time, by more than one critic, a mere caricature; and, though Scott himself would never in after days admit this censure to be just, he allowed that "he might have sprinkled rather too much parsley over his chicken." But even that blemish, for I grant that I think it a serious one, could not disturb the profound interest and pathos of the Bride of Lammermoor—to my fancy the most pure and powerful of all the tragedies that Scott ever penned. The reader will be well pleased, however, to have, in place of any critical observations on this work, the following particulars of its composition from the notes which its printer dictated when stretched on the bed from which he well knew he was never to rise.

"The book" (says James Ballantyne) "was not only written, but published, before Mr. Scott was able to rise from his bed; and he assured me, that when it was first put into his hands in a complete shape, he did not recollect one single incident, character, or conversation it contained! He did not desire me to understand, nor did I understand, that his illness had erased from his memory the original incidents of the story, with which he had been acquainted from his boyhood. These remained rooted where they had ever been; or, to speak more explicitly, he remembered the general facts of the existence of the father and mother, of the son and daughter, of the rival lovers, of the compulsory marriage, and the attack made by the bride upon the hapless bridegroom, with the general catastrophe of the whole. All these things he recollected, just as he did before he took to his bed; but he literally recollected nothing else:—not a single character woven by the romancer, not one of the many scenes and points of humour, nor any thing with which he was connected as the writer of the work. 'For a long time,' he said, 'I felt myself very uneasy in the course of my reading, lest I should be startled by meeting some-

* Boughton, in Northamptonshire. This seat came into the possession of Henry, Duke of Buccleuch, by his marriage with the daughter and heiress of John, the last Duke of Montagu, who survived for many years her son Duke Charles. At Boughton, as the reader will see, Scott's early friend, the Dutchess Harriet of Buccleuch, had been buried in 1814.

† Mr. William Clark. ‡ The Lord Chief-Commissioner Adam. † A shilling.

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thing altogether glaring and fantastic. However, I recollected that you had been the printer, and I felt sure that you would not have permitted any thing of this sort to pass.' 'Well,' I said, 'upon the whole, how did you like it?' 'Why,' he said, 'as a whole, I felt it monstrous gross and grotesque; but still the worst of it made me laugh, and I trusted the good-natured public would not be less indulgent.' I do not think I ever ventured to lead to the discussion of this singular phenomenon again: but you may depend upon it that what I have now said is as distinctly reported as if it had been taken down in short-hand at the moment; I should not otherwise have ventured to allude to the matter at all. I believe you will agree with me in thinking that the history of the human mind contains nothing more wonderful."

Soon after Scott re-appeared in the Parliament-house, he came down one Saturday to the vaulted chambers below, where the Advocates' Library was then kept, to attend a meeting of the Faculty, and as the assembly was breaking up he asked me to walk home with him, taking Ballantyne's printing office in our way. He moved languidly, and said, if he were to stay in town many days, he must send for Sybil Grey; but his conversation was heart-whole; and, in particular, he laughed till, despite his weakness, the stick was flourishing in his hand, over the following almost incredible specimen of that most absurd personage the late Earl of Buchan.

Hearing one morning shortly before this time, that Scott was actually *in extremis*, the Earl proceeded to Castle street, and found the knocker tied up. He then descended to the door in the area, and was there received by honest Peter Mathieson, whose face seemed to confirm the woful tidings, for in truth his master was ill enough. Peter told his Lordship that he had the strictest orders to admit no visiter; but the Earl would take no denial, pushed the bashful coachman aside, and elbowed his way up stairs to the door of Scott's bed-chamber. He had his fingers upon the handle before Peter could give warning to Miss Scott; and when she appeared to remonstrate against such an intrusion, he patted her on the head like a child, and persisted in his purpose of entering the sick-room so strenuously, that the young lady found it necessary to bid Peter to see the Earl down stairs again, at whatever damage to his dignity. Peter accordingly, after trying all his eloquence in vain, gave the tottering, bustling, old, meddlesome coxcomb a single shove,—as respectful, doubt not, as a shove can ever be,—and he accepted that hint, and made a rapid exit. Scott, mean while, had heard the confusion, and at length it was explained to him; when, fearing that Peter's gripe might have injured Lord Buchan's feeble person, he desired James Ballantyne, who had been sitting by his bed, to follow the old man home—make him comprehend, if he could, that the family were in such bewilderment of alarm, that the ordinary rules of civility were out of the question—and, in fine, inquire what had been the object of his Lordship's intended visit. James proceeded forthwith to the Earl's house in George street, and found him strutting about his library in a towering indignation. Ballantyne's elaborate demonstrations of respect, however, by degrees softened him, and he condescended to explain himself. "I wished," said he, "to embrace Walter Scott before he died, and inform him that I had long considered it as a satisfactory circumstance that he and I were destined to rest together in the same place of sepulture. The principal thing, however, was to relieve his mind as to the arrangements of his funeral—to show him a plan which I had prepared for the procession—and, in a word, to assure him that I took upon myself the whole conduct of the ceremonial at Dryburgh." He then exhibited to Ballantyne a formal programme, in which, as may be supposed, the predominant feature was not Walter Scott, but David Earl of Buchan. It had been settled, *inter alia*, that the said Earl was to pronounce an eulogium over the grave, after the fashion of French academicians in the *Père la Chaise*.

And this silliest and vainest of busy-bodies was the elder brother of Thomas and Henry Erskine! But the story is well known of his boasting one day to the late Duchess of Gordon of the extraordinary talents of his family—when her unscrupulous grace asked him, very coolly, whether the wit had not come by the mother, and been all settled on the younger branches?

Scott, as his letters to be quoted presently will show, had several more attacks of his disorder, and some very severe ones, during the autumn of 1819; nor, indeed, had it quite disappeared until about Christmas. But from the time of his return to Abbotsford in July, when he adopted the system of treatment recommended by a skilful physician, (Dr. Dick,) who had had large experience in maladies of this kind during his Indian life, the seizures gradually became less violent, and his confidence that he was ultimately to baffle the enemy, remained unshaken.

As I had no opportunity of seeing him again until he was almost entirely re-established, I shall leave the progress of his restoration to be collected from his correspondence. But I must not forget to set down what his daughter Sophia afterwards told me of his conduct upon one night in June, when he really did despair of himself. He then called his children about his bed, and took leave of them with solemn tenderness. After giving them, one by one, such advice as suited their years and characters, he added, "For myself, my dears, I am unconscious of ever having done any man an injury, or omitted any fair opportunity of doing any man a benefit. I well know that no human life can appear otherwise than weak and filthy in the eyes of God; but I rely on the merits and intercession of our Redeemer." He then laid his hand on their heads, and said, "God bless you! Live so that you may all hope to meet each other in a better place hereafter. And now leave me that I may turn my face to the wall." They obeyed him; but he presently fell into a deep sleep; and when he awoke from it after many hours, the crisis of extreme danger was felt by himself, and pronounced by his physician, to have been overcome.

CHAPTER XLV.

GRADUAL RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF SCOTT'S HEALTH—IVANHOE IN PROGRESS—HIS SON WALTER JOINS THE EIGHTEENTH REGIMENT OF HUSSARS—SCOTT'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIS SON—MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS TO MRS. MACLEAN CLEPHANE—M. W. HARTSTONGE—J.G. LOCKHART—JOHN BALLANTYNE—JOHN RICHARDSON—MISS EDGEWORTH—LORD MONTAGU, ETC.—ABBOTSFORD VISITED BY PRINCE LEOPOLD OF SAXE-COBURG—DEATH OF MRS. WILLIAM ERSKINE.—1819.

Before Scott left Edinburgh, on the 12th of July, he had not only concluded his bargain with Constable for another novel, but, as will appear from some of his letters, made considerable progress in the dictation of Ivanhoe.

That he already felt great confidence on the score of his health, may be inferred from his allowing his son Walter, about the middle of the month, to join the 18th Regiment of Hussars, in which he had, shortly before, received his commission as Cornet.

Scott's letters to his son, the first of his family that left the house, will merit henceforth a good deal of the reader's attention. Walter was, when he thus quitted Abbotsford to try his chances in the active world, only in the eighteenth year of his age; and the fashion of education in Scotland is such, that he had scarcely ever slept a night under a different roof from his parents, until this separation occurred. He had been treated from his cradle with all the indulgence that a man of sense can ever permit himself to show to any of his children; and for several years he had now been his father's daily companion in all of his out doors occupations and amusements. The parting was a painful one; but Scott's ambition centred in the heir of his name, and instead of fruitless pinings and lamentings, he

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henceforth made it his constant business to keep up such a frank correspondence with the young man as might enable himself to exert over him, when at a distance, the gentle influence of kindness, experience, and wisdom. The series of his letters to his son is, in my opinion, by far the most interesting and valuable, as respects the personal character and temper of the writer. It will easily be supposed that, as the young officer entered fully into his father's generous views of what their correspondence ought to be, and detailed every little incident of his new career with the same easy confidence as if he had been writing to a friend or elder brother not very widely differing from himself in standing, the answers abound with opinions on subjects with which I have no right to occupy or entertain my readers; but I shall introduce, in the prosecution of this work, as many specimens of Scott's paternal advice as I can hope to render generally intelligible without indelicate explanations—and more especially such as may prove serviceable to other young persons when first embarking under their own pilotage upon the sea of life. Scott's manly kindness to his boy, whether he is expressing approbation or censure of his conduct, can require no pointing out; and his practical wisdom was of that liberal order, based on such comprehensive views of man and the world, that I am persuaded it will often be found available to the circumstances of their own various cases, by young men of whatever station or profession.

I shall, nevertheless, adhere as usual to the chronological order; and one or two miscellaneous letters must accordingly precede the first article of his correspondence with the Cornet. He alludes, however, to the youth's departure in the following:—

To Mrs. Maclean Clephane of Torloisk.

"Abbotsford, July 15th, 1819.

"Dear Mrs. Clephane,

"Nothing could give me more pleasure than to hear you are well, and thinking of looking this way. You will find all my things in very different order from when you were here last, and plenty of room for matron and miss, man and maid. We have no engagements, except to Newton Don about the 20th August—if we be alive—no unreasonable proviso in so long an engagement. My health, however, seems in a fair way of being perfectly restored. It is a joke to talk of any other remedy than that forceful but most unpleasant one—*calomel*. I cannot say I ever felt advantage from any thing else; and I am perfectly satisfied that, used as an alterative, and taken in very small quantities for a long time, it must correct all the inaccuracies of the biliary organs. At least it has done so in my case more radically than I could have believed possible. I have intermitted the regime for some days, but begin a new course next week for precaution. Dr. Dick, of the East India Company's service, has put me on this course of cure, and says he never knew it fail unless when the liver was irreparably injured. I believe I shall go to Carlsbad next year. If I must go to a watering-place, I should like one where I might hope to see and learn something new myself, instead of being hunted down by some of the confounded lion-catchers who haunt English spas. I have not the art of being savage to those people, though few are more annoyed by them. I always think of Snug the Joiner—

'——— If I should as lion *come in strife*
Into such place, 'twere pity on my life.'

"I have been delayed in answering your kind letter by Walter's departure from us to join his regiment, the 18th Dragoons. He has chosen a profession for which he is well suited, being of a calm but remarkably firm temper—fond of mathematics, engineering, and all sorts of calculation—clear-headed, and good-natured. When you add to this a good person and good manners, with great dexterity in horsemanship and all athletic exercises, and a strong constitution, one hopes you have the grounds of a good soldier. My own selfish wish would have been that he should have followed the law; but he really had no vocation that way, wanting the acuteness and liveliness of intellect indispensable to making a figure in that profession. So I am satisfied all is for the best, only I shall miss my gamekeeper and companion in my rides and walks. But so it was, is, and must be—the young must part from the nest, and learn to wing their own way against the storm.

"I beg my best and kindest compliments to Lady Compton. Stooping to write hurts me, or I would have sent her a few lines. As I shall be stationary here for all this season, I shall not see her, perhaps, for long enough. Mrs. Scott and the girls join in best love, and I am ever, dear Mrs. Clephane, your faithful and most obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

I have had some hesitation about introducing the next letter—which refers to the then recent publication of a sort of mock-tour in Scotland, entitled, "Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk." Nobody but a very young and a very thoughtless person could have dreamt of putting forth such a book: yet the Epistles of the imaginary Dr. Morris have been so often denounced as a mere string of libels, that I think it fair to show how much more leniently Scott judged of them at the time. Moreover, his letter is a good specimen of the liberal courtesy with which, on all occasions, he treated the humblest aspirants in literature. Since I have alluded to Peter's Letters at all, I may as well take the opportunity of adding, that they were not wholly the work of one hand.

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq., Carnbroe House, Hollytown.

"Abbotsford, July 19th, 1819.

"My dear Sir,

"*Distinguendum est.* When I receive a book *ex dono* of the author, in the general case I offer my thanks with all haste before I cut a leaf, lest peradventure I should feel more awkward in doing so afterwards, when they must not only be tendered for the well printed volumes themselves, and the attention which sent them my way, but moreover for the supposed pleasure I have received from the contents. But with respect to the learned Dr. Morris, the case is totally different, and I formed the immediate resolution not to say a word about that gentleman's labours without having read them at least twice over—a pleasant task, which has been interrupted partly by my being obliged to go down the country, partly by an invasion of the Southron, in the persons of Sir John Shelley, famous on the turf, and his lady. I wish Dr. Morris had been of the party, chiefly for the benefit of a little Newmarket man, called Cousins, whose whole ideas, similes, illustrations, &c. were derived from the course and training stable. He was perfectly good-humoured, and I have not laughed more this many a day.

"I think the Doctor has got over his ground admirably;—only the general turn of the book is perhaps too favourable, both to the state of our public society, and of individual character:

'His fools have their follies so lost in a crowd
Of virtues and feelings, that folly grows proud.'*

But it was, in every point of view, right to take this more favourable tone, and to throw a Claude Lorraine tint over our northern landscape. We cannot bear the actual bare truth, either in conversation, or that which approaches nearest to conversation, in a work like the Doctor's, published within the circle to which it refers.

"For the rest, the Doctor has fully maintained his high character for force of expression, both serious and comic, and for acuteness of observation—*rem acu tetigit*—and his scalpel has not been idle, though his lenient hand has cut sharp and clean, and poured balm into the wound. What an acquisition it would have been to our general information to have had such a work written, I do not say fifty, but even five-and-twenty years ago; and how much of grave and gay might then have been preserved, as it were, in amber, which have now mouldered away. When I think that at an age not much younger than yours, I knew Black, Ferguson, Robertson, Erskine, Adam Smith, John Home, &c. &c., and at least saw Burns, I can appreciate better than any one the value of a work which, like this, would have handed them down to posterity in their living colours. Dr. Morris ought, like Nourjahad, to revive every half century, to record the fleeting manners of the age, and the interesting features of those who will be only known to posterity by their works. If I am very partial to the Doctor, which I am not inclined to deny, remember I have been bribed by his kind and delicate account of his visit to Abbotsford. Like old Cumberland, or like my own gray cat, I will e'en purr, and put up my back, and enjoy his kind flattery, even when I knew it goes beyond my merits.

"I wish you would come and spend a few days here, while this delightful weather lasts. I am now so well as quite to enjoy the society of my friends, instead of the woful pickle in which I was in spring, when you last favoured me. It was, however, *dignus vindice nodus*, for no less a deity descended to my aid than the potent Mercury himself, in the shape of calomel, which I have been obliged to take daily, though in small quantities, for these two months past. Notwithstanding the inconveniences

* Goldsmith's *Retaliation*.

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of this remedy, I thrive upon it most marvellously, having recovered both sleep and appetite; so when you incline to come this way, you will find me looking pretty *bobbishly*.—Yours very truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

On the same day, Scott wrote as follows to John Ballantyne, who had started for London, on his route to Paris in quest of articles for next winter's auction-room—and whose good offices he was anxious to engage on behalf of the Cornet, in case they should happen to be in the metropolis at the same time.

To Mr. John Ballantyne, care of Messrs. Longman and Co., London.

"Abbotsford, July 19th, 1819.

"Dear John,

"I have only to say, respecting matters here, that they are all going on quietly. The first volume is very nearly finished, and the whole will be out in the first or second week of September. It will be well if you can report yourself in Britain by that time at farthest, as something must be done on the back of this same Ivanhoe.

"Walter left us on Wednesday night, and will be in town by the time this reaches you, looking, I fancy, very like a cow in a fremd loaning.* He will be heard of at Miss Dumergue's. Pray look after him, and help him about his purchases.

"I hope you will be so successful in your foreign journey as to diddle the Edinburgh folk out of some cash this winter. But don't forget September, if you wish to partake the advantages thereof.

"I wish you would see what good reprints of old books are come out this year at Triphook's, and send me a note of them.—Yours very truly,

W. SCOTT."

John Ballantyne found the Cornet in London, and did for him what his father had requested.

To Mr. John Ballantyne.

"Abbotsford, July 26, 1819.

"Dear John,

"I have yours with the news of Walter's rattle-traps, which are abominably extravagant. But there is no help for it but submission. The things seem all such as cannot well be wanted. How the devil they mount them to such a price the tailors best know. They say it takes *nine* tailors to make a man—apparently one is sufficient to ruin him. We shall rub through here well enough, though James is rather glumpy and dumpy—chiefly, I believe, because his child is unwell. If you can make any more money for me in London, good and well. I have no spare cash till Ivanhoe comes forth.—Yours truly,

W. SCOTT.

"P. S. Enclosed are sundry letters of introduction for the *ci-devant* Laird of Gilnockie."

To Miss Edgeworth of Edgeworthstown.

"Abbotsford, July 21, 1819.

"My dear Miss Edgeworth,

"When this shall happen to reach your hands, it will be accompanied by a second edition of Walter Scott, a *tall* copy, as collectors say, and bound in Turkey leather, garnished with all sorts of fur and frippery—not quite so well *lettered*, however, as the old and vamped original edition. In other, and more intelligible phrase, the tall cornet of hussars, whom this will introduce to you, is my eldest son, who is now just leaving me to join his regiment in Ireland. I have charged him, and he is himself sufficiently anxious, to avoid no opportunity of making your acquaintance, as to be known to the good and the wise is by far the best privilege he can derive from my connexion with literature. I have always felt the value of having access to persons of talent and genius to be the best part of a literary man's prerogative, and you will not wonder, I am sure, that I should be desirous this youngster should have a share of the same benefit.

"I have had dreadful bad health for many months past, and have endured more pain than I thought was consistent with life. But the thread, though frail in some respects, is tough in others; and here am I with renewed health, and a fair prospect of regaining my strength, much exhausted by such a train of suffering.

"I do not know when this will reach you, my son's motions being uncertain. But, find you where or when it will, it comes, dear Miss Edgeworth, from the sincere admirer of your genius, and of the patriotic and excellent manner in which it has always been exerted. In which character I subscribe myself ever yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

I believe at the time when the foregoing letter was written, Scott and Miss Edgeworth had never met. The next was addressed to a gentleman, whose acquaintance the poet had formed when collecting materials for his edition of Swift. On that occasion Mr. Hartstonge was of great service to Scott—and he appears to have paid him soon afterwards a visit at Abbotsford. Mr. Hartstonge was an amiable and kind hearted man, and enthusiastically devoted to literature; but his own poetical talents were undoubtedly of the sort that finds little favour either with gods or columns. He seems to have written shortly before this time to inquire about his old acquaintance's health.

To Matthew Weld Hartstonge, Esq., Molesworth Street, Dublin.

"Abbotsford, July 21, 1819.

"My dear Sir,

. . . . . "Fortunately God Mercury descended in the shape of calomel to relieve me in this *dignus vindice nodus*, and at present my system is pretty strong. In the mean while my family are beginning to get forwards. Walter—(you remember my wading into Cauldshiels loch to save his little frigate from wreck)—is now a Cornet of six feet two inches in your Irish 18th Hussars; the regiment is now at Cork, and will probably be next removed to Dublin, so you will see your old friend with a new face; be-furred, be-feathered, and be-whiskered in the highest military *ton*. I have desired him to call upon you, should he get to Dublin on leave, or come there upon duty. I miss him here very much, for he was my companion, gamekeeper, &c. &c., and when one loses one's own health and strength, there are few things so pleasant as to see a son enjoying both in the vigour of hope and promise. Think of this, my good friend, and as you have kind affections to make some good girl happy, settle yourself in life while you are young, and lay up by so doing, a stock of *domestic* happiness, against age or bodily decay. There are many good things in life, whatever satirists and misanthropes may say to the contrary, but probably the best of all, next to a conscience void of offence, (without which, by the by, they can hardly exist,) are the quiet exercise and enjoyment of the social feelings, in which we are at once happy ourselves, and the cause of happiness to them who are dearest to us. I have no news to send you from hence. The addition to my house is completed with battlement and bartisan, but the old cottage remains hidden among creepers, until I shall have leisure, *i. e.* time, and money—to build the rest of my mansion—which I will not do hastily, as the present is amply sufficient for accommodation. Adieu, my dear sir, never reckon the degree of my regard by the regularity of my correspondence, for besides the vile diseases of laziness and procrastination, which have always beset me, I have had of late both pain and languor sufficient to justify my silence. Believe me, however, always most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT."

The first letter the young Cornet received from his father after mounting his "rattle traps" was the following:—

To Cornet Walter Scott, 18th Hussars, Cork.

"Abbotsford, Aug. 1, 1819.

"Dear Walter,

"I was glad to find you got safe to the hospitable quarters of Piccadilly, and were put on the way of achieving your business well and expeditiously. You would receive a packet of introductory letters by John Ballantyne, to whom I addressed them.

"I had a very kind letter two days ago from your Colonel.* Had I got it sooner it would have saved some expense in London, but there is no help for it now. As you are very fully provided with all these appointments, you must be particular in taking care of them, otherwise the expense of replacing them will be a great burden. Colonel Murray seems disposed to show you much attention. He is, I am told, rather a reserved man, which indeed is the manner of his family. You will, therefore, be the more attentive to what he says, as well as to answer all advances he may make to you with cordiality and frankness; for if you be shy on the one hand, and he reserved on the other, you cannot have the benefit of his advice, which I hope and wish you may gain. I shall be guided by his opinion respecting your allowance: he stipulates that you shall have only two horses, (not to be changed without his consent,) and on no account keep a gig. You know of old how I detest that mania of driving wheel-barrows up and down, when a man has a handsome horse and can ride him. They are both foolish and expensive things, and, in my opinion, are only fit for English bagmen—therefore gig it not, I pray you.

* *Anglice*—a strange lane.

* The then commandant of the 18th Hussars was Lieut. Colonel the Hon. Henry Murray, brother to the Earl of Mansfield.

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"In buying your horses you will be very cautious. I see Colonel Murray has delicacy about assisting you directly in this matter—for he says very truly that some gentlemen make a sort of traffic in horse-flesh—from which his duty and inclination equally lead him to steer clear. But he will take care that you don't buy any that are unfit for service, as in the common course they must be approved by the commandant as *chargers*. Besides which, he will probably give you some private hints, of which avail yourself, as there is every chance of your needing much advice in this business. Two things I preach on my own experience. 1st, Never to buy an aged horse, however showy. He must have done work, and, at any rate, will be unserviceable in a few years. 2dly, To buy rather when the horse is something low in condition, that you may the better see all his points. Six years is the oldest at which I would purchase. You will run risk of being jockeyed by knowing gentlemen of your own corps parting with their *experienced* chargers to *oblige* you. Take care of this. Any good tempered horse learns the dragoon duty in wonderfully short time, and you are rider enough not to want one quite broke in. Look well about you, and out into the country. Excellent horses are bred all through Munster, and better have a clever young one than an old regimental brute foundered by repeated charges and bolts. If you see a brother officer's horse that pleases you much, and seems reasonable, look particularly how he stands on his forelegs, and for that purpose see him in the stable. If he shifts and shakes a little have nothing to say to him. This is the best I can advise, not doubting you will be handsomely excised after all. The officer who leaves his corps may be disposing of good horses, and perhaps selling reasonable. One who continues will not, or at least should not, part with a good horse without some great advantage.

"You will remain at Cork till you have learned your regimental duty, and then probably be dispatched to some outquarter. I need not say how anxious I am that you should keep up your languages, mathematics, and other studies. To have lost that which you already in some degree possess—and that which we don't practice we soon forget—would be a subject of unceasing regret to you hereafter. You have good introductions, and don't neglect to avail yourself of them. Something in this respect your name may do for you—a fair advantage, if used with discretion and propriety. By the way, I suspect you did not call on John Richardson.

"The girls were very dull after you left us; indeed the night you went away, Anne had hysterics, which lasted some time. Charles also was down in the mouth, and papa and mamma a little grave and dejected. I would not have you think yourself of too great importance neither, for the greatest personages are not always long missed, and to make a bit of a parody,

> 'Down falls the rain, up gets the sun,
> Just as if Walter were not gone.'

We comfort ourselves with the hopes that you are to be happy in the occupation you have chosen, and in your new society. Let me know if there are any well-informed men among them, though I don't expect you to find out that for some time. Be civil to all till you can by degrees find out who are really best deserving.

"I enclose a letter from Sophia, which doubtless contains all the news. St. Boswell's Fair rained miserably, and disappointed the misses. The weather has since been delightful, and harvest advances fast. All here goes its old round—the habits of age do not greatly change, though those of youth do. Mamma has been quite well, and so have I—but I still take calomel. I was obliged to drink some claret with Sir A. Don, Sir John Shelley, and a funny little Newmarket quizzy, called Cousins, whom they brought here with them the other day, but I was not the worse. I wish you had Sir J. S. at your elbow when you are buying your horses—he is a very knowing man on the turf. I like his lady very much. She is perfectly feminine in her manners, has good sense, and plays divinely on the harp; besides all which, she shoots wild boars, and is the boldest horsewoman I ever saw. I saw her at Paris ride like a lapwing in the midst of all the aide-de-camps and suite of the Duke of Wellington.

"Write what your horses come to, &c. Your outfit will be an expensive matter; but once settled, it will be fairly launching you into life in the way you wished, and I trust you will see the necessity of prudence and a gentlemanlike economy, which consists chiefly in refusing oneself trifling indulgences until we can easily pay for them. Once more, I beg you to be attentive to Colonel Murray and to his lady. I hear of a disease among the moorfowl. I suppose they are dying for grief at your departure. Ever, my dear boy, your affectionate father,

"WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"7th August, 1819.

"Dear Walter,

"....I shall be curious to know how you like your brother-officers, and how you dispose of your time. The drills and riding-school will, of course, occupy much of your mornings for some time. I trust, however, you will keep in view drawing, languages, &c. It is astonishing how far even half an hour a-day, regularly bestowed on one object, will carry a man in making himself master of it. The habit of dawdling away time is easily acquired, and so is that of putting every moment either to use or to amusement.

"You will not be hasty in forming intimacies with any of your brother officers, until you observe which of them are most generally respected, and likely to prove most creditable friends. It is seldom that the people who put themselves hastily forward to please, are those most worthy of being known. At the same time you will take care to return all civility which is offered, with readiness and frankness. The Italians have a proverb, which I hope you have not forgot poor Pierrotti's lessons so far as not to comprehend—'*Volto sciolto e pensieri stretti.*' There is no occasion to let any one see what you exactly think of him; and it is the less prudent, as you will find reason, in all probability, to change your opinion more than once.

"I shall be glad to hear of your being fitted with a good servant. Most of the Irish of that class are scapegraces—drink, steal, and lie like the devil. If you could pick up a canny Scot it would be well. Let me know about your mess. To drink hard is none of your habits, but even drinking what is called a certain quantity every day hurts the stomach, and by hereditary descent yours is delicate. I believe the poor Duke of Buccleuch laid the foundation of that disease which occasioned his premature death in the excesses of Villar's regiment, and I am sorry and ashamed to say, for your warning, that the habit of drinking wine, so much practised when I was a young man, occasioned, I am convinced, many of my cruel stomach complaints. You had better drink a bottle of wine on any particular occasion, than sit and soak and sipple at an English pint every day.

"All our bipeds are well. Hamlet had an inflammatory attack, and I began to think he was going mad, after the example of his great namesake, but Willie Laidlaw bled him, and he has recovered. Pussy is very well. Mamma, the girls, and Charlie, join in love. Yours affectionately,

W. S.

"P. S.—Always mention what letters of mine you have received, and write to me whatever comes into your head. It is the privilege of great boys when distant that they cannot tire papas by any length of detail upon any subject."

To the Same.

"Abbotsford, 13th August, 1819.

"My dearest Walter,

"I am very much obliged to Colonel Murray for the trouble he has taken on your behalf. I hope he has received the letter which I wrote to him a fortnight since under Mr. Freeling's cover. It enclosed a parcel of letters to you. I took the liberty of asking his advice what allowance you should have to assist you. You know pretty well my circumstances and your own, and that I wish you to be comfortable, but not in any respect extravagant; and this for your own sake, and not for that of money, which I never valued very much, perhaps not so much as I ought to have done. I think by speaking to Colonel Murray you may get at his opinion, and I have so much trust in your honour and affection as to confide in your naming your own allowance. Mean time, lest the horse should starve while the grass grows, I enclose a cheque upon Messrs. Coutts for £60, to accompt of your first year's allowance. Your paymaster will give you the money for it I dare say. You have to indorse the bill, *i. e.* write your name on the back of it.

"All concerned are pleased with your kind tokens of remembrance from London. Mamma and I like the caricatures very much. I think, however, scarce any of them shows the fancy and talent of old Gilray: he became insane, I suppose by racking his brain in search of extravagant ideas, and was supported in his helpless condition by the woman who keeps the great print shop in St. James' Street, who had the generosity to remember that she had made thousands by his labour.

"Every thing here goes on in the old fashion, and we are all as well as possible, saving that Charles rode to Lawrence fair yesterday in a private excursion, and made himself sick with eating gingerbread, whereby he came to disgrace.

"Sophia has your letter of the 4th, which she received yesterday. The enclosed will help you to set up shop and to get and pay whatever is necessary. I wish we had

a touch of your hand to make the parties rise in the morning, at which they show as little alertness as usual.

"I beg you will keep an account of money received and paid. Buy a little book ruled for the purpose, for pounds, shillings, and pence, and keep an account of cash received and expended. The balance ought to be cash in purse, if the book is regularly kept. But any very small expenses you can enter as "sundries, £0 : 3 : 6," which saves trouble.

"You will find this most satisfactory and useful. But, indeed, arithmetic is indispensable to a soldier who means to rise in his profession. All military movements depend upon calculation of time, numbers, and distance.

"Dogs all well—cat sick—supposed with eating birds in their feathers. Sisters, brother, and mamma, join in love to the 'poor wounded hussa-a-r'—I dare say you have heard the song, if not, we shall send it for the benefit of the mess. Yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—Yesterday *the* 12*th* would, I suppose, produce some longings after the Peel heights."

In the following letter to Mr. Richardson, we see Scott busied about certain little matters of heraldic importance which had to be settled before his patent of baronetcy could be properly made out. He also alludes to two little volumes, which he edited during this autumn—the Memorials of the Haliburtons, a thin quarto (never published)—and the poems of Patrick Carey, of which he had given specimens some years before in the Annual Register.

To John Richardson, Esq., Fludyer Street, Westminster.

"Abbotsford, 22d August, 1819.

"My dear Richardson,

"I am sorry Walter did not get to your kind domicile. But he staid but about five or six days in London, and great was his haste, as you may well suppose. He had a world of trinkums to get, for you know there goes as much to the man-millinery of a young officer of hussars as to that of an heiress on her bridal day. His complete equipage, horses not included, cost about £360, and if you add a couple of blood horses, it will be £200 more, besides the price of his commission, for the privilege of getting the hardness of his skull tried by a brickbat at the next meeting of Radical Reformers. I am not much afraid of these folks, however, because I remember 1793 and 1794, when the same ideas possessed a much more formidable class of the people, being received by a large proportion of farmers, shopkeepers, and others, possessed of substance. A mere mob will always be a fire of loose straw; but it is melancholy to think of the individual mischief that may be done. I did not find it quite advisable to take so long a journey as London this summer. I am quite recovered; but my last attack was of so dreadful a nature, that I wish to be quite insured against another—*i. e.* as much as one can be insured against such a circumstance—before leaving home for any length of time.

"To return to the vanities of this world from what threatened to hurry me to the next, I enclose a drawing of my arms with the supporters which the heralds here assign me. Our friend Harden seems to wish I would adopt one of his Mer-maidens, otherwise they should be both Moors, as on the left side. I have also added an impression of my seal. You can furnish Sir George Naylor with as much of my genealogy as will serve the present purpose. I shall lose no time in connecting myself by a general service with my grandduncle, the last Haliburton of Dryburgh Abbey, or Newmains, as they call it. I spoke to the Lyon-office people in Edinburgh. I find my entry there will be an easy matter, the proofs being very pregnant and accessible. I would not stop for a trifling expense to register my pedigree in England, as far as you think may be necessary, to show that it is a decent one. My ancestors were brave and honest men, and I have no reason to be ashamed of them, though they were neither wealthy nor great.

"As something of an antiquary and genealogist, I should not like there were any mistakes in this matter, so I send you a small note of my descent by my father and my paternal grandmother, with a memorandum of the proofs by which they may be supported, to which I might add a whole cloud of oral witnesses. I hate the being suspected of fishing for a pedigree, or bolstering one up with false statements. How people can bring themselves to this I cannot conceive. I send you a copy of the Haliburton MS., of which I have printed twenty for the satisfaction of a few friends. You can have any part of them copied in London which ought to be registered. I should like if Sir George Naylor would take the trouble of looking at the proofs, which are chiefly extracts from the public records. I take this opportunity to send you also a copy of a little amateur book—Carey's Poems—a thorough bred Cavalier, and, I think, no bad versifier. Kind compliments to Mrs. Richardson. Yours, my dear Richardson, most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Cornet W. Scott, 18th Hussars, Cork.

"Abbotsford, 4th Sept., 1819.

"Dear Walter,

"Your very acceptable letter of the 25th reached me to-day. I had begun to be apprehensive that the draft had fallen into the hands of the Philistines, but the very long calm must have made the packets slow in their progress, which I suppose was the occasion of the delay. Respecting the allowance, Colonel Murray informs me that from £200 to £250, in addition to the pay of a Cornet, ought to make a young man very comfortable. He adds, which I am much pleased to hear, that your officers are, many of them, men of moderate fortune, and disposed to be economical. I had thought of £200 as what would suit us both, but when I see the account which you very properly keep, I shall be better able to determine. It must be considered that any uncommon expense, as the loss of a horse or the like, may occasion an extra draught over and above the allowance. I like very much your methodical arrangement as to expenses; it is rather a tiresome thing at first to keep an accompt of pounds, shillings and pence, but it is highly necessary, and enables one to see how the money actually goes. It is, besides, a good practical way of keeping up acquaintance with arithmetic, and you will soon find that the principles on which all military movements turn are arithmetical, and that though one may no doubt learn to do them by rote, yet to *understand* them, you must have recourse to numbers. Your adjutant will explain this to you. By the way, as he is a foreigner, you will have an opportunity to keep up a little of your French and German. Both are highly necessary to you: the knowledge of the last, with few other qualifications, made several officers' fortunes last war.

"I observe with pleasure you are making acquaintances among the gentry, which I hope you will not drop for want of calling, &c. I trust you have delivered all your recommendations, for it is an affront to omit doing so, both to the person who writes them, and those for whom they are designed. On the other hand, one always holds their head a little better up in the world when they keep good society. Lord and Lady Melville are to give you recommendations when you go to Dublin. I was at Melville Castle for two days, and found them both well. I was also one day at Langholm lodge to meet Lord Montagu. Possibly, among your Irish friends, you may get some shooting. I shall be glad you avail yourself of any such opportunities, and also that, when you get your own horses, you hunt in the winter, if you be within the reach of hounds. Nothing confirms a man in horsemanship so well as hunting, though I do not recommend it to beginners, who are apt to learn to ride like grooms. Besides the exercise, field-sports make a young soldier acquainted with the country, and habituate him to have a good eye for distance and for taking up the *carte du pays* in general, which is essential to all, but especially to officers of light troops, who are expected to display both alertness and intelligence in reporting the nature of the country being in fact the *eyes* of the army. In every point of view, field sports are preferable to the in-doors amusement of a billiard-table, which is too often the lounging-place for idle young officers, where there is nothing to be got but a habit of throwing away time, and an acquaintance with the very worst society—I mean at public billiard-rooms—for unquestionably the game itself is a pretty one, when practised among gentlemen, and not made a constant habit of. But public billiard-tables are almost always the resort of black-legs and sharpers, and all that numerous class whom the French call *Chevaliers d'Industrie*, and we *knights of the whipping-post*.

"I am glad you go to the anatomical lectures. An acquaintance with our own very extraordinary frame is a useful branch of general knowledge, and as you have some turn for drawing, it will also enable you to judge of the proper mode of disposing the limbs and muscles of your figures, should you prosecute the art so far. In fact, there is no branch of study can come much amiss to a young man, providing he does study, and very often the precise occupation of the time must be trusted to taste and opportunity.

"The White Boys made a great noise when I was a boy. But Ireland (the more is the pity) has never been without White Boys, or Right Boys, or Defenders, or Peep-of-day Boys, or some wild association or another for disturbing the peace of the country. We shall not be many degrees better if the Radical reformers be not checked. The Manchester Yeomen behaved very well, upsetting the most immense crowd ever was seen, and notwithstanding the lies in the papers, without any unnecessary violence

Mr. Hunt pretends to have had several blows on his head with sabres, but has no wound to show for it. I am disposed to wish he had got such a one as once on a day I could have treated him to. I am apt to think his politic pate would have broached no more sedition.

"Miss Rutherford and Eliza Russell are now with us. We were also favoured with a visit of the Miss ——s, who are rather empty canisters, though I dare say very good girls. Anne tired of them most inhospitably. Mrs. MacLean Clephane and her two unmarried daughters are now here; being, as we say, pears of another tree. Your sisters seem very fond of the young ladies, and I am glad of it, for they will see that a great deal of accomplishment and information may be completely reconciled with liveliness, fun, good-humour, and good-breeding.

"All here send love. Dogs and cat are well. I dare say you have heard from some other correspondent that poor Lady Wallace died of an inflammation, after two days' illness. Trout* has returned here several times—poor fellow—and seems to look for you; but Henry Scott is very kind to him, and he is a great favourite.

"As you Hussars smoke, I will give you one of my pipes, but you must let me know how I can send it safely. It is a very handsome one, though not my best. I will keep my *Meer-schaum* until I make my continental tour, and then you shall have that also. I hope you will get leave for a few months, and go with me. Yours very affectionately

WALTER SCOTT."

About this time, as the succeeding letters will show, Abbotsford had the honour of a short visit from Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, now King of the Belgians. Immediately afterwards Scott heard of the death of Mrs. William Erskine, and repaired to Edinburgh, to condole with his afflicted friend. His allusions, mean while, to views of buying more land on Tweedside, are numerous. These speculations are explained in a most characteristic style to the Cornet; and we see that one of them was cut short by the tragical death of a *bonnet-laird* already introduced to the reader's notice—namely, *Lauchie Longlegs*, the admired of Geoffrey Crayon.

To Cornet Walter Scott, 18th Hussars, Cork.

"Abbotsford, 27th Sept., 1819.

"My dear Walter,

"Your letter of the 10th gave me the pleasant assurance that you are well and happy, and attending to your profession. We have been jogging on here in the old fashion, somewhat varied by an unexpected visit, on Friday last, from no less a person than Prince Leopold. I conclude you will have all the particulars of this important event from the other members of the family, so I shall only say that when I mentioned the number of your regiment, the Prince said he had several friends in the 18th, and should now think he had one more, which was very polite. By the way, I hear an excellent character of your officers for regularity and gentlemanlike manners. This report gives me great pleasure; for to live in bad society will deprave the best manners, and to live in good will improve the worst.

"I am trying a sort of bargain with neighbour Nicol Milne at present. He is very desirous of parting with his estate of Faldonside, and if he will be contented with a reasonable price, I am equally desirous to be the purchaser. I conceive it will come to about £30,000 at least. I will not agree to give a penny more; and I think that sum is probably £2000 and more above its actual marketable value. But then it lies extremely convenient for us, and would, joined to Abbotsford, make a very gentlemanlike property, worth at least £1800 or £2000 a-year. I can command about £10,000 of my own, and if I be spared life and health, I should not fear rubbing off the rest of the price, as Nicol is in no hurry for payment. As you will succeed me in my landed property, I think it right to communicate my views to you. I am much moved by the prospect of getting at about £2000 or £3000 worth of marle, which lies on Milne's side of the loch, but which can only be drained on my side, so that he can make no use of it. This would make the lands of Abbotsford worth 40s. an acre over-head, excepting the sheep farm. I am sensible I might dispose of my money to more advantage, but probably to none which, in the long run, would be better for you—certainly to none which would be productive of so much pleasure to myself. The woods are thriving, and it would be easy, at a trifling expense, to restore Faldonside loch, and stock it with fish. In fact, it would require but a small dam-head. By means of a little judicious planting, added to what is already there, the estate might be rendered one of the most beautiful in this part of Scotland. Such are my present plans, my dear boy, having as much your future welfare and profit in view as the immediate gratification of my own wishes.

"I am very sorry to tell you that poor Mrs. William Erskine is no more. She was sent by the medical people on a tour to the lakes of Cumberland, and was taken ill at Lowood, on Windermere. Nature, much exhausted by her previous indisposition, sunk under four days' illness. Her husband was with her, and two of her daughters—he is much to be pitied.

"Mr. Rees, the bookseller, told me he had met you in the streets of Cork, and reported well of the growth of your *Schnurr-bart*. I hope you know what that means. Pray write often, as the post comes so slow. I keep all your letters, and am much pleased with the frankness of the style. No word of your horses yet? but it is better not to be impatient, and to wait for good ones. I have been three times on Newark, and killed six hares each time. The two young dogs are capital good.

"I must not omit to tell you our old, and, I may add, our kind neighbour Lauchie, has departed, or, as Tom expresses it, has been fairly *flytten out o' the warld*. You know the old quarrel betwixt his brother and him about the wife—in an ill-fated hour Jock the brother came down to Lochbreist with a sister from Edinburgh, who was determined to have her share of the scolding-match; they attacked poor old Lauchie like mad folks, and reviled his wife in all sort of evil language. At length his passion was wrought up to a great pitch, and he answered, with much emotion, that if she were the greatest —— in Edinburgh, it was not their business, and as he uttered this speech, he fell down on his back, and lay a dead man before them. There is little doubt the violence of the agitation had broken a blood-vessel in the heart or brain. A very few days since he was running up and down calling for a coffin, and wishing to God he was in one; to which Swanston,† who was present, answered, he could not apply to a better hand, and he would make him one if he had a mind. He has left a will of his own making, but from some informality I think it will be set aside. His land cannot come into the market until his girl comes of age, which, by the way, makes me more able for the other bargain. His death took place at his own door, and shocking enough it is that an inoffensive creature should have been murdered (for in *foro conscientiæ* it is little better) in such a way. I went to the funeral. Very few people would take notice of Jock, whom they look on as a second Cain. The blackcocks are very plenty. I put up fourteen cocks and hens in walking up the Chappercleuch to look at the wood. Do you not wish you had been on the outside with your gun? Tom has kept us well supplied with game; he boasts that he shot fifteen times without a miss. I shall be glad to hear that you do the same on Mr. Newenham's grounds. Mamma, the girls, and Charles, all join in love and affection. Believe me ever, dear Walter, your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c. &c.

"Abbotsford, 3d Oct., 1819.

"My dear Lord,

"I am honoured with your Buxton letter. . . . . *Anent* Prince Leopold, I only heard of his approach at eight o'clock in the morning, and he was to be at Selkirk by eleven. The magistrates sent to ask me to help them to receive him. It occurred to me he might be coming to Melrose to see the Abbey, in which case I could not avoid asking him to Abbotsford, as he must pass my very door. I mentioned this to Mrs. Scott, who was lying quietly in bed, and I wish you had heard the scream she gave on the occasion. 'What have we to offer him?'—'Wine and cake,' said I, thinking to make all things easy; but she ejaculated in a tone of utter despair, 'Cake!! where am I to get cake?' However, being partly consoled with the recollection that his visit was a very improbable incident, and curiosity, as usual, proving too strong for alarm, she set out with me in order not to miss a peep of the great man. James Skene and his lady were with us, and we gave our carriages such additional dignity as a pair of leaders could add, and went to meet him in full puff. The Prince very civilly told me, that, though he could not see Melrose on this occasion, he wished to come to Abbotsford for an hour. New despair on the part of Mrs. Scott, who began to institute a domiciliary search for cold meat through the whole city of Selkirk, which produced *one shoulder of cold lamb*. In the mean while, his Royal Highness received the civic honours of the burgh very graciously. I had hinted to Baillie Lang,‡ that it ought only

* *Lady Wallace* was a pony; *Trout* a favourite pointer which the Cornet had given, at leaving home, to the young Laird of Harden, now the Master of Polwarth.

† John Swanston had then the care of the saw-mill at Toftfield; he was one of Scott's most valued dependants, and in the sequel succeeded Tom Purdie as his henchman.

‡ Scott's good friend, Mr. Andrew Lang, Procurator-fiscal for Selkirkshire, was then chief magistrate of the county town.

† See *ante*, p. 258.

to be licked *symbolically* on the present occasion; so he flourished it three times before his mouth, but without touching it with his lips, and the Prince followed his example as directed. Lang made an excellent speech, sensible, and feeling, and well delivered. The Prince seemed much surprised at this great propriety of expression and behaviour in a magistrate, whose people seemed such a rabble, and whose whole band of music consisted in a drum and fife. He noticed to Bailie Anderson, that Selkirk seemed very populous in proportion to its extent. 'On an occasion like this it seems so,' answered the Bailie, neatly enough, I thought. I question if any magistrates in the kingdom, lord mayors and aldermen not excepted, could have behaved with more decent and quiet good-breeding. Prince Leopold repeatedly alluded to this during the time he was at Abbotsford. I do not know how Mrs. Scott ultimately managed; but with broiled salmon, and black-cock, and partridges, she gave him a very decent lunch; and I chanced to have some very fine old hock, which was mighty germain to the matter.

"The Prince seems melancholy, whether naturally or from habit, I do not pretend to say; but I do not remember thinking him so at Paris, where I saw him frequently, then a much poorer man than myself; yet he showed some humour, for, alluding to the crowds that followed him every where, he mentioned some place where he had gone out to shoot, but was afraid to proceed for fear of 'bagging a boy.' He said he really thought of getting some shooting-place in Scotland, and promised me a longer visit on his return. If I had had a day's notice to have *warned the waters*, we could have met him with a very respectable number of the gentry; but there was no time for this, and probably he liked it better as it was. There was only young Clifton who could have come, and he was shy and cubbish, and would not, though requested by the Selkirk people. He was perhaps ashamed to march through Coventry with them. It hung often and sadly on my mind that *he* was wanting who could and would have received him like a Prince indeed; and yet the meeting betwixt them, had they been fated to meet, would have been a very sad one. I think I have now given your Lordship a very full, true, and particular account of our royal visit, unmatched even by that of King Charles at the Castle of Tillietudlem. That we did not speak of it for more than a week after it happened, and that that emphatic monosyllable, *The Prince*, is not heard amongst us more than ten times a-day, is, on the whole, to the credit of my family's understanding. The piper is the only one whose brain he seems to have endangered; for, as the Prince said he preferred him to any he had heard in the Highlands—(which, by the way, shows his Royal Highness knows nothing of the matter,)—the fellow seems to have become incapable of his ordinary occupation as a forester, and has cut stick and stem without remorse, to the tune of *Phail Phranse*, *i. e.* the Prince's welcome.

"I am just going to the head-court with Donaldson, and go a day sooner to exhume certain old monuments of the Rutherfords at Jedburgh. Edgerstone* is to meet me at Jedburgh for this research, and then we shall go up with him to dinner. My best respects attend Lady Montagu. I wish this letter may reach you on a more lively day than it is written in, for it requires little to add to its dulness. Tweed is coming down very fast, the first time this summer. Believe me, my dear Lord, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To W. Scott, Esq., 18th Hussars, Cork.

"Abbotsford, 14th October, 1819.

"Dear Walter,

"I had your last letter, and am very glad you find pleasant society. Mrs. Rundas of Arniston is so good as to send you some introductions, which you will deliver as soon as possible. You will be now in some degree accustomed to meet with strangers, and to form your estimate of their character and manners. I hope, in the mean time, the French and German are attended to; please to mention in your next letter what you are reading, and in what languages. The hours of youth, my dear Walter, are too precious to be spent all in gayety. We must lay up in that period when our spirit is active, and our memory strong, the stores of information which are not only to facilitate our progress through life, but to amuse and interest us in our later stage of existence. I very often think what an unhappy person I should have been, if I had not done something more or less towards improving my understanding when I was at your age; and I never reflect, without severe self-condemnation, on the opportunities of acquiring knowledge, which I either trifled with, or altogether neglected. I hope you will be wiser than I have been, and experience less of that self-reproach.

"My last acquainted you with Mrs. Erskine's death, and I grieve to say we have just received intelligence that our kind neighbour and good friend Lord Somerville is at the very last gasp. His disease is a dysentery, and the symptoms, as his brother writes to Mr. Samuel Somerville, are mortal. He is at Vevay, upon his road, I suppose, to Italy, where he had purposed spending the winter. His death, for I understand nothing else can be expected, will be another severe loss to me; for he was a kind, good friend, and at my time of day men do not readily take to new associates. I must own this has been one of the most melancholy years I ever past. The poor Duke, who loved me so well—Mrs. Erskine—Lord Somerville—not to mention others with whom I was less intimate, make it one year of mourning. I should not forget the Chief Baron, who, though from ill health we met of late seldom, was always my dear friend, and indeed very early benefactor. I must look forwards to seeing in your success and respectability, and in the affection and active improvement of all of you, those pleasures which are narrowed by the death of my contemporaries. Men cannot form new intimacies at my period of life, but must be happy or otherwise according to the good fortune and good conduct of those near relatives who rise around them.

"I wish much to know if you are lucky in a servant. Trust him with as little cash as possible, and keep short accounts. Many a good servant is spoiled by neglecting this simple precaution. The man is tempted to some expense of his own, gives way to it, and then has to make it up by a system of overcharge and peculation; and thus mischief begins, and the carelessness of the master makes a rogue out of an honest lad, and cheats himself into the bargain.

"I have a letter from you uncle Tom, telling me his eldest daughter is to be forthwith married to a Captain Huxley of his own regiment. As he has had a full opportunity of being acquainted with the young gentleman, and approves of the match, I have to hope that it will be a happy one. I fear there is no great fortune in the case on either side, which is to be regretted.

"Of domestic affairs I have little to tell you. The harvest has been excellent, the weather delightful; but this I must often have repeated. To-day I was thinning out fir-trees in the thicket, and the men were quite exhausted with the heat, and I myself, though only marking the trees, felt the exercise sufficiently warm. The wood is thriving delightfully. On the 28th we are to have a dance in honour of your birthday. I wish you could look in upon us for the day at least—only I am afraid we could not part with you when it was over, and so you would be in the guise of Cinderella, when she outstaid her time at the ball, and all her finery returned into its original base materials. Talking of balls, the girls would tell you the Melrose hop, where mamma presided, went off well.

"I expect poor Erskine and his daughter next week, or the week after. I went in to town to see him—and found him bearing his great loss with his natural gentleness and patience. But he was sufficiently distressed, as he has great reason to be. I also expect Lord and Lady Melville here very soon. Sir William Rae (now Lord Advocate) and his lady came to us on Saturday. On Sunday Maida walked with us, and in jumping the paling at the Greentongue park contrived to hang himself up by the hind leg. He howled at first, but seeing us making towards him he stopped crying, and waved his tail by way of signal, it was supposed, for assistance. He sustained no material injury, though his leg was strangely twisted into the bars, and he was nearly hanging by it. He showed great gratitude, in his way, to his deliverers.

"This is a long letter, and little in it; but that is nothing extraordinary. All send best love—and I am ever, dear Walter, your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Thomas Scott, Esq., Paymaster 70th Regiment, Canada.

"Abbotsford, 16th Oct. 1819.

"Dear Tom,

"I received yesterday your very acceptable letter, containing the news of Jessie's approaching marriage, in which, as a match agreeable to her mother and you, and relieving your minds from some of the anxious prospects which haunt those of parents, I take the most sincere interest. Before this reaches you, the event will probably have taken place. Mean time, I enclose a letter to the bride or wife, as the case may happen to be. I have sent a small token of good-will to ballast my good wishes, which you will please to value for the young lady, that she may employ it as most convenient or agreeable to her. A little more fortune would perhaps have done the young folks no harm; but Captain Huxley, being such as you describe him, will have every chance of getting forward in his profession; and the happiest marriages are often

* The late John Rutherford of Edgerstone, long M. P. for Roxburghshire, was a person of high worth and universally esteemed. Scott used to say Edgerstone was his *beau ideal* of the character of a country gentleman. He was, I believe, the head of the once great and powerful clan of Rutherford.

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those in which there is, at first, occasion for prudence and economy. I do certainly feel a little of the surprise which you hint at, for time flies over our heads one scarce marks how, and children become marriageable ere we consider them as out of the nursery. My eldest son, Walter, has also wedded himself—but it is to a regiment of hussars. He is at present a cornet in the 18th, and quartered in Cork barracks. He is capital at most exercises, but particularly as a horseman. I do not intend he shall remain in the cavalry, however, but shall get him into the line when he is capable of promotion. Since he has chosen this profession, I shall be desirous that he follows it out in good earnest, and that can only be done by getting into the infantry.

"My late severe illness has prevented my going up to London to receive the honour which the Prince Regent has announced his intention to inflict upon me. My present intention is, if I continue as well as I have been, to go up about Christmas to get this affair over. My health was restored (I trust permanently) by the use of calomel, a very severe and painful remedy, especially in my exhausted state of body, but it has proved a radical one. By the way, *Radical* is a word in very bad odour here, being used to denote a set of blackguards a hundred times more mischievous and absurd than our old friends in 1794 and 1795. You will learn enough of the doings of the *Radical Reformers* from the papers. In Scotland we are quiet enough, excepting in the manufacturing districts, and we are in very good hands, as Sir William Rae, our old commander, is Lord Advocate. Rae has been here two or three days, and left me yesterday—he is the old man, sensible, cool-headed, and firm, always thinking of his duty, never of himself. He inquired kindly after you, and I think will be disposed to serve you, should an opportunity offer. Poor William Erskine has lost his excellent wife, after a long and wasting illness. She died at Lowood on Windermere, he having been recommended to take her upon a tour about three weeks before her death. I own I should scarce forgive a physician who should contrive to give me this addition to family distress. I went to town last week to see him, and found him, upon the whole, much better than I expected. I saw my mother on the same occasion, admirably well indeed. She is greatly better than this time two years, when she rather quacked herself a little too much. I have sent your letter to our mother, and will not fail to transmit to our other friends the agreeable news of your daughter's settlement. Our cousin, Sir Harry Macdougal, is marrying his eldest daughter to Sir Thomas Brisbane, a very good match on both sides. I have been paying a visit on the occasion, which suspends my closing this letter. I hope to hear very soon from you. Respecting our silence, I like a ghost only waited to be spoken to, and you may depend on me as a regular correspondent, when you find time to be one yourself. Charlotte and the girls join in kind love to Mrs. Scott and all the family. I should like to know what you mean to do with young Walter, and whether I can assist you in that matter. Believe me, dear Tom, ever your affectionate brother,

W. Scott."

To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.

"Abbotsford, Nov. 10, 1819.

"My dear Terry,

"I should be very sorry if you thought the interest I take in you and yours so slight as not to render your last letter extremely interesting. We have all our various combats to fight in this best of all possible worlds, and, like brave fellow-soldiers, ought to assist one another as much as possible. I have little doubt, that if God spares me till my little namesake be fit to take up his share of the burden, I may have interest enough to be of great advantage to him in the entrance of life. In the present state of your own profession, you would not willingly, I suppose, choose him to follow it; and, as it is very seductive to young people of a lively temper and good taste for the art, you should, I think, consider early how you mean to dispose of little Walter, with a view, that is, to the future line of life which you would wish him to adopt. Mrs. Terry has not the good health which all who know her amiable disposition and fine accomplishments would anxiously wish her; yet, with impaired health and the caution which it renders necessary, we have very frequently instances of the utmost verge of existence being attained, while robust strength is cut off in the middle career. So you must be of good heart, and hope the best in this as in other cases of a like affecting nature. I go to town on Monday, and will forward under Mr. Freeling's cover as much of Ivanhoe as is finished in print. It is completed, but in the hands of a very slow transcriber; when I can collect it I will send you the MS., which you will please to keep secret from every eye. I think this will give a start, if it be worth taking, of about a month, for the work will be out on the 20th of December. It is certainly possible to adopt it to the stage, but the expense of scenery and decoration would be great, this being a tale of chivalry, not of character. There is a tale in existence, by dramatizing which, I am certain, a most powerful effect might be produced: it is called Undine, and I believe has been translated into French by Mademoiselle Montolieu, and into English from her version: do read it, and tell me your opinion: in German the character of Undine is exquisite. The only objection is that the catastrophe is unhappy, but this might be altered. I hope to be in London for ten days the end of next month; and so good by for the present, being in great haste, most truly yours,

W. Scott."

I conclude this chapter with a letter, written two or three days before Scott quited Abbotsford for the winter session. It is addressed to his friend Hartstonge, who had taken the opportunity of the renewal of Scott's correspondence, to solicit his opinion and assistance touching a MS. drama; and the reader will be diverted with the style in which the amiable tragédian is treated to his *quietus*:—

To Matthew Weld Hartstonge, Esq., Dublin.

"Abbotsford, 11th Nov., 1819.

"My dear Sir,

"I was duly favoured with your packet, containing the play, as well as your very kind letter. I will endeavour (though extremely unwilling to offer criticism on most occasions) to meet your confidence with perfect frankness. I do not consider the Tragedy as likely to make that favourable impression on the public which I would wish that the performance of a friend should effect—and I by no means recommend to you to hazard it upon the boards. In other composition the neglect of the world takes nothing from the merit of the author; but there is something ludicrous in being *affiché* as the author of an unsuccessful play. Besides, you entail on yourself the great and eternal plague of altering and retrenching to please the humours of performers, who are, speaking generally, extremely ignorant, and capricious in proportion. These are not vexations to be voluntarily undertaken; and the truth is, that in the present day there is only one reason which seems to me adequate for the encountering the plague of trying to please a set of conceited performers and a very motley audience,—I mean the want of money, from which, fortunately, you are exempted. It is very true that some day or other a great dramatic genius may arise to strike out a new path; but I fear till this happens no great effect will be produced by treading in the old one. The reign of Tragedy seems to be over, and the very considerable poetical abilities which have been lately applied to it have failed to revive it. Should the public ever be indulged with small theatres adapted to the hours of the better ranks in life, the dramatic art may recover; at present it is in abeyance—and I do therefore advise you in all sincerity to keep the Tragedy (which I return under cover) safe under your own charge. Pray think of this as one of the most unpleasant offices of friendship—and be not angry with me for having been very frank, upon an occasion when frankness may be more useful than altogether palatable.

"I am much obliged to you for your kind intentions towards my young Hussar. We have not heard from him for three weeks. I believe he is making out a meditated visit to Killarney. I am just leaving the country for Edinburgh, to attend my duty in the courts; but the badness of the weather in some measure reconciles me to the unpleasant change. I have the pleasure to continue the most satisfactory accounts of my health; it is to external appearance as strong as in my strongest days—indeed, after I took once more to Sancho's favourite occupations of eating and sleeping, I recovered my losses wonderfully. Very truly yours,

Walter Scott."

CHAPTER XLVI.

POLITICAL ALARMS—THE RADICALS—LEVIES OF VOLUNTEERS—PROJECT OF THE BUCCLEUCH LEGION—DEATH OF SCOTT'S MOTHER—HER BROTHER DR. RUTHERFORD—AND HER SISTER CHRISTIAN—LETTERS TO LORD MONTAGU—MR. THOMAS SCOTT—CORNET SCOTT—MR. LAIDLAW—AND LADY LOUISA STUART—PUBLICATION OF IVANHOE.—1819.

Towards the winter of 1819 there prevailed a spirit of alarming insubordination among the mining population of Northumberland and the weavers of the west of Scotland; and Scott was particularly gratified with finding that his own neighbours at Galashiels had escaped the contagion. "There can be

little doubt that this exemption was principally owing to the personal influence and authority of the Laird of Abbotsford and Sheriff of the Forest; but the people of Galashiels were also fortunate in the qualities of their own beneficent landlords, Mr. Scott of Gala, and Mr. Pringle of Torwoodlee. The progress of the western *Reformers* by degrees led even the most important *Whigs* in that district to exert themselves in the organization of volunteer regiments, both mounted and dismounted; and, when it became generally suspected that Glasgow and Paisley maintained a dangerous correspondence with the refractory colliers of Northumberland—Scott and his friends the Lairds of Torwoodlee and Gala determined to avail themselves of the loyalty and spirit of the men of Ettrick and Teviotdale, and proposed first raising a company of sharpshooters among their own immediate neighbours, and afterwards—this plan receiving every encouragement—a legion or brigade upon a large scale, to be called the Buccleuch Legion. During November and December, 1819, these matters formed the chief daily care and occupation of the author of Ivanhoe; and though he was still obliged to dictate most of the chapters of his novel, we shall see that, in case it should be necessary for the projected levy of Foresters to march upon Tynedale, he was prepared to place himself at their head.

He had again intended, as soon as he should have finished Ivanhoe, to proceed to London and receive his baronetcy; but as that affair had been crossed at Easter by his own illness, so at Christmas it was again obliged to be put off in consequence of a heavy series of domestic afflictions. Within one week Scott lost his excellent mother, his uncle Dr. Daniel Rutherford, Professor of Botany in the University of Edinburgh—and their sister, Christian Rutherford, already often mentioned as one of the dearest and most esteemed of all his friends and connexions.

The following letters require no further introduction or comment.

To the Lord Montagu, Buxton.

"Abbotsford, 12th Nov. 1819.

"My dear Lord,

. . . . . I wish I had any news to send your Lordship, but the best is we are all quiet here. The Galashiels weavers, both men and masters, have made their political creed known to me, and have sworn themselves anti-radical. They came in solemn procession, with their banners, and my own piper at their head, whom they had borrowed for the nonce. But the Tweed being in flood, we could only communicate like Wallace and Bruce across the Carron. However, two deputies came through in the boat, and made me acquainted with their loyal purposes. The evening was crowned with two most distinguished actions—the weavers refusing, in the most peremptory manner, to accept of a couple of guineas to buy whisky, and the renowned John of Skye, piper in ordinary to the Laird of Abbotsford, no less steadily refusing a very handsome collection, which they offered him for his minstrelsy. All this sounds very nonsensical, but the people must be humoured and countenanced when they take the right turn, otherwise they will be sure to take the wrong. The accounts from the West sometimes make me wish our little Duke five or six years older, and able to get on horseback. It seems approaching to the old song—

'Come fill up our cup, come fill up our can,
Come saddle the horses, and call up our men,
Come open the gates, and let us go free,
And we'll show them the bonnets of bonny Dundee.'

"I am rather too old for that work now, and I cannot look forward to it with the sort of feeling that resembled pleasure—as I did in my younger and more healthy days. However, I have got a good following here, and will endeavour to keep them together till times mend.

"My respectful compliments attend Lady Montagu, and I am always, with the greatest regard, your Lordship's very faithful WALTER SCOTT."

To Cornet Walter Scott, 18th Hussars.

"Edinburgh, 13th Nov., 1819.

"Dear Walter,

"I am much surprised and rather hurt at not hearing from you for so long a while. You ought to remember that, however pleasantly the time may be passing with you, we at home have some right to expect that a part of it (a very small part will serve the turn) should be dedicated, were it but for the sake of propriety, to let us know what you are about. I cannot say I shall be flattered by finding myself under the necessity of again complaining of neglect. To write once a week to one or other of us is no great sacrifice, and it is what I earnestly pray you to do.

"We are to have great doings in Edinburgh this winter. No less than Prince Gustavus of Sweden is to pass the season here, and do what Princes call studying. He is but half a Prince either, for this Northern Star is somewhat shorn of his beams. His father was, you know, dethroned by Buonaparte, at least by the influence of his arms, and one of his generals, Bernadotte, made heir of the Swedish throne in his stead. But this youngster, I suppose, has his own dreams of royalty, for he is nephew to the Emperor of Russia, (by the mother's side,) and that is a likely connexion to be of use to him, should the Swedish nobles get rid of Bernadotte, as it is said they wish to do. Lord Melville has recommended the said Prince particularly to my attention, though I do not see how I can do much for him.

"I have just achieved my grand remove from Abbotsford to Edinburgh—a motion which you know I do not make with great satisfaction. We had the Abbotsford hunt last week. The company was small, as the newspapers say, but select, and we had excellent sport, killing eight hares. We coursed on Gala's ground, and he was with us. The dinner went off with its usual alacrity, but we wanted you and Sally to ride and mark for us.

"I enclose another letter from Mrs. Dundas of Arniston. I am afraid you have been careless in not delivering those I formerly forwarded, because in one of them, which Mrs. Dundas got from a friend, there was enclosed a draught for some money. I beg you will be particular in delivering any letters intrusted to you, because though the good-nature of the writers may induce them to write to be of service to you, yet it is possible that they may, as in this instance, add things which are otherwise of importance to their correspondents. It is probable that you may have picked up among your military friends the idea that the mess of a regiment is all in all sufficient to itself; but when you see a little of the world you will be satisfied that none but pedants—for there is pedantry in all professions—herd exclusively together, and that those who do so are laughed at in real good company. This you may take on the authority of one who has seen more of life and society, in all its various gradations, from the highest to the lowest, than a whole hussar regimental mess, and who would be much pleased by knowing that you reap the benefit of an experience which has raised him from being a person of small consideration, to the honour of being father of an officer of hussars. I therefore enclose another letter from the same kind friend, of which I pray you to avail yourself. In fact, those officers who associate entirely among themselves see and know no more of the world than their messman, and get conceited and disagreeable by neglecting the opportunities offered for enlarging their understanding. Every distinguished soldier whom I have known, and I have known many, was a man of the world, and accustomed to general society.

"To sweeten my lecture, I have to inform you that, this being quarter day, I have a remittance of £50 to send you whenever you are pleased to let me know it will be acceptable—for, like a ghost, I will not speak again till I am spoken to.

"I wish you not to avail yourself of your leave of absence this winter, because, if my health continues good, I shall endeavour to go on the Continent next summer, and should be very desirous to have you with me; therefore, I beg you to look after your French and German. We had a visit from a very fine fellow indeed at Abbotsford, Sir Thomas Brisbane, who long commanded a brigade in the Peninsula. He is very scientific, but bores no one with it, being at the same time a well informed man on all subjects, and particularly alert in his own profession, and willing to talk about what he has seen. Sir Harry Hay Macdougal, whose eldest daughter he is to marry, brought him to Abbotsford on a sort of wedding visit, as we are cousins according to the old fashion of country kin: Beardie, of whom Sir Harry has a beautiful picture, being a son of an Isabel Macdougal, who was, I fancy, grand-aunt to Sir Harry.

"Once more, my dear Walter, write more frequently, and do not allow yourself to think that the first neglect in correspondence I have ever had to complain of has been on your part. I hope you have received the Meerschaum pipe.—I remain your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, 3d December, 1819.

"My dear Walter,

"I hope your servant proves careful and trusty

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Pray let me know this. At any rate, do not trust him a bit further than you can help it, for in buying any thing you will get it much cheaper yourself than he will. We are now settled for the winter; that is, all of them excepting myself, who must soon look southwards. On Saturday we had a grand visiter, *i. e.*, the Crown Prince of Sweden, under the name of Count Itterburg. His travelling companion or tutor is Baron de Polier, a Swiss of eminence in literature and rank. They took a long look at King Charles XII., who, you cannot have forgotten, keeps his post over the dining-room chimney; and we were all struck with the resemblance betwixt old Iron-head, as the janissaries called him, and his descendant. The said descendant is a very fine lad, with very soft and mild manners, and we passed the day very pleasantly. They were much diverted with Captain Adam, who outdid his usual outdoings, and, like the barber of Bagdad, danced the dance and sung the song of every person he spoke of.

"I am concerned I cannot give a very pleasant account of things here. Glasgow is in a terrible state. The Radicals had a plan to seize on 1000 stand of arms, as well as a depôt of ammunition, which had been sent from Edinburgh Castle for the use of the volunteers. The Commander-in-Chief, Sir Thomas Bradford, went to Glasgow in person, and the whole city was occupied with patroles of horse and foot, to deter them from the meditated attack on the barracks. The arms were then delivered to the volunteers, who are said to be 4000 on paper; how many effective and trustworthy, I know not. But it was a new sight in Scotland on a Sunday to see all the inhabitants in arms, soldiers patroling the streets, and the utmost precaution of military service exacted and observed in an apparently peaceful city.

"The Old Blue Regiment of volunteers was again summoned together yesterday. They did not muster very numerous, and looked most of them a little *ancient*. However, they are getting recruits fast, and then the veterans may fall out of the ranks. The Commander-in-Chief has told the President that he may soon be obliged to leave the charge of the castle to these armed citizens. This looks serious. The President* made one of the most eloquent addresses that ever was heard, to the Old Blues. The Highland chiefs have offered to raise their clans, and march them to any point in Scotland where their services shall be required. To be sure, the Glasgow folks would be a little surprised at the arrival of Dugald Dhu, 'brogues an' brochan an' a'.' I shall, I think, bid Ballantyne send you a copy of his weekly paper, which often contains things you would like to see, and will keep you in mind of Old Scotland.

"They are embodying a troop of cavalry in Edinburgh —nice young men and good horses. They have paid me the compliment to make me an honorary member of the corps, as my days of active service have been long over. Pray take care, however, of my sabre, in case the time comes which must turn out all.

"I have almost settled that, if things look moderately tranquil in Britain in spring or summer, I will go abroad, and take Charles, with the purpose of leaving him, for two or three years, at the famous institution of Fellenberg, near Berne, of which I hear very highly. Two of Fraser Tytler's sons are there, and he makes a very favourable report of the whole establishment. I think that such a residence abroad will not only make him well acquainted with French and German, as indeed he will hear nothing else, but also prevent his becoming an Edinburgh *petit-maître* of fourteen or fifteen, which he could otherwise scarce avoid. I mentioned to you that I should be particularly glad to get you leave of absence, providing it does not interfere with your duty, in order that you may go with us. If I have cash enough I will also take your sister and mamma, and you, might return home with them by Paris, in case I went on to Italy. All this is doubtful, but I think it is almost certain that Charles and I go, and hope to have you with us. This will be probably about July next, and I wish you particularly to keep it in view. If these dark prospects become darker, which God forbid! neither you nor I will have it in our power to leave the post to which duty calls us.

"Mamma and the girls are quite well, and so is Master Charles, who is of course more magnificent, as being the only specimen of youthhead at home. He has got an old broadsword hanging up at his bedhead, which, to be the more ready for service, hath no sheath. To this I understand we are to trust for our defence against the Radicals. Anne (notwithstanding the assurance) is so much afraid of the disaffected, that last night, returning with Sophia from Portobello, where they had been dancing with the Scotts of Harden, she saw a Radical in every man that the carriage passed. Sophia is of course wise and philosophical, and mamma has not yet been able to conceive why we do not catch and hang the whole of them, untried and unconvicted. Amidst all their various emotions, they join in best love to you; and I always am very truly yours,

W. Scott.

"P. S.—I shall set off for London on the 25th."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, 17th December, 1819.

"My dear Walter,

"I have a train of most melancholy news to acquaint you with. On Saturday I saw your grandmother perfectly well, and on Sunday the girls drank tea with her, when the good old lady was more than usually in spirits; and, as if she had wished to impress many things on their memory, told over a number of her old stories with her usual alertness and vivacity. On Monday she had an indisposition, which proved to be a paralytic affection, and on Tuesday she was speechless, and had lost the power of one side, without any hope of recovery, although she may linger some days. But what is very remarkable, and no less shocking, Dr. Rutherford, who attended his sister in perfect health upon Tuesday, died himself upon the Wednesday morning. He had breakfasted without intimating the least illness, and was dressed to go out, and particularly to visit my mother, when he sunk backwards, and died in his daughter Anne's arms, almost without a groan. To add to this melancholy list, our poor friend, Miss Christie, is despaired of. She was much affected by my mother's fatal indisposition, but does not know as yet of her brother's death.

"Dr. Rutherford was a very ingenious as well as an excellent man, more of a gentleman that his profession too often are, for he could not take the backstairs mode of rising in it, otherwise he might have been much more wealthy. He ought to have had the Chemistry class, as he was one of the best chemists in Europe;* but superior interest assigned it to another, who, though a neat experimentalist, is not to be compared to poor Daniel for originality of genius. Since you knew him his health was broken and his spirits dejected, which may be traced to the loss of his eldest son on board an East Indiaman, and also, I think, to a slight paralytic touch which he had some years ago.

"To all this domestic distress I have to add the fearful and unsettled state of the country. All the regular troops are gone to Glasgow. The Mid-Lothian Yeomanry and other corps of volunteers went there on Monday, and about 5000 men occupied the town. In the mean while, we were under considerable apprehension here, the Castle being left in the charge of the city volunteers and a few veterans.

"All our corner, high and low, is loyal. Torwoodlee, Gala, and I, have offered to raise a corps, to be called the Loyal Foresters, to act any where south of the Forth. If matters get worse, I will ask leave of absence for you from the Commander-in-chief, because your presence will be materially useful to levy men, and you can only be idle where you are, unless Ireland should be disturbed. Your old corps of the Selkirkshire Yeomanry have been under orders, and expect to be sent either to Dumfries or Carlisle. Berwick is dismantled, and they are removing the stores, cannon, &c., from one of the strongest places here, for I defy the devil to pass the bridge at Berwick, if reasonably well kept by 100 men. But there is a spirit of consternation implied in many of the orders, which, *entre nous*, I like worse than what I see or know of the circumstances which infer real danger. For myself, I am too old to fight, but nobody is too old to die, like a man of virtue and honour, in defence of the principles he has always maintained.

"I would have you to keep yourself ready to return here suddenly, in case the Duke of York should permit your temporary services in your own country, which, if things grow worse, I will certainly ask. The fearful thing is the secret and steady silence observed by the Radicals in all they do. Yet, without any thing like effective arms or useful discipline, without money and without a commissariat, what can they do, but, according to their favourite toast, have blood and plunder? Mamma and the girls, as well as Charles, send kind love. Your affectionate father,

Walter Scott."

To Mr. William Laidlaw, Kaeside.

"Edinburgh, Dec. 20, 1819.

"My dear Willie,

"Distress has been very busy with me since I wrote to

* The Right Honourable Charles Hope, Lord President of the Court of Session, was Colonel-commandant of the Old Blues, or First Regiment of Edinburgh Volunteers.

* "The subject of his *Thesis* is singular, and entitles Rutherford to rank very high among the chemical philosophers of modern times. Its title is "De Aere Mephitico," &c.—It is universally admitted that Dr. Rutherford first discovered this gas—the reputation of his discovery being speedily spread through Europe, his character as a chemist of the first eminence was firmly established, and much was augured from a young man in his twenty-second year having distinguished himself so remarkably."—Bower's *History of the University of Edinburgh*, vol. iii. (1830,) pp. 260—1.

you. I have lost, in the course of one week, my valued relations, Dr. and Miss Rutherford—happy in this, that neither knew of the other's dissolution. My dear mother has offered me deeper subject of affliction, having been struck with the palsy, and being now in such a state that I scarce hope to see her again.

"But the strange times compel me, under this pressure of domestic distress, to attend to public business. I find Mr. Scott of Gala agrees with me in thinking we should appeal at this crisis to the good sense and loyalty of the lower orders, and we have resolved to break the ice, and be the first in the Lowlands, so far as I have yet heard of, to invite our labourers, and those over whom circumstances and fortune give us influence, to rise with us in arms, and share our fate. You know, as well as any one, that I have always spent twice the income of my property in giving work to my neighbours, and I hope they will not be behind the Galashiels people, who are very zealous. Gala and I go hand in hand, and purpose to raise at least a company each of men, to be drilled as sharp-shooters or infantry, which will be a lively and interesting amusement for the young fellows. The dress we propose to be as simple, and at the same time as serviceable as possible; a jacket and trowsers of Galashiels gray cloth, and a smart bonnet with a small feather, or, to save even that expense, a sprig of holly. And we will have shooting at the mark, and prizes, and fun, and a little whiskey, and daily pay when on duty or drill. I beg of you, dear Willie, to communicate my wish to all who have received a good turn at my hand, or may expect one, or may be desirous of doing me one—(for I should be sorry Darnick and Brigend were beat)—and to all other free and honest fellows who will take share with me on this occasion. I do not wish to take any command farther than such as shall entitle me to go with the corps, for I wish it to be distinctly understood that, in whatever capacity, *I go with them*, and take a share in good or bad, as it casts up. I cannot doubt that I will have your support, and I hope you will use all your enthusiasm in our behalf. Morrison volunteers as our engineer. Those who I think should be spoke to are the following, among the higher class:—

"John Usher.* He should be lieutenant, or his son ensign.

"Sam Somerville.† I will speak to him—he may be lieutenant, if Usher declines; but I think in that case Usher should give us his son.

"Young Nicol Milne‡ is rather young, but I will offer to his father to take him in.

"Harper§ is a *sine qua non*. Tell him I depend on him for the honour of Darnick. I should propose to him to take a gallant halbert.

"Adam Ferguson thinks you should be our adjutant. John Ferguson I propose for captain. He is steady, right bold, and has seen much fire. The auld captain will help us in one shape or other. For myself, I know not what they propose to make of me, but it cannot be any thing very active. However, I should like to have a steady, quiet horse, drilled to stand fire well, and if he has these properties, no matter how stupid, so he does not stumble. In this case, the price of such a horse will be no object.

"These, my dear friend, are your beating orders. I would propose to raise about sixty men, and not to take old men. John the Turk‖ will be a capital corporal; and I hope in general that all my young fellows will go with me, leaving the older men to go through necessary labour. Sound Tom what he would like. I think, perhaps, he would prefer managing matters at home in your absence and mine at drill.

"John of Skye is cock-a-hoop upon the occasion, and I suppose has made fifty blunders about it by this time. You must warn Tom Jamieson, Gordon Winnes, John Swanston, (who will carry off all the prizes at shooting,) Davidson, and so forth.

"If you think it necessary, a little handbill might be circulated. But it may be better to see if government will accept our services; and I think, in the situation of the country, when work is scarce, and we offer pay for their playing themselves, we should have choice of men. But I would urge no one to do what he did not like.

"The very precarious state of my poor mother detains me here, and makes me devolve this troublesome duty upon you. All you have to do, however, is to sound the men, and mark down those who seem zealous. They will perhaps have to fight with the pitmen and colliers of Northumberland, for defence of their firesides, for these literal *blackguards* are got beyond the management of their own people. And if such is the case, better keep them from coming into Scotland, than encounter the mischief they might do there. Yours always most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Thos. Scott, Esq., 70th Regiment, Kingston, Canada.

"Edinburgh, 22d December, 1819.

"My dear Tom,

"I wrote you about ten days since, stating that we were all well here. In that very short space a change so sudden and so universal has taken place among your friends here, that I have to communicate to you a most miserable catalogue of losses. Our dear mother was on Sunday, the 12th December, in all her usual strength and alertness of mind. I had seen and conversed with her on the Saturday preceding, and never saw her better in my life of late years. My two daughters drank tea with her on Sunday, when she was uncommonly lively, telling them a number of stories, and being in rather unusual spirits, probably from the degree of excitation which sometimes is remarked to precede a paralytic affection. In the course of Monday she received that fatal summons, which at first seemed slight; but in the night betwixt Monday and Tuesday our mother lost the use both of speech and of one side. Since that time she has lain in bed constantly, yet so sensible as to see me and express her earnest blessing on all of us. The power of speech is totally lost; nor is there any hope, at her advanced age, that the scene can last long. Probably a few hours will terminate it. At any rate, life is not to be wished, even for our nearest and dearest, in those circumstances. But this heavy calamity was only the commencement of our family losses. Dr. Rutherford, who had seemed perfectly well, and had visited my mother upon Tuesday the 14th, was suddenly affected with gout in his stomach, or some disease equally rapid, on Wednesday the 15th, and without a moment's warning or complaint, fell down a dead man, almost without a single groan. You are aware of his fondness for animals; he was just stroking his cat after eating his breakfast, when, without more warning than a half-uttered exclamation, he sunk on the ground, and died in the arms of his daughter Anne. Though the Doctor had no formed complaint, yet I have thought him looking poorly for some months; and though there was no failure whatever in intellect, or any thing which approached it, yet his memory was not so good, and I thought he paused during the last time he attended me, and had difficulty in recollecting the precise terms of his recipe. Certainly there was a great decay of outward strength. We were very anxious about the effect this fatal news was likely to produce on the mind and decayed health of our aunt, Miss C. Rutherford, and resolved, as her health had been gradually falling off ever since she returned from Abbotsford, that she should never learn any thing of it until it was impossible to conceal it longer. But God has so ordered it that she was never to know the loss she had sustained, and which she would have felt so deeply. On Friday, the 17th December, the second day after her brother's death, she expired, without a groan and without suffering, about six in the morning. And so we lost an excellent and warm-hearted relation, one of the few women I ever knew whose strength of mental faculties enabled her, at a mature period of life, to supply the defects of an imperfect education. It is a most uncommon and afflicting circumstance, that a brother and two sisters should be taken ill the same day'—that two of them should die, without any rational possibility of the survivance of the third—and that no one of the three could be affected by learning the loss of the other. The Doctor was buried on Monday, 20th, and Miss Rutherford this day, (Wednesday, 22d,) in the burial place adjoining to and surrounding one of the new Episcopal chapels,* where Robert Rutherford† had purchased a burial ground of some extent, and parted with one half to the Russells. It is surrounded with a very high wall, and all the separate burial grounds, five, I think, in number, are separated by party walls, going down to the depth of twelve feet, so as to prevent the possibility either of encroachment, or of disturbing the relics of the dead. I have purchased one half of Miss Russell's interest in this sad spot, moved by its extreme seclusion, privacy, and security. When poor Jack was buried in the Grayfriar's churchyard, where my father and Anne lie,‡ I thought

* Mr. Usher has already been mentioned as Scott's predecessor in the property of Toftfield. He now resided near those lands, and was Scott's tenant on the greater part of them.

† Samuel Somerville, W. S., (a son of the historian of Queen Anne,) had a pretty villa at Lowood, on the Tweed, immediately opposite the seat of his relation, Lord Somerville, of whose estate he had the management.

‡ Nicol Milne, Esq. (now advocate,) eldest son of the Laird of Faldonside.

§ Harper, keeper of a little inn at Darnick, was a gallant and spirited yeoman—uniformly the gainer of the prizes at every contest of strength and agility in that district.

‖ One of Scott's foresters—thus designated as being, in all senses of the word, a *gallant* fellow.

* St. John's Chapel.

† Robert Rutherford, Esq., W. S., son to the Professor of Botany.

‡ "Our family heretofore buried in the Gray Friar's Churchyard, close by the entrance to Heriot's Hospital, and on the southern or left-hand side as you pass from the churchyard."—*MS. Memorandum.*

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their graves more encroached upon than I liked to witness; and in this new place I intend to lay our poor mother when the scene shall close; so that the brother and the two sisters, whose fate has been so very closely entwined in death, may not be divided in the grave—and this I hope you will approve of.

Thursday, December 23d.—My mother still lingers this morning, and as her constitution is so excellent, she may perhaps continue to exist some time, or till another stroke. It is a great consolation that she is perfectly easy. All her affairs of every sort have been very long arranged for this great change, and with the assistance of Donaldson and Macculloch, you may depend, when the event takes place, that your interest will be attended to most pointedly. I hope our civil tumults here are like to be ended by the measures of Parliament. I mentioned in my last that Kinloch of Kinloch was to be tried for sedition. He has forfeited his bail, and was yesterday laid under outlawry for non-appearance. Our neighbours in Northumberland are in a deplorable state; upwards of 50,000 blackguards are ready to rise between Tyne and Wear.* On the other hand, the Scottish frontiers are steady and loyal, and arming fast. Scott of Gala and I have offered 200 men, all fine strapping young fellows, and good marksmen, willing to go any where with us. We could easily double the number. So the necessity of the times has made me get on horseback once more. Our mother has at different times been perfectly conscious of her situation, and knew every one, though totally unable to speak. She seemed to take a very affectionate farewell of me the last time I saw her, which was the day before yesterday; and as she was much agitated, Dr. Keith advised I should not see her again unless she seemed to desire it, which hitherto she has not done. She sleeps constantly, and will probably be so removed. Our family sends love to yours. Yours most affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

Scott's excellent mother died on the 24th December—the day after he closed the foregoing letter to his brother.

On the 18th, in the midst of these accumulated afflictions, the romance of Ivanhoe made its appearance. The date has been torn from the following letter, but it was evidently written while all these events were fresh and recent.

To the Lady Louisa Stuart, Ditton Park, Windsor.

"Dear Lady Louisa,

"I am favoured with your letter from Ditton, and am glad you found any thing to entertain you in Ivanhoe. Novelty is what this giddy-paced time demands imperiously, and I certainly studied as much as I could to get out of the old beaten track, leaving those who like to keep the road, which I have rutted pretty well. I have had a terrible time of it this year, with the loss of dear friends and near relations; it is almost fearful to count up my losses, as they make me bankrupt in society. My brother-in-law; our never-to-be-enough regretted Duke; Lord Chief Baron,† my early, kind, and constant friend, who took me up when I was a young fellow of little mark or likelihood; the wife of my intimate friend William Erskine; the only son of my friend David Hume, a youth of great promise, and just entering into life, who had grown up under my eye from childhood; my excellent mother; and, within a few days, her surviving brother and sister. My mother was the only one of these whose death was the natural consequence of very advanced life. And our sorrows are not at an end. A sister of my mother's, Mrs. Russell of Ashestiel, long deceased, had left (besides several sons, of whom only one now survives and is in India) three daughters, who lived with her youngest sister, Miss Rutherford, and were in the closest habits of intimacy with us. The eldest of these girls, and a most excellent creature she is, was in summer so much shocked by the sudden news of the death of one of the brothers I have mentioned, that she was deprived of the use of her limbs by an affection either nervous or paralytic. She was slowly recovering from this afflicting and helpless situation, when the sudden fate of her aunts and uncle, particularly of her who had acted as a mother to the family, brought on a new shock; and though perfectly possessed of her mind, she has never since been able to utter a word. Her youngest sister, a girl of one or two and twenty, was so much shocked by this scene of accumulated distress, that she was taken very ill, and having suppressed and concealed her disorder, relief came too late, and she has been taken from us also. She died in the arms of the elder sister, helpless as I have described her; and to separate the half dead from the actual corpse was the most melancholy thing possible. You can hardly conceive, dear Lady Louisa, the melancholy feeling of seeing the place of last repose belonging to the devoted family open four times within so short a space, and to meet the same group of sorrowing friends and relations on the same sorrowful occasion. Looking back on those whom I have lost, all well known to me excepting my brother-in-law, whom I could only judge of by the general report in his favour, I can scarce conceive a group possessing more real worth and amiable qualities, not to mention talents, and accomplishments. I have never felt so truly what Johnson says so well—

> 'Condemn'd to Hope's delusive mine,
> As on we toil from day to day,
> By sudden blasts, or slow decline,
> Our social comforts drop away.'

"I am not sure whether it was your ladyship, or the poor Duchess of Buccleuch, who met my mother once, and flattered me by being so much pleased with the good old lady. She had a mind peculiarly well stored with much acquired information and natural talent, and as she was very old, and had an excellent memory, she could draw without the least exaggeration or affectation the most striking pictures of the past age. If I have been able to do any thing in the way of painting the past times, it is very much from the studies with which she presented me. She connected a long period of time with the present generation, for she remembered, and had often spoken with, a person who perfectly recollected the battle of Dunbar, and Oliver Cromwell's subsequent entry into Edinburgh. She preserved her faculties to the very day before her final illness; for our friends Mr. and Mrs. Scott of Harden visited her on the Sunday; and, coming to our house after, were expressing their surprise at the alertness of her mind, and the pleasure which she had in talking over both ancient and modern events. She had told them with great accuracy, the real story of the Bride of Lammermuir, and pointed out wherein it differed from the novel. She had all the names of the parties, and detailed (for she was a great genealogist) their connexion with existing families. On the subsequent Monday she was struck with a paralytic affection, suffered little, and that with the utmost patience; and what was God's reward, and a great one to her innocent and benevolent life, she never knew that her brother and sister, the last thirty years younger than herself, had trodden the dark path before her. She was a strict economist, which she said enabled her to be liberal; out of her little income of about £300 a-year she bestowed at least a third in well chosen charities, and with the rest lived like a gentlewoman, and even with hospitality more general than seemed to suit her age; yet I could never prevail on her to accept of any assistance. You cannot conceive how affecting it was to me to see the little preparations of presents which she had assorted for the New Year—for she was a great observer of the old fashions of her period—and to think that the kind heart was cold which delighted in all these acts of kindly affection. I should apologize, I believe, for troubling your ladyship with these melancholy details, but you would not thank me for a letter written with constraint, and my mind is at present very full of this sad subject, though I scarce know any one to whom I would venture to say so much. I hear no good news of Lady Anne, though Lord Montagu writes cautiously. The weather is now turning milder, and may, I hope, be favourable to her complaint. After my own family, my thought most frequently turns to these orphans, whose parents I loved and respected so much.—I am always, dear Lady Louisa, your very respectful and obliged

WALTER SCOTT."

There is in the library at Abbotsford a fine copy of Baskerville's folio Bible, two vols., printed at Cambridge in 1763; and there appears on the blank leaf, in the trembling handwriting of Scott's mother, this inscription—"*To my dear son, Walter Scott, from his affectionate mother, Anne Rutherford, January 1st*, 1819." Under these words her son has written as follows:—"This Bible was the gift of my grandfather Dr. John Rutherford to my mother, and presented by her to me; being, alas! the last gift which I was to receive from that excellent parent, and, as I verily believe, the thing which she most loved in the world,—not only in humble veneration of the sacred contents, but as the dearest pledge of her father's affection to her. As such she gave it to me; and as such I bequeath it to those who may represent me—charging them carefully to preserve the

* This was a ridiculous exaggerated report of that period of alarm.

† The Right Hon. Robert Dundas of Arniston died 17th June, 1819.

* Lines on the death of Mr. Robert Lovet.

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same, in memory of those to whom it has belonged. 1820."

If literary success could have either filled Scott's head or hardened his heart, we should have no such letters as those of December, 1819. 'Ivanhoe was received throughout England with a more clamorous delight than any of the *Scotch novels* had been. The volumes (three in number) were now, for the first time, of the post 8vo form, with a finer paper than hitherto, the press-work much more elegant, and the price accordingly raised from eight shillings the volume to ten; yet the copies sold in this original shape were twelve thousand.

I ought to have mentioned sooner, that the original intention was to bring out Ivanhoe as the production of a new hand, and that, to assist this impression, the work was printed in a size and manner unlike the preceding ones; but Constable, when the day of publication approached, remonstrated against this experiment, and it was accordingly abandoned.

The reader has already been told that Scott dictated the greater part of this romance. The portion of the MS. which is his own appears, however, not only as well and firmly executed as that of any of the Tales of My Landlord, but distinguished by having still fewer erasures and interlineations, and also by being in a smaller hand. The fragment is beautiful to look at—many pages together without one alteration. It is, I suppose, superfluous to add, that in no instance did Scott re-write his prose before sending it to the press. Whatever may have been the case with his poetry, the world uniformly received the *prima cura* of the novelist.

As a work of art, Ivanhoe is perhaps the first of all Scott's efforts, whether in prose or in verse; nor have the strength and splendour of his imagination been displayed to higher advantage than in some of the scenes of this romance. But I believe that no reader who is capable of thoroughly comprehending the author's Scotch characters and Scotch dialogue will ever place even Ivanhoe, as a work of genius, on the same level with Waverley or the Heart of Mid-Lothian.

There is, to me, something so remarkably characteristic of Scott's mind and manner in a particular passage of the Introduction, which he penned ten years afterwards for this work, that I must be pardoned for extracting it here. He says:—"The character of the fair Jewess found so much favour in the eyes of some fair readers, that the writer was censured, because, when arranging the fates of the characters of the drama, he had not assigned the hand of Wilfred to Rebecca, rather than the less interesting Rowena. But not to mentioned that the prejudices of the age rendered such an union almost impossible, the author may, in passing, observe, that he thinks a character of a highly virtuous and lofty stamp, is degraded rather than exalted by an attempt to reward virtue with temporal prosperity. Such is not the recompense which Providence has deemed worthy of suffering merit; and it is a dangerous and fatal doctrine to teach young persons, the most common readers of romance, that rectitude of conduct and of principle are either naturally allied with, or adequately rewarded by, the gratification of our passions, or attainment of our wishes. In a word, if a virtuous and self-denied character is dismissed with temporal wealth, greatness, rank, or the indulgence of such a rashly formed or ill assorted passion as that of Rebecca for Ivanhoe, the reader will be apt to say, verily, Virtue has had its reward. But a glance on the great picture of life will show, that the duties of self-denial, and the sacrifice of passion to principle, are seldom thus remunerated; and that the internal consciousness of their high-minded discharge of duty, produces on their own reflections a more adequate recompense, in the form of that peace which the world cannot give or take away."

The introduction of the charming Jewess and her father originated, I find, in a conversation that Scott held with his friend Shene during the severest season of his bodily sufferings in the early part of this year. "Mr. Skene," says that gentleman's wife, "sitting by his bedside, and trying to amuse him as well as he could in the intervals of pain, happened to get on the subject of the Jews, as he had observed them when he spent some time in Germany in his youth. Their situation had naturally made a strong impression; for in those days they retained their own dress and manners entire, and were treated with considerable austerity by their Christian neighbours, being still locked up at night in their own quarter by great gates; and Mr. Skene, partly in seriousness, but partly from the mere wish to turn his mind at the moment upon something that might occupy and divert it, suggested that a group of Jews would be an interesting feature if he could contrive to bring them into his next novel." Upon the appearance of Ivanhoe, he reminded Mr. Skene of this conversation, and said, "You will find this book owes not a little to your German reminiscences." Mrs. Skene adds: "Dining with us one day, not long before Ivanhoe was begun, something that was mentioned led him to describe the sudden death of an advocate of his acquaintance, a Mr. Elphinstone, which occurred in the *Outer-house* soon after he was called to the bar. It was, he said, no wonder, that it had left a vivid impression on his mind, for it was the first sudden death he ever witnessed; and he now related it so as to make us all feel as if we had the scene passing before our eyes. In the death of the Templar in Ivanhoe, I recognised the very picture—I believe I may safely say the very words."*

By the way, before Ivanhoe made its appearance, I had myself been formally admitted to the author's secret; but had he favoured me with no such confidence, it would have been impossible for me to doubt that I had been present some months before at the conversation which suggested, and indeed supplied all the materials of, one of its most amusing chapters. I allude to that in which our Saxon terms for animals in the field, and our Norman equivalents for them as they appear on the table, and so on, are explained and commented on. All this Scott owed to the after-dinner talk one day in Castle-street of his old friend Mr. William Clerk,—who, among other elegant pursuits, has cultivated the science of philology very deeply.

I cannot conclude this chapter without observing that the publication of Ivanhoe marks the most brilliant epoch in Scott's history as the literary favourite of his contemporaries. With the novel which he next put forth, the immediate sale of these works began gradually to decline; and though even when that had reached its lowest declension, it was still far above the most ambitious dreams of any other novelist, yet the publishers were afraid the announcement of any thing like a falling-off might cast a damp over the spirits of the author. He was allowed to remain, for several years, under the impression that whatever novel he threw off commanded at once the old triumphant sale of ten or twelve thousand, and was afterwards, when included in the collective edition, to be circulated in that shape also as widely as Waverley or Ivanhoe. In my opinion, it would have been very unwise in the booksellers to give Scott any unfavourable tidings upon such subjects after the commencement of the malady which proved fatal to him,—for that from the first shook his mind; but I think they took a false measure of the man when they hesitated to tell him exactly how the matter stood, throughout 1820 and the three or four following years, when his intellect was as vigorous as it ever had been, and his heart as courageous; and I regret their scruples, (among other reasons,) because the years now mentioned were the most costly ones in his life; and for every twelvemonths in which any man allows himself, or is encouraged by others, to proceed in a course of unwise expenditure, it becomes proportionably more difficult, as well as painful, for him to pull up, when the mistake is at length detected or recognised.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE VISIONARY—THE PEEL OF DARNICK—SCOTT'S SATURDAY EXCURSIONS TO ABBOTSFORD—A SUNDAY

* See Waverley Novels, vol. xvii. p. 373.

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THERE IN FEBRUARY—CONSTABLE—JOHN BALLANTYNE—THOMAS PURDIE, ETC.—PRINCE GUSTAVUS VASA—PROCLAMATION OF KING GEORGE IV.—PUBLICATION OF THE MONASTERY.—1820.

In the course of December, 1819, and January, 1820, Scott drew up three essays, under the title of "The Visionary," upon certain popular doctrines or delusions, the spread of which at this time filled with alarm, not only Tories like him, but many persons who had been distinguished through life for their adherence to political liberalism. These papers appeared successively in James Ballantyne's Edinburgh Weekly Journal, and their parentage being obvious, they excited much attention in Scotland. Scott collected them into a pamphlet, which had also a large circulation; and I remember his showing very particular satisfaction when he observed a mason reading it to his comrades, as they sat at their luncheon, by a new house on Leith Walk. During January, however, his thoughts continued to be chiefly occupied with the details of the proposed corps of Foresters; of which, I believe, it was at last settled, as far as depended on the other gentlemen concerned in it, that he should be the Major. He wrote and spoke on this subject with undiminished zeal, until the whole fell to the ground in consequence of the Government's ultimately declining to take on itself any part of the expense; a refusal which must have been fatal to any such project when the Duke of Buccleuch was a minor. He felt the disappointment keenly; but, in the mean time, the hearty alacrity with which his neighbours of all classes gave in their adhesion, had afforded him much pleasure, and, as regarded his own immediate dependants, served to rivet the bonds of affection and confidence, which were to the end maintained between him and them. Darnick had been especially ardent in the cause, and he thenceforth considered its volunteers as persons whose individual fortunes closely concerned him. I could fill many a page with the letters which he wrote at subsequent periods, with the view of promoting the success of these spirited young fellows in their various departments of industry; they were proud of their patron, as may be supposed, and he was highly gratified, as well as amused, when he learned that,—while the rest of the world were talking of "The Great Unknown,"—his usual *sobriquet* among these villagers was the "Duke of Darnick." Already his possessions almost encircled this picturesque and thriving hamlet; and there were few things on which he had more strongly fixed his fancy than acquiring a sort of symbol of seigniory there, by becoming the purchaser of a certain then ruinous tower that predominated, with a few coeval trees, over the farm-houses and cottages of his *ducal* vassals. A letter previously quoted, contains an allusion to this Peelhouse of Darnick; which is moreover exactly described in the novel which he had now in hand—the Monastery. The interest Scott seemed to take in the Peel awakened, however, the pride of its hereditary proprietor: and when that worthy person, who had made some money by trade in Edinburgh, resolved on fitting it up for the evening retreat of his own life, *his Grace of Darnick* was too happy to waive his pretensions.

This was a winter of uncommon severity in Scotland; and the snow lay so deep and so long as to interrupt very seriously all Scott's country operations. I find, in his letters to Laidlaw, various paragraphs expressing the concern he took in the hardships which his poor neighbours must be suffering. Thus, on the 19th of January, he says,

"Dear Willie,

"I write by the post that you may receive the enclosed, or rather subjoined, cheque for £60 in perfect safety. This dreadful morning will probably stop Mercer.* It makes me shiver in the midst of superfluous comforts, to think of the distress of others. £10 of the £60 I wish you to distribute among our poorer neighbours, so as may best aid them. I mean not only the actually indigent, but those who are, in our phrase, *ill aff*. I am sure Dr. Scott† will assist you with his advice in this labour of love. I think part of the wood-money,‡ too, should be given among the Abbotstown folks if the storm keeps them off work, as is like. Yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

"Deep, deep snow lying here. How do the good-wife and bairns? The little bodies will be half buried in snow drift."

And again, on the 25th, he writes thus:—

"Dear Willie,

"I have yours with the news of the inundation, which, it seems, has done no damage. I hope *Mai* will be taken care of. He should have a bed in the kitchen, and always be called in doors after it is dark, for all the kind are savage at night. Please cause Swanston to knock him up a box, and fill it with straw from time to time. I enclose a cheque for £50 to pay accounts, &c. Do not let the poor bodies want for a £5, or even a £10, more or less.

'Wo'll get a blessing wi' the lave,
And never miss't.'§

"Yours, W. S."

In the course of this month, through the kindness of Mr. Croker, Scott received from the late Earl Bathurst, then Colonial Secretary of State, the offer of an appointment in the civil service of the East India Company for his second son: and this seemed at the time too good a thing not to be gratefully accepted; though the apparently increasing prosperity of his fortunes induced him, a few years afterwards, to indulge his parental feelings by throwing it up. He thus alludes to this matter in a letter to his good old friend at Jedburgh.

To Robert Shortreed, Esq., Sheriff Substitute of Roxburghshire, Jedburgh.

"Edinburgh, 19th Jan., 1820.

"My dear Sir,

"I heartily congratulate you on getting the appointment for your son William in a manner so very pleasant to your feelings, and which is, like all Whytbank does, considerate, friendly, and generous.‖ I am not aware that I have any friends at Calcutta, but if you think letters to Sir John Malcolm and Lieutenant-Colonel Russell would serve my young friend, he shall have my best commendations to them.

"It is very odd that almost the same thing has happened to me; for about a week ago I was surprised by a letter, saying, that an unknown friend (who since proves to be Lord Bathurst, whom I never saw or spoke with) would give my second son a writer's situation for India. Charles is two years too young for this appointment; but I do not think I am at liberty to decline an offer so advantageous, if it can be so arranged that, by exchange or otherwise, it can be kept open for him. Ever yours faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT."

About the middle of February—it having been ere that time arranged that I should marry his eldest daughter in the course of the spring,—I accompanied him and part of his family on one of those flying visits to Abbotsford, with which he often indulged himself, on a Saturday during term. Upon such occasions, Scott appeared at the usual hour in Court, but wearing, instead of the official suit of black, his country morning dress, green jacket and so forth, under the clerk's gown; a license of which many gentlemen of the long robe had been accustomed to avail themselves in the days of his youth—it being then considered as the authentic badge that they were lairds as well as lawyers—but which, to use the dialect of the place, had fallen into *desuetude* before I knew the Parliament House. He was, I think, one of the two or three, or, at most, the half dozen, who still adhered to this privilege of their order; and it has now, in all likelihood, become quite obsolete, like the ancient custom, a part of the same system, for all Scotch barristers to appear without gowns or wigs, and in coloured clothes, when upon circuit. At noon, when the Court broke up, Peter Matheison was sure

* The weekly Darnick carrier.

* Dr. Scott of Darnlee.—See *ante*, p. 310. I regret to observe in the newspapers, as this page is passing through the press, the death of this very amiable, modest, and intelligent friend of Sir Walter Scott's.

† Some money expected from the sale of larches.

‡ Burns.—*Lines to a Mouse.*

§ "An India appointment, with the name blank, which the late Mr. Pringle of Whytbank sent unsolicited, believing it might be found useful to a family where there were seven sons to provide for."—*Note, by Mr. A. Shortreed.*

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to be in attendance in the Parliament Close, and five minutes after, the gown had been tossed off, and Scott, rubbing his hands for glee, was under weigh for Tweedside. On this occasion, he was, of course, in mourning; but I have thought it worth while to preserve the circumstance of his usual Saturday's costume. As we proceeded, he talked without reserve of the novel of the Monastery, of which he had the first volume with him; and mentioned, what he had probably forgotten when he wrote the Introduction of 1830, that a good deal of that volume had been composed before he concluded Ivanhoe. "It was a relief," he said, "to interlay the scenery most familiar to me with the strange world for which I had to draw so much on imagination."

Next morning there appeared at breakfast John Ballantyne, who had at this time a shooting or hunting-box a few miles off in the vale of the Leader, and with him Mr. Constable, his guest; and it being a fine clear day, as soon as Scott had read the Church service and one of Jeremy Taylor's sermons, we all sallied out, before noon, on a perambulation of his upland territories; Maida and the rest of the favourites accompanying our march. At starting we were joined by the constant henchman, Tom Purdie—and I may save myself the trouble of any attempt to describe his appearance, for his master has given us an inimitably true one in introducing a certain personage of his Redgauntlet:—"He was, perhaps, sixty years old; yet his brow was not much furrowed, and his jet black hair was only grizzled, not whitened, by the advance of age. All his motions spoke strength unabated; and, though rather undersized, he had very broad shoulders, was square made, thin-flanked, and apparently combined in his frame muscular strength and activity; the last somewhat impaired, perhaps, by years, but the first remaining in full vigour. A hard and harsh countenance; eyes far sunk under projecting eyebrows, which were grizzled like his hair; a wide mouth, furnished from ear to ear with a range of unimpaired teeth of uncommon whiteness, and a size and breadth which might have become the jaws of an ogre, completed this delightful portrait." Equip this figure in Scott's cast-off green jacket, white hat, and drab trousers; and imagine that years of kind treatment, comfort, and the honest consequence of a confidential *grieve*, had softened away much of the hardness and harshness originally impressed on the visage by anxious penury and the sinister habits of a *black-fisher*; and the Tom Purdie of 1820 stands before us.

We were all delighted to see how completely Scott had recovered his bodily vigour, and none more so than Constable, who, as he puffed and panted after him up one ravine and down another, often stopped to wipe his forehead, and remarked that "it was not every author who should lead him such a dance." But Purdie's face shone with rapture as he observed how severely the swag-bellied bookseller's activity was tasked. Scott exclaiming exultingly, though perhaps for the tenth time, "This will be a glorious spring for our trees, Tom!"—"You may say that, Sheriff," quoth Tom—and then lingering a moment for Constable—"My certy," he added, scratching his head, "and I think it will be a grand season for *our buiks* too." But indeed Tom always talked of *our buiks* as if they had been as regular products of the soil as *our aiks* and *our birks*. Having threaded, first the Hexilcleugh and then the Rhymer's Glen, we arrived at Huntly Burn, where the hospitality of the kind *Weird-Sisters*, as Scott called the Miss Fergusons, reanimated our exhausted Bibliopoles, and gave them courage to extend their walk a little further down the same famous brook. Here there was a small cottage in a very sequestered situation, by making some little additions to which Scott thought it might be converted into a suitable summer residence for his daughter and future son-in-law. The details of that plan were soon settled—it was agreed on all hands that a sweeter scene of seclusion could not be fancied. He repeated some verses of Rogers's "Wish," which paint the spot:—

"Mine be a cot beside the hill—
A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear;
A willowy brook, that turns a mill,
With many a fall, shall linger near," &c.

But when he came to the stanza—

"And Lucy at her wheel shall sing,
In russet-gown and apron blue,"

he departed from the text, adding—

"But if Bluestockings here you bring,
The Great Unknown won't dine with you."

Johnny Ballantyne, a projector to the core, was particularly zealous about this embryo establishment. Foreseeing that he should have had walking enough ere he reached Huntly Burn, his dapper little Newmarket groom had been ordered to fetch Old Mortality thither, and now, mounted on his fine hunter, he capered about us, looking pallid and emaciated as a ghost, but as gay and cheerful as ever, and would fain have been permitted to ride over hedge and ditch to mark out the proper line of the future avenue. Scott admonished him that the country people, if they saw him at such work, would take the whole party for heathens; and clapping spurs to his horse, he left us. "The deil's in the body," quoth Tom Purdie, "he'll be ower every *yett* atween this and Turnagain, though it be the Lord's day. I wadna wonder if he were to be *cested* before the Session." "Be sure, Tam," cries Constable, "that ye egg on the Dominie to blaw up his father—I would na grudge a hundred miles o' gait to see the ne'er-do-weel on the stool, and neither, I'll be sworn, would the Sheriff." "Na, na," quoth the Sheriff—"we'll let sleeping dogs be, Tam."

As we walked homeward, Scott, being a little fatigued, laid his left hand on Tom's shoulder, and leaned heavily for support, chatting to his "Sunday poney," as he called the affectionate fellow, just as freely as with the rest of the party, and Tom put in his word shrewdly and manfully, and grinned and grunted whenever the joke chanced to be within his apprehension. It was easy to see that his heart swelled within him from the moment that the Sheriff got his collar in his gripe.

There arose a little dispute between them about what tree or trees ought to be cut down in a hedgerow that we passed, and Scott seemed somewhat ruffled with finding that some previous hints of his on that head had not been attended to. When we got into motion again, his hand was on Constable's shoulder—and Tom dropped a pace or two to the rear, until we approached a gate, when he jumped forward and opened it. "Give us a pinch of your snuff, Tom," quoth the Sheriff—Tom's mull was produced, and the hand resumed its position. I was much diverted with Tom's behaviour when we at length reached Abbotsford. There were some garden chairs on the green in front of the cottage porch. Scott sat down on one of them to enjoy the view of his new tower as it gleamed in the sunset, and Constable and I did the like. Mr. Purdie remained lounging near us for a few minutes, and then asked the Sheriff "to speak a word." They withdrew together into the garden—and Scott presently rejoined us with a particularly comical expression of face. As soon as Tom was out of sight he said, "Will ye guess what he has been saying, now?—Well, this is a great satisfaction! Tom assures me that he has thought the matter over, and *will take my advice* about the thinning of that clump behind Captain Ferguson's."

I must not forget that, whoever might be at Abbotsford, Tom always appeared at his master's elbow on Sunday, when dinner was over, and drank long life to the Laird and the Lady and all the good company, in a quaigh of whiskey, or a tumbler of wine, according to his fancy. I believe Scott has somewhere expressed in print his satisfaction that, among all the changes of our manners, the ancient freedom of personal intercourse may still be indulged between a master and an *out-of-doors* servant; but in truth he kept by the old fashion even with domestic servants, to an extent which I have hardly seen practised by any other gentleman. He conversed with his coachman if he sat by him, as he often did, on the box—with his footman, if he hap-

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penned to be in the rumble; and when there was any very young lad in the household, he held it a point of duty to see that his employments were so arranged as to leave time for advancing his education, made him bring his copy-book once a-week to the library, and examined him as to all that he was doing. Indeed he did not confine his humanity to his own people. Any steady servant of a friend of his was soon considered as a sort of friend too, and was sure to have a kind little colloquy to himself at coming and going. With all this, Scott was a very rigid enforcer of discipline—contrived to make it thoroughly understood by all about him, that they must do their part by him as he did by them; and the result was happy. I never knew any man so well served as he was—so carefully, so respectfully, and so silently; and I cannot help doubting if, in any department of human operations, real kindness ever compromised real dignity.

In a letter, already quoted, there occurs some mention of the Prince Gustavus Vasa, who was spending this winter in Edinburgh, and his Royal Highness' accomplished attendant, the Baron Polier. I met them frequently in Castle street, and remember as especially interesting the first evening that they dined there. The only portrait in Scott's Edinburgh dining-room was one of Charles XII. of Sweden, and he was struck, as indeed every one must have been, with the remarkable resemblance which the exiled Prince's air and features presented to the hero of his race. Young Gustavus, on his part, hung with keen and melancholy enthusiasm on Scott's anecdotes of the expedition of Charles Edward Stewart. The Prince, accompanied by Scott and myself, witnessed the ceremonial of the proclamation of King George IV. on the 2d of February at the Cross of Edinburgh, from a window over Mr. Constable's shop in the High street; and on that occasion also, the air of sadness that mixed in his features with eager curiosity, was very affecting. Scott explained all the details to him, not without many lamentations over the barbarity of the Auld Reekie bailies, who had removed the beautiful Gothic cross itself, for the sake of widening the thoroughfare. The weather was fine; the sun shone bright; and the antique tabards of the heralds, the trumpet-notes of *God save the King*, and the hearty cheerings of the immense uncovered multitude that filled the noble old street, produced altogether a scene of great splendour and solemnity. The royal exile surveyed it with a flushed cheek and a watery eye, and Scott, observing his emotion, withdrew with me to another window, whispering, "Poor lad! poor lad! God help him." Later in the season the Prince spent a few days at Abbotsford; but I have said enough to explain some allusions in the following letter to Lord Montagu, in which Scott also adverts to several public events of January and February, 1820—the assassination of the Duke of Berri—the death and funeral of King George III.—the general election which ensued the royal demise—and its more unhappy consequence, the re-agitation of the old disagreement between George IV. and his wife, who, as soon as she learned his accession to the throne, announced her resolution of returning to England from the continent, (where she had been leading for some years a wandering life,) and asserting her rights as Queen. The Tory gentleman in whose canvass of the Selkirk boroughs Scott was now earnestly concerned, was his worthy friend, Mr. Henry Monteith, of Carstairs, who ultimately carried the election.

To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c., Ditton Park, Windsor.

"Edinburgh, 22d February, 1820.

"My dear Lord,

"I have nothing to say, except that Selkirk has declared decidedly for Monteith, and that his calling and election seem to be sure. Roxburghshire is right and tight. Harden will not stir for Berwickshire. In short, within my sphere of observation, there is nothing which need make you regret your personal absence; and I hope my dear young namesake and chief will not find his influence abated while he is unable to head it himself. It is but little I can do, but it shall always be done with a good will—and merits no thanks, for I owe much more to his father's memory than ever I can pay a tittle of. I often think what he would have said or wished, and within my limited sphere, *that* will always be a rule to me while I have the means of advancing in any respect the interest of his son—certainly if any thing could increase his desire, it would be the banner being at present in your lordship's hand. I can do little but look out a-head, but that is always something. When I look back on the house of Buccleuch, as I once knew it, it is a sad retrospect. But we must look forward, and hope for the young blossom of so goodly a tree.* I think your lordship judged quite right in carrying Walter in his place to the funeral.† He will long remember it, and may survive many occasions of the same kind, to all human appearance. Here is a horrid business of the Duke de Berri. It was first told me yesterday by Count Itterburg, (*i. e.* Prince Gustavus of Sweden, son of the ex-King,) who comes to see me very often. No fairy tale could match the extravagance of such a tale being told to a private Scotch gentleman by such a narrator, his own grandfather having perished in the same manner. But our age has been one of complete revolution, baffling all argument and expectation. As to the King and Queen, or to use the abbreviation of an old Jacobite of my acquaintance, who, not loving to hear them so called at full length, and yet desirous to have the newspapers read to him, commanded these words always to be pronounced as the letters K. and Q.—I say, then, as to the K. and Q., I venture to think, that whichever strikes the first blow will lose the battle. The sound, well-judging, and well-principled body of the people will be much shocked at the stirring such a hateful and disgraceful question. If the K. urges it unprovoked, the public feeling will put him in the wrong; if he lets her alone, her own imprudence, and that of her hot-headed adviser, Henry Brougham, will push on the discussion; and, take a fool's word for it, as Sancho says, the country will never bear her coming back, foul with the various kinds of infamy she has been stained with, to force herself into the throne. On the whole, it is a discussion most devoutly to be deprecated by those who wish well to the royal family.

"Now for a very different subject. I have a report that there is found on the farm of Melsington, in a bog, the limb of a bronze figure, full size, with a spur on the heel. This has been reported to Mr. Riddell, as Commissioner, and to me as Antiquary in chief, on the estate. I wish your lordship would permit it to be sent provisionally to Abbotsford, and also allow me, if it shall seem really curious, to make search for the rest of the statue. Clarkson† has sent me a curious account of it; and that a Roman statue, for such it seems, of that size, should be found in so wide a place, has something very irritating to the curiosity. I do not of course desire to have any thing more than the opportunity of examining the relique. It may be the foundation of a set of bronzes, if stout Lord Walter should turn to *virtu*.

"Always my dear Lord, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The novel of the Monastery was published, by Messrs. Longman and Co., in the beginning of March. It appeared not in the post 8vo form of Ivanhoe, but in 3 vols. 12mo, like the earlier works of the series. In fact, a few sheets of the Monastery had been printed before Scott agreed to let Ivanhoe have "By the Author of Waverley" on its title-page; and the different shapes of the two books belonged to the abortive scheme of passing off "Mr. Laurence Templeton" as a hitherto unheard of candidate for literary success.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

SCOTT REVISITS LONDON—HIS PORTRAIT BY LAWRENCE, AND BUST BY CHANTREY—ANECDOTES BY ALLEN CUNNINGHAM—LETTERS TO MRS. SCOTT—LAIDLAW, ETC.—HIS BARONETCY GAZETTED—MARRIAGE OF HIS DAUGHTER SOPHIA—LETTER TO "THE BARON OF GALASHIELS"—VISIT OF PRINCE GUSTAVUS VASA AT ABBOTSFORD—TENDERS OF HONORARY DEGREES FROM OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE—LETTER TO MR. THOMAS SCOTT.—1820.

At the rising of his Court on the 12th of March, Scott proceeded to London, for the purpose of receiving his baronetcy, which he had been prevented

* The funeral of George III. at Windsor: the young duke of Buccleuch was at this time at Eton.

† Ebenezer Clarkson, Esq., a surgeon of distinguished skill at Selkirk, and through life a trusty friend and crony of the Sheriff's.

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from doing in the spring of the preceding year by his own illness, and again at Christmas by accumulated family afflictions. On his arrival in town, his son the Cornet met him; and they both established themselves at Miss Dumergue's.

One of his first visiters was Sir Thomas Lawrence, who informed him that the King had resolved to adorn the great gallery, then in progress at Windsor Castle, with portraits by his hand of his Majesty's most distinguished contemporaries; all the reigning monarchs of Europe, and their chief ministers and generals had already sat for this purpose; on the same walls the King desired to see exhibited those of his own subjects who had attained the highest honours of literature and science—and it was his pleasure that this series should commence with Walter Scott. The portrait was of course begun immediately, and the head was finished before Scott left town. Sir Thomas has caught and fixed with admirable skill one of the loftiest expressions of Scott's countenance at the proudest period of his life: to the perfect truth of the representation every one who ever surprised him in the act of composition at his desk, will bear witness. The expression, however, was one with which many who had seen the man often, were not familiar; and it was extremely unfortunate that Sir Thomas filled in the figure from a separate sketch after he had quitted London. When I first saw the head I thought nothing could be better; but there was an evident change for the worse when the picture appeared in its finished state—for the rest of the person had been done on a different scale, and this neglect of proportion takes considerably from the majestic effect which the head itself, and especially the mighty pile of forehead, had in nature. I hope one day to see a good engraving of the head alone, as I first saw it floating on a dark sea of canvass.

Lawrence told me, several years afterwards, that, in his opinion, the two greatest men he had painted were the Duke of Wellington and Sir Walter Scott; "and it was odd," said he, "that they both chose usually the same hour for sitting—seven in the morning. They were both as patient sitters as I ever had. Scott, however, was, in my case at least, a very difficult subject. I had selected what struck me as his noblest look; but when he was in the chair before me, he talked away on all sorts of subjects in his usual style, so that it cost me great pains to bring him back to solemnity, when I had to attend to any thing beyond the outline of a subordinate feature. I soon found that the surest recipe was to say something that would lead him to recite a bit of poetry. I used to introduce, by hook or by crook, a few lines of Campbell or Byron—he was sure to take up the passage where I left it, or *cap* it by something better—and then—when he was, as Dryden says of one of his heroes—

'Made up of three parts fire—so full of Heaven
It sparkled at his eyes'—

then was my time—and I made the best use I could of it. The hardest day's-work I had with him was once when *****† accompanied him to my painting room. ***** was in particularly gay spirits, and nothing would serve him but keeping both artist and sitter in a perpetual state of merriment by anecdote upon anecdote about poor Sheridan. The anecdotes were mostly in themselves black enough,—but the style of the *conteur* was irresistibly quaint and comical. When Scott came next, he said he was ashamed of himself for laughing so much as he listened to them; 'for truly,' quoth he, 'if the tithe was fact, ***** might have said to Sherry—as Lord Braxfield once said to an eloquent culprit at the bar—Ye're a vera clever chiel', man, but ye wad be nane the waur o' a hanging.'"

It was also during this visit to London that Scott sat to Mr. (now Sir Francis) Chantrey for that bust which alone preserves for posterity the cast of expression most fondly remembered by all who ever mingled in his domestic circle. Chantrey's request that Scott would sit to him was communicated through Mr. Allan Cunningham, then (as now) employed as Clerk of the Works in our great Sculptor's establishment. Mr. Cunningham, in his early days, when gaining his bread as a stone-mason in Nithsdale, made a pilgrimage on foot into Edinburgh, for the sole purpose of seeing the author of Marmion as he passed along the street. He was now in possession of a celebrity of his own, and had mentioned to his patron his purpose of calling on Scott to thank him for some kind message he had received, through a common friend, on the subject of those "Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song," which first made his poetical talents known to the public. Chantrey embraced this opportunity of conveying to Scott his own long-cherished ambition of modelling his head; and Scott at once assented to the flattering proposal. "It was about nine in the morning," says Mr. Cunningham, "that I sent in my card to him at Miss Dumergue's in Piccadilly—it had not been gone a minute when I heard a quick heavy step coming, and in he came, holding out both hands, as was his custom, and saying, as he pressed mine—'Allan Cunningham, I am glad to see you.'" "I said something" (continues Mr. C.) "about the pleasure I felt in touching the hand that had charmed me so much. He moved his hand, and with one of his comic smiles, said, 'Ay—and a big brown hand it is.' I was a little abashed at first: Scott saw it, and soon put me at my ease; he had the power, I had almost called it the art, but art it was not, of winning one's heart and restoring one's confidence, beyond any man I ever met." Then ensued a little conversation, in which Scott complimented Allan on his ballads, and urged him to try some work of more consequence, quoting Burns's words, "for dear auld Scotland's sake;" but being engaged to breakfast in a distant part of the town, he presently dismissed his visiter, promising to appear next day at an early hour, and submit himself to Mr. Chantrey's inspection.

Chantrey's purpose had been the same as Lawrence's—to seize a poetical phasis of Scott's countenance; and he proceeded to model the head as looking upwards, gravely and solemnly. The talk that passed, mean time, had equally amused and gratified both, and fortunately, at parting, Chantrey requested that Scott would come and breakfast with him next morning before they recommenced operations in the studio. Scott accepted the invitation, and when he arrived again in Ecclestone street, found two or three acquaintances assembled to meet him,—among others, his old friend Richard Heber. The breakfast was, as any party in Sir Francis Chantrey's house is sure to be, a gay and joyous one, and not having seen Heber in particular for several years, Scott's spirits were unusually excited by the presence of an intimate associate of his youthful days. I transcribe what follows from Mr. Cunningham's Memorandum:—

"Heber made many inquiries about old friends in Edinburgh, and old books and old houses, and reminded the other of their early socialities. 'Ay,' said Mr. Scott, 'I remember we once dined out together, and sat so late that when we came away the night and day were so nearly balanced, that we resolved to walk about till sunrise. The moon was not down, however, and we took advantage of her ladyship's lantern and climbed to the top of Arthur's Seat; when we came down we had a rare appetite for breakfast.'—'I remember it well,' said Heber; 'Edinburgh was a wild place in those days,—it abounded in clubs—convivial clubs.'—'Yes,' replied Mr. Scott, 'and abounds still; but the conversation is calmer, and there are no such sallies now as might be heard in other times. One club, I remember, was infested with two Kemps, father and son: when the old man had done speaking, the young one began,—and before he grew weary, the father was refreshed and took up the song. John Clerk, during a pause, was called on for a stave; he immediately struck up in a psalm-singing tone, and electrified the club with a verse which sticks like a burr to my memory—

'Now, God Almighty judge James Kemp,
And likewise his son John,
And hang them over Hell in hemp,
And burn them in brimstone.'—

† A distinguished Whig friend.

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"In the midst of the mirth which this specimen of peabody raised, John (commonly called *Jack*) Fuller, the member for Surrey, and standing jester of the House of Commons, came in. Heber, who was well acquainted with the free and joyous character of that worthy, began to lead him out by relating some festive anecdotes: Fuller growled approbation, and indulged us with some of his wild sallies: things which, he assured us, 'were damned good, and true too, which was better.' Mr. Scott, who was standing when Fuller came in, eyed him at first with a look grave and considerate: but as the stream of conversation flowed, his keen eye twinkled brighter and brighter; his stature increased, for he drew himself up, and seemed to take the measure of the hoary joker, body and soul. An hour or two of social chat had meanwhile induced Mr. Chantrey to alter his views as to the bust, and when Mr. Scott left us, he said to me privately, 'this will never do—I shall never be able to please myself with a perfectly serene expression. I must try his conversational look, take him when about to break out into some sly funny old story.' As Chantrey said this, he took a string, cut off the head of the bust, put it into its present position, touched the eyes and the mouth slightly, and wrought such a transformation upon it, that when Scott came to his third sitting, he smiled, and said, 'Ay, ye're mair like yoursel now!—Why, Mr. Chantrey, no witch of old ever performed such cantrips with clay as this.'"

These sittings were seven in number; but when Scott revisited London, a year afterwards, he gave Chantrey several more, the bust being by that time in marble. Allan Cunningham, when he called to bid him farewell, as he was about to leave town on the present occasion, found him in court dress, preparing to kiss hands at the Levee, on being gazetted as Baronet. "He seemed any thing but at his ease," says Cunningham, "in that strange attire; he was like one in armour—the stiff cut of the coat—the large shining buttons and buckles—the lace ruffles—the queue—the sword—and the cocked hat, formed a picture at which I could not forbear smiling. He surveyed himself in the glass for a moment, and burst into a hearty laugh. 'O Allan,' he said, 'O Allan,' what creatures we must make of ourselves in obedience to Madam Etiquette. See'st thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this Fashion is?—how giddily he turns about all the hotbloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty?'"*

Scott's baronetcy was conferred on him, not in consequence of any ministerial suggestion, but by the King personally, and of his own unsolicited motion; and when the Poet kissed his hand, he said to him—"I shall always reflect with pleasure on Sir Walter Scott's having been the first creation of my reign."

The Gazette announcing his new dignity was dated March 30, and published on the 2d April, 1820; and the Baronet, as soon afterwards as he could get away from Lawrence, set out on his return to the North; for he had such respect for the ancient prejudice (a classical as well as a Scottish one) against marrying in May, that he was anxious to have the ceremony in which his daughter was concerned over before that unlucky month should commence. It is needless to say, that during this stay in London he had again experienced, in its fullest measure, the enthusiasm of all ranks of his acquaintance: and I shall now transcribe a few paragraphs from domestic letters, which will show, among other things, how glad he was when the hour came that restored him to his ordinary course of life.

To Mrs. Scott, 39, Castle Street, Edinburgh.

"Piccadilly, 20th March, 1820.

"My dear Charlotte,

"I have got a delightful plan for the addition at Abb——, which, I think, will make it quite complete, and furnish me with a handsome library, and you with a drawing-room and better bed-room, with good bed-rooms for company, &c. It will cost me a little hard work to meet the expense, but I have been a good while idle. I hope to leave this town early next week, and shall hasten back with great delight to my own household gods.

"I hope this will find you from under Dr. Ross's charge. I expect to see you quite in beauty when I come down, for I assure you I have been coaxed by very pretty ladies here, and look for merry faces at home. My picture comes on, and will be a grand thing, but the sitting is a great bore. Chantrey's bust is one of the finest things he ever did. It is quite the fashion to go to see it—there's for you. Yours, my dearest love, with the most sincere affection,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"March 27, Piccadilly.

"My dear Charlotte,

"I have the pleasure to say that Lord Sidmouth has promised to dismiss me in all my honours by the 30th, so that I can easily be with you by the end of April; and you and Sophia may easily select the 28th, 29th, or 30th, for the ceremony. I have been much fêted here, as usual, and had a very quiet dinner at Mr. Arbuthnot's yesterday with the Duke of Wellington, where Walter heard the great Lord in all his glory talk of war and Waterloo. Here is a hellish—yes, literally a hellish bustle. My head turns round with it. The whole mob of the Middlesex blackguards pass through Piccadilly twice a day, and almost drive me mad with their noise and vociferation. Pray do, my dear Charlotte, write soon. You know those at a distance are always anxious to hear from home. I beg you to say what would give you pleasure that I could bring from this place, and whether you want any thing from Mrs. Arthur for yourself, Sophia, or Anne; also, what would please little Charles. You know you may stretch a point on this occasion. Richardson says your honours will be gazetted on Saturday; certainly very soon, as the King, I believe, has signed the warrant. When or how I shall see him, is not determined, but I suppose I shall have to go to Brighton. My best love attends the girls, little Charles, and all the quadrupeds.

"I conclude that the marriage will take place in Castle Street, and want to know where they go, &c. All this you will have to settle without my wise head; but I shall be terribly critical—so see you do all right. I am always, dearest Charlotte, most affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

("For the Lady Scott of Abbotsford—to be.")

To Mr. James Ballantyne, Printer, St. John Street, Edinburgh.

"28th March, 96, Piccadilly.

"Dear James,

"I am much obliged by you attentive letter. Unquestionably Longman and Co. sell their books at subscription price, because they have the first of the market, and only one third of the books; so that, as they say with us, 'let them care that come ahint.' This I knew and foresaw, and the ragings of the booksellers, considerably aggravated by the displeasure of Constable and his house, are ridiculous enough; and as to their injuring the work, if it have a principle of locomotion in it, they cannot stop it—if it has not, they cannot make it move. I care not a bent twopence about their quarrels; only I say now, as I always said, that Constable's management is best, both for himself and the author; and, had we not been controlled by the narrowness of discount, I would put nothing past him. I agree with the public in thinking the work not very interesting; but it was written with as much care as the others—that is, with no care at all; and,

'If it is na weil bobbit we'll bobb it again.'

"On these points I am Atlas. I cannot write much in this bustle of engagements, with Sir Francis's mob bellowing under the windows. I find that even this light composition demands a certain degree of silence, and I might as well live in a cotton-mill. Lord Sidmouth tells me I will obtain leave to quit London by the 30th, which will be delightful news, for I find I cannot bear late hours and great society so well as formerly; and yet it is a fine thing to hear politics talked of by Ministers of State, and war discussed by the Duke of Wellington.

"My occasions here will require that John or you send me two notes payable at Coutts' for £300 each, at two and three months' date. I will write to Constable for one at £350, which will settle my affairs here—which, with fees and other matters, come, as you may think, pretty heavy. Let the bills be drawn payable at Coutts', and sent without delay. I will receive them safe if sent under Mr. Freeling's cover. Mention particularly what you are doing, for now is your time to push miscellaneous work. Pray take great notice of inaccuracies in the Novels. They are very very many—some mine, I dare say—but all such as you may and ought to correct. If you would call on William Erskine, (who is your well-wisher, and a little mortified he never sees you,) he would point out some of them.

"Do you ever see Lockhart? You should consult him on every doubt where you would refer to me if present. Yours very truly,

W. S.

"You say nothing of John, yet I am anxious about him."

* Much ado about Nothing. Act iii., Scene 3.

* The general election was going on.

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To Mr. Laidlaw, Kaeside, Melrose.

" London, April 2, 1820.

" Dear Willie,

" I had the great pleasure of your letter, which carries me back to my own braes, which I love so dearly, out of this place of bustle and politics. When I can see my Master—and thank him for many acts of favour—I think I will bid adieu to London for ever; for neither the hours nor the society suit me so well as a few years since. There it too much necessity for exertion, too much brilliancy and excitation from morning till night.

" I am glad the sheep are away, though at a loss. I should think the weather rather too dry for planting, judging by what we have here. Do not let Tom go on sticking in plants to no purpose—better put in firs in a rainy week in August. Give my service to him. I expect to be at Edinburgh in the end of this month, and to get a week at Abbotsford before the Session sits down. I think you are right to be in no hurry to let Broomielees. There seems no complaint of wanting money here just now, so I hope things will come round.—Ever yours, truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Miss Scott, Castle Street, Edinburgh.

" London, April 3, 1820.

" Dear Sophia,

" I have no letter from any one at home excepting Lockhart, and he only says you are all well; and I trust it is so. I have seen most of my old friends, who are a little the worse for the wear, like myself. A five years' march down the wrong side of the hill tell more than ten on the right side. Our good friends here are kind as kind can be, and no frumps. They lecture the Cornet a little, which he takes with becoming deference and good humour. There is a certain veil of Flanders lace floating in the wind for a certain occasion, from a certain godmother, but that is more than a dead secret.

" We had a very merry day yesterday at Lord Melville's, where we found Lord Huntly* and other friends, and had a bumper to the new Baronet, whose name was Gazetted that evening. Lady Huntly plays Scotch tunes like a Highland angel. She ran a set of variations on 'Kenmure's on and awa',' which I told her were enough to raise a whole country-side. I never in my life heard such fire thrown into that sort of music. I am now laying anchors to windward, as John Ferguson says, to get Walter's leave extended. We saw the D. of York, who was very civil, but wants altogether the courtesy of the King. I have had a very gracious message from the King. He is expected up very soon, so I don't go to Brighton, which is so far so good. I fear his health is not strong. Mean while all goes forward for the Coronation. The expense of the robes for the peers may amount to £400 a-piece. All the ermine is bought up at the most extravagant prices. I hear so much of it, that I really think, like Beau Tibbs, I shall be tempted to come up and see it, if possible. Indeed, I don't see why I should not stay here, as I seem to be forgotten at home. The people here are like to smother me with kindness, so why should I be in a great hurry to leave them?

" I write, wishing to know what I could bring Anne and you and mamma down that would be acceptable; and I shall be much obliged to you to put me up to that matter. To little Charles also I promised something, and I wish to know what he would like. I hope he pays attention to Miss Thompson, to whom remember my best compliments. I hope to get something for him soon.

" To-day I go to spend my Sabbath quietly with Joanna Baillie and John Richardson, at Hampstead. The long Cornet goes with me. I have kept him amongst the seniors—nevertheless he seems pretty well amused. He is certainly one of the best-conditioned lads I ever saw, in point of temper.

" I understand you and Anne have gone through the ceremony of confirmation. Pray, write immediately, and let me know how you are all going on, and what you would like to have, all of you. You know how much I would like to please you. Yours, most affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

While Scott remained in London, the Professorship of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh became vacant by the death of Dr. Thomas Brown; and among others who proposed themselves as candidates to fill it was the author of the Isle of Palms. He was opposed in the Town Council (who are the patrons of most of the Edinburgh chairs) on various pretences, but solely, in fact, on party grounds, certain humorous political pieces having much exacerbated the Whigs of the North against him; and I therefore wrote to Scott, requesting him to animate the Tory Ministers in his behalf. Sir Walter did so, and Mr. Wilson's canvass was successful. The answer to my communication was in these terms:—

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq., Great King Street, Edinburgh.

" London, 30th March, 1820.

" Dear Lockhart,

" I have yours of the Sunday morning, which has been terribly long of coming. There needed no apology for mentioning any thing in which I could be of service to Wilson; and, so far as good words and good wishes here can do, I think he will be successful; but the battle must be fought in Edinburgh. You are aware that the only point of exception to Wilson may be, that, with the fire of genius, he has possessed some of its eccentricities;—but, did he ever approach to those of Henry Brougham, who is the god of Whiggish idolatry? If the high and rare qualities with which he is invested are to be thrown aside as useless, because they may be clouded by a few grains of dust which he can blow aside at pleasure, it is less a punishment on Mr. Wilson than on the country. I have little doubt he would consider success in this weighty matter as a pledge for binding down his acute and powerful mind to more regular labour than circumstances have hitherto required of him; for indeed, without doing so, the appointment could in no point of view answer his purpose. He must stretch to the oar for his own credit as well as that of his friends; and if he does so there can be no doubt that his efforts will be doubly blessed, in reference both to himself and to public utility. He must make every friend he can amongst the council. Palladio Johnstone should not be omitted. If my wife canvasses him, she may do some good.*

" You must, of course, recommend to Wilson great temper in his canvass—for wrath will do no good. After all, he must leave off sack, purge, and live cleanly as a gentleman ought to do; otherwise people will compare his present ambition to that of Sir Terry O'Fag when he wished to become a judge. 'Our pleasant follies are made the whips to scourge us,' as Lear says; for otherwise what could possibly stand in the way of his nomination? I trust it will take place, and give him the consistence and steadiness which are all he wants to make him the first man of the age.

" I am very angry with Castle Street—Not a soul has written me, save yourself, since I came to London. Yours very truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

Sir Walter, accompanied by the Cornet, reached Edinburgh late in April, and on the 29th of that month he gave me the hand of his daughter Sophia. The wedding, *more Scotico*, took place in the evening; and, adhering on all such occasions to ancient modes of observance with the same punctiliousness which he mentions as distinguishing his worthy father, he gave a jolly supper afterwards to all the friends and connexions of the young couple.

His excursions to Tweedside during Term-time were, with very rare exceptions, of the sort which I have described in the preceding chapter; but he departed from his rule about this time, in honour of the Swedish Prince, who had expressed a wish to see Abbotsford before leaving Scotland, and assembled a number of his friends and neighbours to meet his Royal Highness. Of the invitations which he distributed on this occasion I insert one specimen—that addressed to Mr. Scott of Gala.

" To the Baron of Galashiels. The Knight of Abbotsford sends greeting.

" Trusty and well beloved — Whereas Gustavus, Prince Royal of Sweden, proposeth to honour our poor house of Abbotsford with his presence on Thursday next, and to repose himself there for certain days, we do heartily pray you, out of the love and kindness which is and shall abide betwixt us, to be aiding to us at this conjuncture, and to repair to Abbotsford with your lady, either upon Thursday or Friday, as may best suit your convenience and pleasure, looking for no denial at your hands. Which loving countenance we will, with all thankfulness, return to you at your mansion of Gala. The hour of appearance being five o'clock, we request you to be then and there

* The late Duke of Gordon.

* Mr. Robert Johnston, a grocer on a large scale on the North Bridge of Edinburgh, and long one of the leading Bailies, was about this time the prominent patron of some architectural novelties in Auld Reekie, which had found no favour with Scott;—hence his prenomen of *Palladio*—which he owed, I believe, to a song in Blackwood's Magazine. The good Bailie had been at the High School with Sir Walter, and their friendly intercourse was never interrupted but by death.

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present, as you love the honour of the name; and so advance banners in the name of God and St. Andrew.

WALTER SCOTT.

"Given at Edinburgh, 20th May, 1820."

The visit of Count Itterburg is alluded to in this letter to the Cornet, who had now rejoined his regiment in Ireland. It appears that on reaching headquarters he had found a charger *hors de combat*.

To Walter Scott, Esq., 18th Hussars, Cork.

"Castle Street, May 31, 1820.

"Dear Walter,

"I enclose the cheque for the allowance; pray take care to get good notes in exchange. You had better speak to the gentleman whom Lord Shannon introduced you to, for, when banks take a-breaking, it seldom stops with the first who go. I am very sorry for your loss. You must be economical for a while, and bring yourself round again, for at this moment I cannot so well assist as I will do by and by. So do not buy any thing but what you need.

"I was at Abbotsford for three days last week, to receive Count Itterburg, who seemed very happy while with us, and was much affected when he took his leave. I am sorry for him—his situation is a very particular one, and his feelings appear to be of the kindest order. When he took leave of me, he presented me with a beautiful seal, with all our new blazonries cut on a fine amethyst; and what I thought the prettiest part, on one side of the setting is cut my name, on the other the Prince's—*Gustaf*. He is to travel through Ireland, and will probably be at Cork. You will, of course, ask the Count and Baron to mess, and offer all civilities in your power, in which, I dare say, Colonel Murray will readily join. They intend to inquire after you.

"I have bought the land adjoining to the Burnfoot cottage, so that we now march with the Duke of Buccleuch all the way round that course. It cost me £2300—but there is a great deal of valuable fir planting, which you may remember; fine roosting for the black game. Still I think it is £200 too dear, but Mr. Laidlaw thinks it can be made worth the money, and it rounds the property off very handsomely. You cannot but remember the ground; it lies under the Eildon, east of the Chargelaw.

"Mamma, Anne, and Charles, are all well. Sophia has been complaining of a return of her old sprain. I told her Lockhart would return her on our hands as not being sound wind and limb.

"I beg you to look at your French, and have it much at heart that you should study German. Believe me, always affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

In May, 1820, Scott received from both the English Universities the highest compliment which it was in their power to offer him. The Vice-Chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge communicated to him, in the same week, their request that he would attend at the approaching Commemorations, and accept the honorary degree of Doctor in Civil Law. It was impossible for him to leave Scotland again that season; and on various subsequent renewals of the same flattering proposition from either body, he was prevented, by similar circumstances, from availing himself of their distinguished kindness.

In the course of a few months Scott's family arrangements had undergone, as we have seen, considerable alteration. Meanwhile he continued anxious to be allowed to adopt, as it were, the only son of his brother Thomas; and the letter, in consequence of which that hopeful youth was at last committed to his charge, contains so much matter likely to interest parents and guardians, that though long, I cannot curtail it.

To Thomas Scott, Esq., Paymaster, 70th Regiment.

"Abbotsford, 23d July, 1820.

"My dear Tom,

"Your letter of May, this day received, made me truly happy, being the first I have received from you since our dear mother's death, and the consequent breaches which fate has made in our family. My own health continues quite firm, at no greater sacrifice than bidding adieu to our old and faithful friend John Barleycorn, whose life-blood has become a little too heavy for my stomach. I wrote to you from London concerning the very handsome manner in which the King behaved to me in conferring my *petit titre*, and also of Sophia's intended marriage, which took place in the end of April, as we intended. I got Walter's leave prolonged, that he might be present, and I assure you that, when he attended at the ceremony in full regimentals, you have scarce seen a handsomer young man. He is about six feet and an inch, and perfectly well made. Lockhart seems to be every thing I could wish, and as they have enough to live easily upon for the present, and good expectations for the future, life opens well with them. They are to spend their vacations in a nice little cottage, in a glen belonging to this property, with a rivulet in front, and a grove of trees on the east side to keep away the cold wind. It is about two miles distant from this house, and a very pleasant walk reaches to it through my plantations, which now occupy several hundred acres. Thus there will be space enough betwixt the old man of letters and the young one. Charles's destination to India is adjourned till he reaches the proper age—it seems he cannot hold a writership until he is sixteen years old, and then is admitted to study for two years at Hertford College.

"After my own sons, my most earnest and anxious wish will be, of course, for yours,—and with this view I have pondered well what you say on the subject of your Walter; and whatever line of life you may design him for, it is scarce possible but that I can be of considerable use to him. Before fixing, however, on a point so very important, I would have you consult the nature of the boy himself. I do not mean by this that you should ask his opinion, because at so early an age a well bred up child naturally takes up what is suggested to him by his parents; but I think you should consider, with as much impartiality as a parent can, his temper, disposition, and qualities of mind and body. It is not enough that you think there is an opening for him in one profession rather than another,—for it were better to sacrifice the fairest prospects of that kind than to put a boy into a line of life for which he is not calculated. If my nephew is steady, cautious, fond of a sedentary life and quiet pursuits, and at the same time a proficient in arithmetic, and with a disposition towards the prosecution of its highest branches, he cannot follow a better line than that of an accountant. It is highly respectable—and is one in which, with attention and skill, aided by such opportunities as I may be able to procure for him, he must ultimately succeed. I say ultimately, because the harvest is small and the labourers numerous in this as in other branches of our legal practice; and whoever is to dedicate himself to them, must look for a long and laborious tract of attention ere he reaches the reward of his labours. If I live, however, I will do all I can for him, and see him put under a proper person, taking his prentice fee, &c., upon myself. But if, which may possibly be the case, the lad has a decided turn for active life and adventure, is high-spirited, and impatient of long and dry labour, with some of those feelings not unlikely to result from having lived all his life in a camp or barrack, do not deceive yourself, my dear brother—you will never make him an accountant; you will never be able to convert such a sword into a pruning-hook merely because you think the pruning-hook the better thing of the two. In this supposed case your authority and my recommendation might put him into an accountant's office; but it would be just to waste the earlier years of his life in idleness, with all the temptations to dissipation which idleness gives way to; and what sort of a place a writing chamber is you cannot but remember. So years might wear away, and at last the youth starts off from his profession, and becomes an adventurer too late in life, and with the disadvantage, perhaps, of offended friends and advanced age standing in the way of his future prospects.

"This is what I have judged fittest in my own family, for Walter would have gone to the bar had I liked, but I was sensible (with no small reluctance did I admit the conviction) that I should only spoil an excellent soldier to make a poor and undistinguished gownsman. On the same principle I shall send Charles to India, not, God knows, with my will, for there is little chance of my living to see him return; but merely that, judging by his disposition, I think the voyage of his life might be otherwise lost in shallows. He has excellent parts, but they are better calculated for intercourse with the world than for hard and patient study. Having thus sent one son abroad from my family, and being about to send off the other in due time, you will not, I am sure, think that I can mean disregard to your parental feelings in stating what I can do for your Walter. Should his temper and character incline for active life, I think I can promise to get him a cadetship in the East India Company's service; so soon as he has had the necessary education, I will be at the expense of his equipment and passage-money; and when he reaches India, there he is completely provided, secure of a competence if he lives, and with great chance of a fortune if he thrives. I am aware this would be a hard pull at Mrs. Scott's feelings and yours; but recollect your fortune is small, and the demands on it numerous, and pagodas and rupees are no bad things. I can get Walter the first intro-

ductions, and if he behaves himself as becomes your son, and my nephew, I have friends enough in India, and of the highest class, to ensure his success, even his rapid success—always supposing my recommendations to be seconded by his own conduct. If, therefore, the youth has any thing of your own spirit, for God's sake do not condemn him to a drudgery which he will never submit to—and remember, to sacrifice his fortune to your fondness will be sadly mistaken affection. As matters stand, unhappily you must be separated; and considering the advantages of India, the mere circumstance of distance is completely counterbalanced. Health is what will naturally occur to Mrs. Scott; but the climate of India is now well understood, and those who attend to ordinary precaution live as healthy as in Britain. And so I have said my say. Most heartily will I do my best in any way you may ultimately decide for; and as the decision really ought to turn on the boy's temper and disposition, you must be a better judge by far than any one else. But if he should resemble his father and uncle in certain indolent habits, I fear he will make a better subject for an animating life of enterprise than for the technical labour of an accountant's desk. There is no occasion, fortunately, for forming any hasty resolution. When you send him here I will do all that is in my power to stand in the place of a father to him, and you may fully rely on my care and tenderness. If he should ultimately stay at Edinburgh, as b th my own boys leave me, I am sure I shall have great pleasure in having the nearest in blood after them with me. Pray send him as soon as you can, for at his age, and under imperfect opportunities of education, he must have a good deal to make up. I wish I could be of the same use to you which I am sure I can be to your son.

"Of public news I have little to send. The papers will tell you the issue of the Radical row for the present. The yeomanry behaved most gallantly. There is in Edinburgh a squadron as fine as ours was, all young men, and zealous soldiers. They made the western campaign with the greatest spirit, and had some hard and fatiguing duty, long night-marches, surprises of the enemy, and so forth, but no fight, for the whole Radical plot went to the devil when it came to gun and sword. Scarce any blood was shed, except in a trifling skirmish at Bonnymuir, near Carron. The rebels were behind a wall, and fired on ten hussars and as many yeomen—the latter under command of a son of James Davidson, W. S. The cavalry cleared the wall, and made them prisoners to a man. The commission of Oyer and Terminer is now busy trying them and others. The Edinburgh young men showed great spirit; all took arms, and my daughters say, (I was in London at the time,) that not a feasible-looking beau was to be had for love or money. Several were like old Beardie; they would not shave their moustaches till the Radicals were put down, and returned with most awful whiskers. Lockhart is one of the cavalry, and a very good troop. It is high to hear these young fellows talk of the Raid of Airdrie, the trot of Kilmarnock, and so on, like so many moss-troopers. The Queen is making an awful bustle, and though by all accounts her conduct has been most abandoned and beastly, she has got the whole mob for her partisans, who call her injured innocence, and what not. She has courage enough to dare the worst, and a most decided desire to be revenged *of him*, which, by the way, can scarce be wondered at. She had as many followers of high as of low degree, (in proportion,) and funds to equip them, I should not be surprised to see her fat bottom in a pair of buckskins, and at the head of an army—God mend all. The things said of her are beyond all usual profligacy. Nobody of any fashion visits her. I think myself monstrously well clear of London and its intrigues, when I look round my green fields, and recollect I have little to do, but to

> ——'make my grass mow,
> And my apple tree grow.'

"I beg my kind love to Mrs. Huxley. I have a very acceptable letter from her, and I trust to retain the place she promises me in her remembrance. Sophia will be happy to hear from uncle Tom, when Uncle Tom has so much leisure. My best compliments attend your wife and daughters, not forgetting Major Huxley and Walter. My dear Tom, it will be a happy moment when circumstances shall permit us a meeting on this side Jordan, as Tabitha says, to talk over old stories, and lay new plans. So many things have fallen out which I had set my heart upon strongly, that I trust this may happen amongst others.—Believe me, yours very affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

CHAPTER XLIX.

AUTUMN AT ABBOTSFORD—SCOTT'S HOSPITALITY—VISIT OF SIR HUMPHRY DAVY—HENRY MACKENZIE—DR. WOLLASTON AND WILLIAM STEWART ROSE—COURSING ON NEWARK HILL—SALMON FISHING—THE FESTIVAL AT BOLDSIDE—THE ABBOTSFORD HUNT—THE KIRN, ETC.—1820.

About the middle of August, (1820,) my wife and I went to Abbotsford; and we remained there for several weeks, during which I became familiarized to Sir Walter Scott's mode of existence in the country. It was necessary to observe it day after day, for a considerable period, before one could believe that such was, during nearly half the year, the routine of life with the most productive author of his age. The humblest person who stayed merely for a short visit, must have departed with the impression, that what he witnessed was an occasional variety; that Scott's courtesy prompted him to break in upon his habits when he had a stranger to amuse; but that it was physically impossible, that the man who was writing the Waverley romances at the rate of nearly twelve volumes in the year, could continue, week after week, and month after month, to devote all but a hardly perceptible fraction of his mornings to out of doors' occupations, and the whole of his evenings to the entertainment of a constantly varying circle of guests.

The hospitality of his afternoons must alone have been enough to exhaust the energies of almost any man; for his visiters did not mean, like those of country houses in general, to enjoy the landlord's good cheer and amuse each other; but the far greater proportion arrived from a distance, for the sole sake of the Poet and Novelist himself, whose person they had never before seen, and whose voice they might never again have any opportunity of hearing. No other villa in Europe was ever resorted to from the same motives, and to any thing like the same extent, except Ferney; and Voltaire never dreamt of being visible to his *hunters*, except for a brief space of the day; few of them even dined with him, and none of them seem to have slept under his roof. Scott's establishment, on the contrary, resembled in every particular that of the affluent idler, who, because he has inherited, or would fain transmit, political influence in some province, keeps open house—receives as many as he has room for, and sees their apartments occupied, as soon as they vacate them, by another troop of the same description. Even on gentlemen guiltless of inkshed, the exercise of hospitality upon this sort of scale is found to impose a heavy tax; few of them, nowadays, think of maintaining it for any large portion of the year: very few indeed below the highest rank of the nobility—in whose case there is usually a staff of led-captains, led-chaplains, servile dandies, and semi-professional talkers and jokers from London, to take the chief part of the burden. Now, Scott had often in his mouth the pithy verses—

> "Conversation is but carving,—
> Give no more to every guest,
> Than he's able to digest;
> Give him always of the prime,
> And but a little at a time;
> Carve to all but just enough,
> Let them neither starve nor stuff;
> *And that you may have your due,*
> *Let your neighbours carve for you:*"—

and he, in his own familiar circle always, and in other circles where it was possible, furnished a happy exemplification of these rules and regulations of the Dean of St. Patrick's. But the same sense and benevolence which dictated adhesion to them among his old friends and acquaintance, rendered it necessary to break them, when he was receiving strangers of the class I have described above at Abbotsford: he felt that their coming was the best homage they could pay to his celebrity, and that it would have been as uncourteous in him not to give them their fill of his talk, as it would be in your every-day lord of manors to make his casual guests welcome indeed to his venison, but keep his grouse-shooting for his immediate allies and dependants.

Every now and then he received some stranger who was not indisposed to take his part in the *carving;* and how good-humouredly he surrendered the lion's share to any one that seemed to covet it—

with what perfect placidity he submitted to be bored even by bores of the first water, must have excited the admiration of many besides the daily observers of his proceedings. I have heard a spruce Senior Wrangler lecture him for half an evening on the niceties of the Greek epigram; I have heard the poorest of all parliamentary blunderers try to detail to him the *pros* and *cons* of what he called the *Truck System*; and in either case the same bland eye watched the lips of the tormentor. But, with such ludicrous exceptions, Scott was the one object of the Abbotsford pilgrims; and evening followed evening only to show him exerting, for their amusement, more of animal spirits, to say nothing of intellectual vigour, than would have been considered by any other man in the company as sufficient for the whole expenditure of a week's existence. Yet this was not the chief marvel; he talked of things that interested himself, because he knew that by doing so he should give most pleasure to his guests; but how vast was the range of subjects on which he could talk with unaffected zeal; and with what admirable delicacy of instinctive politeness did he select his topic according to the peculiar history, study, pursuits, or social habits of the stranger! How beautifully he varied his style of letter-writing, according to the character and situation of his multifarious correspondents, the reader has already been enabled to judge: but to carry the same system into practice *at sight*—to manage utter strangers, of many and widely different classes, in the same fashion, and with the same effect—called for a quickness of observation and fertility of resource such as no description can convey the slightest notion of to those who never witnessed the thing for themselves. And all this was done without approach to the unmanly trickery of what is called *catching the tone* of the person one converses with. Scott took the subject on which he thought such a man or woman would like best to hear him speak—but not to handle it in their way, or in any way but what was completely, and most simply his own;—not to flatter them by embellishing, with the illustration of his genius, the views and opinions which they were supposed to entertain,—but to let his genius play out its own variations, for his own delight and theirs, as freely and easily, and with as endless a multiplicity of delicious novelties, as ever the magic of Beethoven or Mozart could fling over the few primitive notes of a village air.

It is the custom in some, perhaps in many country houses, to keep a register of the guests, and I have often regretted that nothing of the sort was ever attempted at Abbotsford. It would have been a curious record—especially if so contrived—(as I have seen done)—that the names of each day should, by their arrangement on the page, indicate the exact order in which the company sat at dinner. It would hardly, I believe, be too much to affirm, that Sir Walter Scott entertained, under his roof, in the course of the seven or eight brilliant seasons when his prosperity was at its height, as many persons of distinction in rank, in politics, in art, in literature, and in science, as the most princely nobleman of his age ever did in the like space of time.—I turned over, since I wrote the preceding sentence, Mr. Lodge's compendium of the British Peerage, and on summing up the titles which suggested *to myself* some reminiscence of this kind, I found them nearly as one out of six.—I fancy it is not beyond the mark to add, that of the eminent foreigners who visited our island within this period, a moiety crossed the Channel mainly in consequence of the interest with which his writings had invested Scotland—and that the hope of beholding the man under his own roof was the crowning motive with half that moiety. As for countrymen of his own, like him ennobled, in the higher sense of that word, by the display of their intellectual energies, if any one such contemporary can be pointed out as having crossed the Tweed, and yet not spent a day at Abbotsford, I shall be surprised.

It is needless to add, that Sir Walter was familiarly known, long before the days I am speaking of, to almost all the nobility and higher gentry of Scotland; and consequently, that there seldom wanted a fair proportion of them to assist him in doing the honours of his country. It is still more superfluous to say so respecting the heads of his own profession at Edinburgh: *Sibi et amicis*—Abbotsford was their villa whenever they pleased to resort to it, and few of them were ever absent from it long. He lived meanwhile in a constant interchange of easy visits with the gentlemen's families of Teviotdale and the Forest; so that, mixed up with his superfine admirers of the Mayfair breed, his staring worshippers from foreign parts, and his quick-witted coevals of the Parliament-House—there was found generally some hearty homespun laird, with his dame—the young laird—a bashful bumpkin, perhaps, whose ideas did not soar beyond his gun and pointer—or perhaps a little pseudo-dandy, for whom the Kelso race-course and the Jedburgh ball were "Life," and "the World;" and not forgetting a brace of "Miss Rawbones," in whom, as their mamma prognosticated, some of Sir Walter's young Waverleys or Osbaldistones might peradventure discover a Flora MacIvor or a Die Vernon. To complete the *olla podrida*, we must remember that no old acquaintance, or family connexions, however remote their actual station or style of manners from his own, were forgotten or lost sight of. He had some, even near relations, who, except when they visited him, rarely, if ever, found admittance to what the haughty dialect of the upper world is pleased to designate exclusively as *society*. These were welcome guests, let who might be under that roof; and it was the same with many a worthy citizen of Edinburgh, habitually moving in the obscurest of circles, who had been in the same class with Scott at the High School, or his fellow-apprentice when he was proud of earning three-pence a page by the use of his pen. To dwell on nothing else, it was surely a beautiful perfection of real universal humanity and politeness, that could enable this great and good man to blend guests so multifarious in one group, and contrive to make them all equally happy with him, with themselves, and with each other.

I remember saying to William Allan one morning as the whole party mustered before the porch after breakfast, "a faithful sketch of what you at this moment see would be more interesting a hundred years hence, than the grandest so-called historical picture that you will ever exhibit in Somerset-House;" and my friend agreed with me so cordially, that I often wondered afterwards he had not attempted to realize the suggestion. The subject ought, however, to have been treated conjointly by him (or Wilkie) and Edwin Landseer. It was a clear, bright, September morning, with a sharpness in the air that doubled the animating influence of the sunshine, and all was in readiness for a grand coursing match on Newark Hill. The only guest who had chalked out other sport for himself was the stanchest of anglers, Mr. Rose; but he, too, was there on his *shelty*, armed with his salmon-rod and landing-net, and attended by his humorous squire Hinves, and Charlie Purdie, a brother of Tom, in those days the most celebrated fisherman of the district. This little group of Waltonians, bound for Lord Somerville's preserve, remained lounging about to witness the start of the main cavalcade. Sir Walter, mounted on Sibyl, was marshalling the order of procession with a huge hunting-whip; and among a dozen frolicsome youths and maidens, who seemed disposed to laugh at all discipline, appeared, each on horseback, each as eager as the youngest sportsman in the troop, Sir Humphry Davy, Dr. Wollaston, and the patriarch of Scottish belles-lettres, Henry Mackenzie. The Man of Feeling, however, was persuaded with some difficulty to resign his steed for the present to his faithful negro follower, and to join Lady Scott in the sociable, until we should reach the ground of our *battue*. Laidlaw, on a long-tailed wiry Highlander, yclept *Hoddin Gray*, which carried him nimbly and stoutly, although his feet almost touched the ground as he sat, was the adjutant. But the most picturesque figure

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was the illustrious inventor of the safety-lamp. He had come for his favourite sport of angling, and had been practising it successfully with Rose, his travelling companion, for two or three days preceding this, but he had not prepared for coursing fields, or had left Charlie Purdie's troop for Sir Walter's on a sudden thought, and his fisherman's costume—a brown hat with flexible brims, surrounded with line upon line of catgut, and innumerable fly-hooks—jackboots worthy of a Dutch smuggler, and a fustian surtout dabbled with the blood of salmon, made a fine contrast with the smart jackets, white-cord breeches, and well polished jockey-boots of the less distinguished cavaliers about him. Dr. Wollaston was in black, and with his noble serene dignity of countenance, might have passed for a sporting archbishop. Mr. Mackenzie, at this time in the 76th year of his age, with a white hat turned up with green, green spectacles, green jacket, and long brown leathern gaiters buttoned upon his nether anatomy, wore a dog-whistle round his neck, and had all over the air of as resolute a devotee as the gay captain of Huntly Burn. Tom Purdie and his subalterns had preceded us by a few hours with all the greyhounds that could be collected at Abbotsford, Darnick, and Melrose; but the giant Maida had remained as his master's orderly, and now gambolled about Sibyl Grey, barking for mere joy like a spaniel puppy.

The order of march had been all settled, and the sociable was just getting under weigh, when *the Lady Anne* broke from the line, screaming with laughter, and exclaimed, "Papa, papa, I knew you could never think of going without your pet." Scott looked round, and I rather think there was a blush as well as a smile upon his face, when he perceived a little black pig frisking about his pony, and evidently a self-elected addition to the party of the day. He tried to look stern, and cracked his whip at the creature, but was in a moment obliged to join in the general cheers. Poor piggy soon found a strap round its neck, and was dragged into the background:—Scott, watching the retreat, repeated with mock pathos the first verse of an old pastoral song—

> "What will I do gin my hoggie* die?
> My joy, my pride, my hoggie!
> My only beast, I had nae mae,
> And wow! but I was vogie!"

—the cheers were redoubled—and the squadron moved on.

This pig had taken, nobody could tell how, a most sentimental attachment to Scott, and was constantly urging its pretensions to be admitted a regular member of his *tail* along with the greyhounds and terriers; but, indeed, I remember him suffering another summer under the same sort of pertinacity on the part of an affectionate hen. I leave the explanation for philosophers—but such were the facts. I have too much respect for the vulgarly calumniated donkey to name him in the same category of pets with the pig and the hen; but a year or two after this time, my wife used to drive a couple of these animals in a little garden chair, and whenever her father appeared at the door of our cottage, we were sure to see Hannah More and Lady Morgan (as Anne Scott had wickedly christened them) trotting from their pasture to lay their noses over the paling, and, as Washington Irving says of the old whitehaired hedger with the Parisian snuff-box, "to have a pleasant crack wi' the laird."

But to return to our *chasse*. On reaching Newark Castle, we found Lady Scott, her eldest daughter, and the venerable Mackenzie, all busily engaged in unpacking a basket that had been placed in their carriage, and arranging the luncheon it contained upon the mossy rocks overhanging the bed of the Yarrow. When such of the company as chose had partaken of this refection, the Man of Feeling remounted his pony, and all ascended the mountain, duly marshalled at proper distances, so as to beat in a broad line over the heather, Sir Walter directing the movement from the right wing—towards Blackandro. Davy, next to whom I chanced to be riding, laid his whip about the fern like an experienced hand, but cracked many a joke, too, upon his own jackboots, and surveying the long eager battalion of bush-rangers, exclaimed, "Good heavens! is it thus that I visit the scenery of the Lay of the Last Minstrel?" He then kept muttering to himself, as his glowing eye—(the finest and brightest that I ever saw)—ran over the landscape, some of those beautiful lines from the *Conclusion* of the Lay—

> ——"But still,
> When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
> And July's eve, with balmy breath,
> Waved the blue-bells on Newark heath,
> When throstles sing in Hareheadshaw,
> And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
> And flourished, broad, Blackandro's oak,
> The aged harper's soul awoke," &c.

Mackenzie, spectacled though he was, saw the first sitting hare, gave the word to slip the dogs, and spurred after them like a boy. All the seniors, indeed, did well as long as the course was upwards, but when puss took down the declivity, they halted and breathed themselves upon the knoll—cheering gayly, however, the young people, who dashed at full speed past and below them. Coursing on such a mountain is not like the same sport over a set of fine English pastures. There were gulfs to be avoided, and bogs enough to be threaded—many a stiff nag stuck fast—many a bold rider measured his length among the peat-hags—and another stranger to the ground besides Davy plunged neck-deep into a treacherous well-head, which, till they were floundering in it, had borne all the appearance of a piece of delicate green turf. When Sir Humphry emerged from his involuntary bath, his habiliments garnished with mud, slime, and mangled water-cresses, Sir Walter received him with a triumphant *encore!* But the philosopher had his revenge, for joining soon afterwards in a brisk gallop, Scott put Sibyl Grey to a leap beyond her prowess, and lay humbled in the ditch, while Davy, who was better mounted, cleared it and him at a bound. Happily there was little damage done—but no one was sorry that the sociable had been detained at the foot of the hill.

I have seen Sir Humphry in many places, and in company of many different descriptions; but never to such advantage as at Abbotsford. His host and he delighted in each other, and the modesty of their mutual admiration was a memorable spectacle. Davy was by nature a poet—and Scott, though anything but a philosopher in the modern sense of that term, might, I think it very likely, have pursued the study of physical science with zeal and success, had he happened to fall in with such an instructor as Sir Humphry would have been to him, in his early life. Each strove to make the other talk—and they did so in turn more charmingly than I ever heard either on any other occasion whatsoever. Scott in his romantic narratives touched a deeper chord of feeling than usual, when he had such a listener as Davy: and Davy, when induced to open his views upon any question of scientific interest in Scott's presence, did so with a degree of clear energetic eloquence, and with a flow of imagery and illustration, of which neither his habitual tone of table-talk, (least of all in London,) nor any of his prose writings, (except, indeed, the posthumous Consolations of Travel,) could suggest an adequate notion. I say his prose writings—for who that has read his sublime quatrains on the doctrine of Spinoza can doubt that he might have united, if he had pleased, in some great didactic poem, the vigorous ratiocination of Dryden and the moral majesty of Wordsworth? I remember William Laidlaw whispering to me, one night, when their "rapt talk" had

* *Hog* signifies in the Scotch dialect a young sheep that has never been shorn. Hence, no doubt, the name of the Poet of Ettrick—derived from a long line of shepherds. Mr. Charles Lamb, however, in one of his sonnets, suggests this pretty origin of *his* "Family Name:"—

> "Perhaps some shepherd on Lincolnian plains,
> In manners guileless as his own sweet flocks,
> Received it first amid the merry mocks
> And arch allusions of his fellow swains."

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kept the circle round the fire until long after the usual bedtime of Abbotsford—"Gude preserve us! this is a very superior occasion! Eh, sirs!" he added, cocking his eye like a bird, "I wonder if Shakspeare and Bacon ever met to screw ilk other up?"

Since I have touched on the subject of Sir Walter's autumnal diversions in these his later years, I may as well notice here two annual festivals, when sport was made his pretext for assembling his rural neighbours about him—days eagerly anticipated, and fondly remembered by many. One was a solemn bout of salmon-fishing for the neighbouring gentry and their families, instituted originally, I believe, by Lord Somerville, but now, in his absence, conducted and presided over by the Sheriff. Charles Purdie, already mentioned, had charge (partly as lessee) of the salmon fisheries for three or four miles of the Tweed, including all the water attached to the lands of Abbotsford, Gala, and Allwyn; and this festival had been established with a view, besides other considerations, of recompensing him for the attention he always bestowed on any of the lairds or their visiters that chose to fish, either from the banks or the boat, within his jurisdiction. His selection of the day, and other precautions, generally secured an abundance of sport for the great anniversary; and then the whole party assembled to regale on the newly caught prey, boiled, grilled, and roasted in every variety of preparation, beneath a grand old ash, adjoining Charlie's cottage at Boldside, on the northern margin of the Tweed, about a mile above Abbotsford. This banquet took place earlier in the day or later, according to circumstances; but it often lasted till the harvest moon shone on the lovely scene and its revellers. These formed groups that would have done no discredit to Watteau—and a still better hand has painted the background in the Introduction to the Monastery:—"On the opposite bank of the Tweed might be seen the remains of ancient enclosures, surrounded by sycamores and ash-trees of considerable size. These had once formed the crofts or arable ground of a village, now reduced to a single hut, the abode of a fisherman, who also manages a ferry. The cottages, even the church which once existed there, have sunk into vestiges hardly to be traced without visiting the spot, the inhabitants having gradually withdrawn to the more prosperous town of Galashiels, which has risen into consideration, within two miles of their neighbourhood. Superstitious eld, however, has tenanted the deserted grove with aerial beings, to supply the want of the mortal tenants who have deserted it. The ruined and abandoned churchyard of Boldside has been long believed to be haunted by the Fairies, and the deep broad current of the Tweed, wheeling in moonlight round the foot of the steep bank, with the number of trees originally planted for shelter round the fields of the cottagers, but now presenting the effect of scattered and detached groves, fill up the idea which one would form in imagination for a scene that Oberon and Queen Mab might love to revel in. There are evenings when the spectator might believe, with Father Chaucer, that the

> ——'Queen of Faëry,
> With harp, and pipe, and symphony,
> Were dwelling in the place.'"——

Sometimes the evening closed with a "burning of the water;" and then the Sheriff, though now not so agile as when he practised that rough sport in the early times of Ashestiel, was sure to be one of the party in the boat,—held a torch, or perhaps took the helm,—and seemed to enjoy the whole thing as heartily as the youngest of his company—

> "'Tis blithe along the midnight tide,
> With stalwart arm the boat to guide—
> On high the dazzling blaze to rear,
> And heedful plunge the barbed spear;
> Rock, wood, and scaur, emerging bright,
> Fling on the stream their ruddy light,
> And from the bank our band appears
> Like Genii armed with fiery spears."

The other "superior occasion" came later in the season; the 28th of October, the birthday of Sir Walter's eldest son, was I think that usually selected for *the Abbotsford Hunt*. This was a cunning-field on a large scale, including, with as many of the young gentry as pleased to attend, all Scott's personal favourites among the yeomen and farmers of the surrounding country. The Sheriff always took the field, but latterly devolved the command upon his good friend Mr. John Usher, the ex-laird of Toftfield; and he could not have had a more skilful or a better-humoured lieutenant. The hunt took place either on the moors above the Cauld-Shiels Loch, or over some of the hills on the estate of Gala, and we had commonly, ere we returned, hares enough to supply the wife of every farmer that attended with *soup* for a week following. The whole then dined at Abbotsford, the Sheriff in the chair, Adam Ferguson croupier, and Dominie Thomson, of course, chaplain. George, by the way, was himself an eager partaker in the preliminary sport; and now he would favour us with a grace, in Burns's phrase, "as long as my arm," beginning with thanks to the Almighty, who had given man dominion over the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, and expatiating on this text with so luculent a commentary, that Scott, who had been fumbling with his spoon long before he reached his Amen, could not help exclaiming as he sat down, "Well done, Mr. George, I think we've had every thing but the view hollа!" The company, whose onset had been thus deferred, were seldom, I think, under thirty in number, and sometimes they exceeded forty. The feast was such as suited the occasion—a baron of beef, roasted, at the foot of the table, a salted round at the head, while tureens of hare-soup, hotchpotch, and cockey-leekie, extended down the centre, and such light articles as geese, turkeys, entire sucking pigs, a singed sheep's head, and the unfailing haggis, were set forth by way of side-dishes. Blackcock and moorfowl, bushels of snipe, *black puddings*, *white puddings*, and pyramids of pancakes, formed the second course. Ale was the favourite beverage during dinner, but there was plenty of port and sherry for those whose stomachs they suited. The quaighs of Glenlivet were filled brimful, and tossed off as if they held water. The wine decanters made a few rounds of the table, but the hints for hot punch and toddy soon became clamorous. Two or three bowls were introduced, and placed under the supervision of experienced manufacturers—one of these being usually the Ettrick Shepherd,—and then the business of the evening commenced in good earnest. The faces shone and glowed like those at Camacho's wedding: the chairman told his richest stories of old rural life, Lowland or Highland; Ferguson and humbler heroes fought their peninsular battles o'er again; the stalwart Dandie Dinmonts lugged out their last winter's snow-storm, the parish scandal, perhaps, or the dexterous bargain of the Northumberland *tryste*; and every man was knocked down for the song that he sung best, or took most pleasure in singing. Sheriff-substitute Shortreed—(a cheerful hearty little man, with a sparkling eye and a most infectious laugh)—gave us *Dick o' the Cow*, or, *Now Liddesdale has ridden a raid*; a weather-beaten, stiff-bearded veteran, *Captain* Ormistoun, as he was called, (though I doubt if his rank was recognised at the Horse Guards,) had the primitive pastoral of *Cowdenknowes* in sweet perfection; Hogg produced *The Women folk*, or, *The Kye comes hame*, and, in spite of many grinding notes, contrived to make every body delighted, whether with the fun or the pathos of his ballad; the Melrose doctor sang in spirited style some of Moore's masterpieces; a couple of retired sailors joined in *Bould Admiral Duncan upon the high sea*;—and the gallant croupier crowned the last bowl with *Ale, good ale, thou art my darling!* Imagine some smart Parisian *savant*—some dreamy pedant of Halle or Heidelberg—a brace of stray young lords from Oxford or Cambridge, or perhaps their prim college tutors, planted here and there amidst these rustic wassailers—this being their first vision of the author of Marmion and Ivanhoe, and he appearing as heartily at home in the scene as if he had been a

veritable *Dandie* himself—his face radiant, his laugh gay as childhood, his chorus always ready. And so it proceeded until some worthy, who had fifteen or twenty miles to ride home, began to insinuate that his wife and bairns would be getting sorely anxious about the fords, and the Dumples and Hoddins were at last heard neighing at the gate, and it was voted that the hour had come for *doch an dorrach*—the stirrup-cup—to wit, a bumper all round of the unmitigated *mountain dew*. How they all contrived to get home in safety Heaven only knows—but I never heard of any serious accident except upon one occasion, when James Hogg made a bet at starting that he would leap over his wall-eyed poney as she stood, and broke his nose in this experiment of "o'ervaulting ambition." One comely good-wife, far off among the hills, amused Sir Walter by telling him, the next time he passed her homestead after one of these jolly doings, what her husband's first words were when he alighted at his own door—"Ailie, my woman, I'm ready for my bed—and oh, lass, (he gallantly added,) I wish I could sleep for a towmont, for there's only ae thing in this warld worth living for, and that's the Abbotsford hunt!"

It may well be supposed that the President of the Boldside Festival and the Abbotsford Hunt, did not omit the good old custom of *the Kirn*. Every November before quitting the country for Edinburgh, he gave a *harvest-home*, on the most approved model of former days, to all the peasantry on his estate, their friends and kindred, and as many poor neighbours besides as his barn could hold. Here old and young danced from sunset to sunrise, John of Skye's bagpipe being relieved at intervals by the violin of some "Wandering Willie;"—and the laird and all his family were present during the early part of the evening, he and his wife to distribute the contents of the first tub of whisky-punch, and his young people to take their due share in the endless reels and hornpipes of the earthen floor. As Mr. Morritt has said of him as he appeared at Laird Nippey's kirn of earlier days, "to witness the cordiality of his reception might have unbent a misanthrope." He had his private joke for every old wife or "gausie carle," his arch compliment for the ear of every bonny lass, and his hand and his blessing for the head of every little *Eppie Daidle* from Abbotstown or Broomylees.

"The notable paradox," he says in one of the most charming of his essays, "that the residence of a proprietor upon his estate is of as little consequence as the bodily presence of a stockholder upon Exchange, has, we believe, been renounced. At least, as in the case of the Duchess of Suffolk's relationship to her own child, the vulgar continue to be of opinion that there is some difference in favour of the next hamlet and village, and even of the vicinage in general, when the squire spends his rents at the manor-house, instead of cutting a figure in France or Italy. A celebrated politician used to say, he would willingly bring in one bill to make poaching felony, another to encourage the breed of foxes, and a third to revive the decayed amusements of cock-fighting and bull-baiting—that he would make, in short, any sacrifice to the humours and prejudices of the country gentlemen, in their most extravagant form, provided only he could prevail upon them to 'dwell in their own houses, be the patrons of their own tenantry, and the fathers of their own children.'"*

CHAPTER L.

PUBLICATION OF THE ABBOT — THE BLAIR-ADAM CLUB—KELSO—WALTONHALL, ETC.—BALLANTYNE'S NOVELIST'S LIBRARY—ACQUITTAL OF QUEEN CAROLINE—SERVICE OF THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—SCOTT ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH—THE CELTIC SOCIETY—LETTERS TO LORD MONTAGU—CORNET SCOTT—CHARLES SCOTT—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM, ETC.—KENILWORTH PUBLISHED.—1820-1821.

In the September of 1820, Longman, in conjunction with Constable, published *The Abbot*—the continuation, to a certain extent, of The Monastery, of which I barely mentioned the appearance under the preceding March. I had nothing of any consequence to add to the information which the subsequent Introduction affords us respecting the composition and fate of the former of these novels. It was considered as a failure—the first of the series on which any such sentence was pronounced; nor have I much to allege in favour of the White Lady of Avenel, generally criticised as the primary blot, or of Sir Percy Shafton, who was loudly, though not quite so generally, condemned. In either case, considered separately, he seems to have erred from dwelling (in the German taste) on materials that might have done very well for a rapid sketch. The phantom with whom we have leisure to become familiar is sure to fail—even the witch of Endor is contented with a momentary appearance and five syllables of the shade she evokes. And we may say the same of any grotesque absurdity in human manners; Scott might have considered with advantage how lightly and briefly Shakspeare introduces *his* Euphuism—though actually the prevalent humour of the hour when he was writing. But perhaps these errors might have attracted little notice, had the novelist been successful in finding some reconciling medium capable of giving consistence and harmony to his naturally incongruous materials. "These," said one of his ablest critics, "are joined—but they refuse to blend. Nothing can be more poetical in conception, and sometimes in language, than the fiction of the White Maid of Avenel; but when this ethereal personage, who rides on the cloud which 'for Araby is bound'—who is

> 'Something between heaven and hell,
> Something that neither stood nor fell'—

whose existence is linked by an awful and mysterious destiny to the fortunes of a decaying family; when such a being as this descends to clownish pranks, and promotes a frivolous jest about a tailor's bodkin, the course of our sympathies is rudely arrested, and we feel as if the author had put upon us the old-fashioned pleasantry of selling a bargain."*

The beautiful natural scenery, and the sterling Scotch characters and manners introduced in the Monastery are, however, sufficient to redeem even these mistakes; and, indeed, I am inclined to believe that it will ultimately occupy a securer place than some romances enjoying hitherto a far higher reputation, in which he makes no use of *Scottish* materials.

Sir Walter himself thought well of *The Abbot* when he had finished it. When he sent me a complete copy, I found on a slip of paper at the beginning of volume first, these two lines from *Tom Crib's Memorial to Congress*:—

> "Up he rose in a funk, lapped a toothful of brandy,
> And *to it* again!—any odds upon Sandy!"—

and whatever ground he had been supposed to lose in the Monastery, part at least of it was regained by this tale, and especially by its most graceful and pathetic portraiture of Mary Stuart. "The Castle of Lochleven," says the Chief-Commissioner Adam, "is seen at every turn from the northern side of Blair-Adam. This castle, renowned and attractive above all the others in my neighbourhood, became an object of much increased attention, and a theme of constant conversation, after the author of Waverley had, by his inimitable power of delineating character—by his creative poetic fancy in representing scenes of varied interest—and by the splendour of his romantic descriptions, infused a more diversified and a deeper tone of feeling into the history of Queen Mary's captivity and escape."

I have introduced this quotation from a little book privately printed for the amiable Judge's own family and familiar friends, because Sir Walter owned to

* Essay on Landscape Gardening, Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xxi., p. 77.

* Adolphus's Letters to Heber, p. 18.

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myself at the time, that the idea of *The Abbot* had arisen in his mind during a visit to Blair-Adam. In the pages of the tale itself, indeed, the beautiful localities of that estate are distinctly mentioned, with an allusion to the virtues and manners that adorn its mansion, such as must have been intended to satisfy the possessor (if he could have had any doubts on the subject) as to the authorship of those novels.

The Right Honourable William Adam (who must pardon my mentioning him here as the only man I ever knew that rivalled Sir Walter Scott in uniform graciousness of *bonhommie* and gentleness of humour) was appointed in 1815, to the Presidency of the Court for Jury Trial in Civil Cases, then instituted in Scotland, and he thenceforth spent a great part of his time at his paternal seat in Kinross-shire. Here, about mid-summer, 1816, he received a visit from his near relation William Clerk, Adam Ferguson, his hereditary friend and especial favourite, and their lifelong intimate, Scott. They remained with him for two or three days, in the course of which they were all so much delighted with their host, and he with them, that it was resolved to reassemble the party, with a few additions, at the same season of every following year. This was the origin of the Blair-Adam Club, the regular members of which were in number nine; viz., the four already named—the Chief Commissioner's son, Admiral Sir Charles Adam—his son-in-law, the late Mr. Anstruther Thomson of Charleton, in Fifeshire—Mr. Thomas Thomson, the Deputy Register of Scotland—his brother, the Rev. John Thomson, minister of Duddingston, who, though a most diligent and affectionate parish-priest, has found leisure to make himself one of the first masters of the British School of Landscape Painting—and the Right Honourable Sir Samuel Shepherd, who, after filling with high distinction the office of Attorney-General in England, became Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer in Scotland, shortly after the third anniversary of this brotherhood, into which he was immediately welcomed with unanimous cordiality. They usually contrived to meet on a Friday; spent the Saturday in a ride to some scene of historical interest within an easy distance; enjoyed a quiet Sunday at home—"duly attending divine worship at the Kirk of Cleish (not Cleishbotham)"—gave Monday morning to another antiquarian excursion, and returned to Edinburgh in time for the Courts of Tuesday. From 1816 to 1831 inclusive, Sir Walter was a constant attendant at these meetings. He visited in this way Castle Campbell, Magus Moor, Falkland, Dunfermline, St. Andrews, and many other scenes of ancient celebrity; to one of those trips we must ascribe his dramatic sketch of *Macduff's Cross*—and to that of the dog-days of 1819, we owe the weightier obligation of *The Abbot*.

I expect an easy forgiveness for introducing from the *liber rarissimus* of Blair-Adam the page that belongs to that particular meeting—which, though less numerous than usual, is recorded as having been 'most pleasing and delightful." "There were," writes the President, "only five of us—the Chief Baron, Sir Walter, Mr. Clerk, Charles Adam, and myself. The weather was sultry, almost beyond bearing. We did not stir beyond the bounds of the pleasure-ground, indeed not far from the vicinity of the house; wandering from one shady place to another; lolling upon the grass, or sitting upon prostrate trees, not yet carried away by the purchaser. Our conversation was constant, though tranquil; and what might be expected from Mr. Clerk, who is a superior converser, and whose mind is stored with knowledge; and from Sir Walter Scott, who has let the public know what his powers are. Our talk was of all sorts (except of *beeves*.) Besides a display of their historic knowledge, at once extensive and correct, they touched frequently on the pleasing reminiscences of their early days. Shepherd and I could not go back to those periods; but we could trace our own intimacy and constant friendship for more than forty years back, when in 1783 we began our professional pursuits on the circuit. So that if Scott could describe, with inconceivable humour, their doings at Mr. Murray's of Simprim, when emerging from boyhood; when he, and Murray, and Clerk, and Adam Ferguson, acted plays in the school-room (Simprim making the dominie bear his part)—when Ferguson was prompter, orchestra, and audience—and as Scott said, representing the whole pit, kicked up an 'O. P.' row by anticipation; and many other such recollections—Shepherd and I could tell of our Circuit fooleries, as old Fielding (the son of the great novelist) called them—of the Circuit songs which Will Fielding made and sung—and of the grave Sir William Grant, (then a briefless barrister,) yclept by Fielding the Chevalier Grant, bearing his part in those fooleries, enjoying all our pranks with great zest, and who talked of them with delight to his dying day. When the conversation took a graver tone, and turned upon literary subjects, the Chief Baron took a great share in it; for notwithstanding his infirmity of deafness, he is a most pleasing and agreeable converser, and readily picks up what is passing; and having a classical mind, and classical information, gives a pleasing, gentlemanly, and well-informed tone to general conversation. Before I bring these recollections of our social and cheerful doings to a close, let me observe, that there was a characteristic feature attending them, which it would be injustice to the individuals who composed our parties not to mention. The whole set of us were addicted to take a full share of conversation, and to discuss every subject that occurred with sufficient keenness. The topics were multifarious, and the opinions of course various; but during the whole time of our intercourse, for so many years, four days at a time, and always together, except when we were asleep, there never was the least tendency on any occasion to any unruly debate, nor to any thing that deviated from the pure delight of social intercourse."

The Chief Commissioner adds the following particulars in his appendix:—"Our return from Blair-Adam (after the first meeting of the Club) was very early on a Tuesday morning, that we might reach the Courts by nine o'clock. An occurrence took place near the Hawe's Inn, which left little doubt upon my mind that Sir Walter Scott was the Author of Waverley, of Guy Mannering, and of the Antiquary, his only novels then published. The morning was prodigiously fine, and the sea as smooth as glass. Sir Walter and I were standing on the beach, enjoying the prospect; the other gentlemen were not come from the boat. The porpoises were rising in great numbers, when Sir Walter said to me, 'Look at them, how they are showing themselves; what fine fellows they are! I have the greatest respect for them: I would as soon kill a man as a phoca.' I could not conceive that the same idea could occur to two men respecting this animal, and set down that it could only be Sir Walter Scott who made the phoca have the better of the battle with the Antiquary's nephew, Captain M'Intyre.

"Soon after, another occurrence quite confirmed me as to the authorship of the novels. On that visit to Blair-Adam, in course of conversation, I mentioned an anecdote about Wilkie, the author of the Epigoniad, who was but a formal poet, but whose conversation was most amusing, and full of fancy. Having heard much of him in my family, where he had been very intimate, I went, when quite a lad, to St. Andrews, where he was a Professor, for the purpose of visiting him. I had scarcely let him know who I was, when he said, 'Mr. William, were you ever in this place before?' I said no. 'Then, sir, you must go and look at Regulus Tower,—no doubt you will have something of an eye of an architect about you;—walk up to it at an angle, advance and recede until you get to see it at its proper distance, and come back and tell me whether you ever saw any thing so beautiful in building: till I saw that tower, and studied it, I thought the beauty of architecture had consisted in curly wurlies, but now I find it consists in symmetry and proportion.' In the following winter Rob Roy was published, and there I read, that the

Cathedral of Glasgow was a 'respectable Gothic structure, without any *curly-wurlies*.'

"But what confirmed, and was certainly meant to disclose to me the author, (and that in a very elegant manner,) was the mention of the *Kiery Craigs* —a picturesque piece of scenery in the grounds of Blair Adam—as being in the vicinity of Kelty Bridge, the *howf* of Auchtermuchty, the Kinross carrier.

"It was only an intimate friend of the family, in the habit of coming to Blair-Adam, who could know any thing of the Kiery Craigs, or its name; and both the scenery and the name had attractions for Sir Walter.

"At our first meeting after the publication of the 'Abbot,' when the party was assembled on the top of the rock, the Chief-Baron Shepherd, looking Sir Walter full in the face, and stamping his staff on the ground, said 'Now, Sir Walter, I think we be upon the top of the Kiery *Cragge*.' Sir Walter preserved profound silence; but there was a conscious looking down, and a considerable elongation of his uppef lip."

Since I have obtained permission to quote from this private volume, I may as well mention that I was partly moved to ask that favour, by the author's own confession, that his "Blair-Adam, from 1733 to 1834," originated in a suggestion of Scott's. "It was," says the Judge, "on a fine Sunday, lying on the grassy summit of Bennarty, above its craggy brow, that Sir Walter said, looking first at the flat expanse of Kinross-shire, (on the south side of the Ochils,) and then at the space which Blair-Adam fills between the hill of Drumglow (the highest of the Cleish hills) and the valley of Lochore—'What an extraordinary thing it is that here to the north so little appears to have been done, when there are so many proprietors to work upon it; and to the south, here is a district of country entirely made by the efforts of one family, in three generations, and one of them amongst us in the full enjoyment of what has been done by his two predecessors and himself? Blair-Adam, as I have always heard, had a wild, uncomely, and unhospitable appearance, before its improvements were begun. It would be most curious to record in writing its original state, and trace its gradual progress to its present condition.'" Upon this suggestion, enforced by the approbation of the other members present, the President of the Blair-Adam Club commenced arranging the materials for what constitutes a most instructive as well as entertaining history of the Agricultural and Arboricultural progress of his domains, in the course of a hundred years, under his grandfather, his father, (the celebrated architect,) and himself. And Sir Walter had only suggested to his friend of Kinrossshire what he was resolved to put in practice with regard to his own improvements on Tweed-side; for he begun at precisely the same period to keep a regular Journal of all his rural transactions, under the title of "Sylva Abbotsfordiensis."

For reasons, as we have seen, connected with the affairs of the Ballantynes, Messrs. Longman published the first edition of The Monastery; and similar circumstances induced Sir Walter to associate this house with that of Constable in the succeeding novel. Constable disliked its title, and would fain have had *the Nunnery* instead; but Scott stuck to his *Abbot*. The bookseller grumbled a little, but was soothed by the author's reception of his request that Queen Elizabeth might be brought into the field in his next romance, as a companion to the Mary Stuart of the Abbot. Scott would not indeed indulge him with the choice of the particular period of Elizabeth's reign indicated in the proposed title of *The Armada*; but expressed his willingness to take up his own old favourite, the legend of Meikle's ballad. He wished to call the novel, like the ballad, *Cumnor-hall*, but in further deference to Constable's wishes, substituted "Kenilworth." John Ballantyne objected to this title, and told Constable the result would be "something worthy of the kennel;" but Constable had all reason to be satisfied with the child of his christening. His partner, Mr. Cadell, says—"his vanity boiled over so much at this time, on having his suggestion gone into, that when in his high moods he used to stalk up and down his room, and exclaim, 'By G——, I am all but the author of the Waverley Novels!'" Constable's bibliographical knowledge, however, it is but fair to say, was really of most essential service to Scott upon many of these occasions; and his letter (now before me) proposing the subject of *The Armada*, furnished the Novelist with such a catalogue of materials for the illustration of the period, as may, probably enough, have called forth some very energetic expressions of thankfulness.

Scott's kindness secured for John Ballantyne the usual interest in the profits of Kenilworth, the last of his great works in which this friend was to have any concern. I have already mentioned the obvious drooping of his health and strength; and a document to be introduced presently, will show that John himself had occasional glimpses, at least, of his danger before the close of 1819. Nevertheless, his spirits continued, at the time of which I am now treating, to be in general as high as ever; nay, it was now, after his maladies had taken a very serious shape, and it was hardly possible to look on without anticipating a speedy termination of his career, that the gay, hopeful spirit of the shattered and trembling invalid led him to plunge into a new stream of costly indulgence. It was an amiable point in his character, that he had always retained a tender fondness for his native place. He had now taken up the ambition of rivalling his illustrious friend, in some sort, by providing himself with a summer retirement amidst the scenery of his boyhood; and it need not be doubted, at the same time, that in erecting a villa at Kelso, he anticipated and calculated on substantial advantages from its vicinity to Abbotsford.

One fine day of this autumn I accompanied Sir Walter to inspect the progress of this edifice, which was to have the title of *Walton Hall*. John had purchased two or three old houses of two stories in height, with notched gables, and thatched roofs, near the end of the long, original street of Kelso, and not far from the gateway of the Duke of Roxburghe's magnificent park, with their small gardens and paddocks running down to the margin of the Tweed. He had already fitted up convenient bachelor's lodgings in one of the primitive tenements, and converted the others into a goodly range of stabling, and was now watching the completion of his new *corps de logis* behind, which included a handsome entrance-hall, or saloon, destined to have old Piscator's bust, on a stand, in the centre, and to be embellished all round with emblems of his sport. Behind this were spacious rooms overlooking the little *pleasance* which was to be laid out somewhat in the Italian style, with ornamental steps, a fountain, and *jet d'eau*, and a broad terrace hanging over the river, and commanding an extensive view of perhaps the most beautiful landscape in Scotland. In these new dominions John received us with pride and hilarity; and we then walked with him over this pretty town, lounged away an hour among the ruins of the Abbey, and closed our perambulation with *the Garden*, where Scott had spent some of the happiest of his early summers, and where he pointed out with sorrowful eyes the site of the Platanus, under which he first read Percy's Reliques. Returning to John's villa, we dined gaily, *al fresco*, by the side of his fountain; and after not a few bumpers to the prosperity of Walton Hall, he mounted Old Mortality, and escorted us for several miles on our ride homewards. It was this day that, overflowing with kindly zeal, Scott revived one of the long-forgotten projects of their early connexion in business, and offered his services as editor of a Novelist's Library, to be printed and published for the sole benefit of his host. The offer was eagerly embraced, and when two or three mornings afterwards John returned Sir Walter's visit, he had put into his hands the MS. of that admirable life of Fielding, which was followed, at brief intervals, as the arrangements of the projected work required, by others of Smollet, Richardson, Defoe, Sterne, Johnson, Goldsmith, Le Sage, Horace Walpole, Cumberland, Mrs. Radcliffe, Charles Johnstone, Clara Reeve, Charlotte Smith, and Rob-

ert Bage. The publication of the first volume of "Ballantyne's Novelist's Library" did not take place however until February, 1821: and the series was closed soon after the proprietor's death in the ensuing summer. In spite of the charming prefaces, in which Scott combines all the graces of his easy narrative, with a perpetual stream of deep and gentle wisdom in commenting the tempers and fortunes of his best predecessors in novel literature, and also with expositions of his own critical views, which prove how profoundly he had investigated the principles and practice of those masters before he struck out a new path for himself—in spite of these delightful and valuable essays, the publication was not prosperous. Constable, after Ballantyne's death, would willingly have resumed the scheme. But Scott had by that time convinced himself that it was in vain to expect much success for a collection so bulky and miscellaneous, and which must of necessity include a large proportion of matter, condemned by the purity, whether real or affected, of modern taste. He could hardly have failed to perceive, on reflection, that his own novels, already constituting an extensive library of fiction, in which no purist could pretend to discover danger for the morals of youth, had in fact superseded the works of less strait-laced days in the only permanently and solidly profitable market for books of this order. He at all events declined Constable's proposition for renewing and extending this attempt. What he did was done gratuitously for John Ballantyne's sake; and I have dwelt on it thus long, because, as the reader will perceive by and by, it was so done during (with one exception) the very busiest period of Scott's literary life.

Shortly before Scott wrote the following letters, he had placed his second son (at this time in his fifteenth year) under the care of the Reverend John Williams, who had been my intimate friend and companion at Oxford, with a view of preparing him for that University. Mr. Williams was then Vicar of Lampeter, in Cardiganshire, and the high satisfaction with which his care of Charles Scott inspired Sir Walter, induced several other Scotch gentlemen of distinction by and by to send their sons also to his Welsh parsonage; the result of which northern connexions was important to the fortunes of one of the most accurate and extensive scholars, and most skilful teachers, of the present time.

To Walter Scott, Esq., 18th Hussars, Cork.

"Edinburgh, 14th November, 1820.

"My dear Walter,

"I send you a cheque on Coutts for your quarter's allowance. I hope you manage your cash like a person of discretion—above all, avoid the card tables of ancient dowagers. Always remember that my fortune, however much my efforts may increase it, and although I am improving it for your benefit, not for any that can accrue in my own time,—yet never can be more than a decent independence, and therefore will make a poor figure unless managed with good sense, moderation, and prudence—which are habits easily acquired in youth, while habitual extravagance is a fault very difficult to be afterwards corrected.

"We came to town yesterday, and bade adieu to Abbotsford for the season. Fifa,* to mamma's great surprise and scandal, chose to stay at Abbotsford with Mai, and plainly denied to follow the carriage—so our canine establishment in Castle street is reduced to little Ury.† We spent two days at Arniston, on the road, and on coming here, found Sophia as nicely and orderly settled in her house as if she had been a married woman these five years. I believe she is very happy—perhaps unusually so, for her wishes are moderate, and all seem anxious to please her. She is preparing in due time for the arrival of a little stranger, who will make you an uncle and me (God help me!) a grandpapa.

"The Round Towers you mention are very curious, and seem to have been built, as the Irish hackney-coachman said of the Martello one at the Black Rock, 'to puzzle posterity.' There are two of them in Scotland—both excellent pieces of architecture; one at Brechin, built quite close to the old church, so as to appear united with it, but in fact it is quite detached from the church, and sways from it in a high wind, when it vibrates like a lighthouse. The other is at Abernethy in Perthshire—said to have been the capital city of the Picts. I am glad to see you observe objects of interest and curiosity, because otherwise a man may travel over the universe without acquiring any more knowledge than his horse does.

"We had our hunt and our jollification after it on last Wednesday. It went off in great style, although I felt a little sorry at having neither Charles nor you in the field. By the way, Charles seems most admirably settled. I had a most sensible letter on the subject from Mr. Williams, who appears to have taken great pains, and to have formed a very just conception both of his merits and foibles. When I have an opportunity, I will hand you his letter; for it will entertain you, it is so correct a picture of Monsieur Charles.

"Dominic Thomson has gone to a Mrs. Dennistoun, of Colgrain, to drill her youngsters. I am afraid he will find a change; but I hope to have a nook open to him by and by—as a sort of retreat or harbour on his lee. Adieu, my dear—always believe me your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Mr. Charles Scott, care of the Rev. John Williams, Lampeter.

"Edinburgh, 14th Nov. 1820.

"My dear boy Charles,

"Your letters made us all very happy, and I trust you are now comfortably settled and plying your task hard. Mr. Williams will probably ground you more perfectly in the grammar of the classical languages than has hitherto been done, and this you will at first find but dry work. But there are many indispensable reasons why you must bestow the utmost attention upon it. A perfect knowledge of the classical languages has been fixed upon, and not without good reason, as the mark of a well-educated young man; and though people may have scrambled into distinction without it, it is always with the greatest difficulty, just like climbing over a wall, instead of giving your ticket at the door. Perhaps you may think another proof of a youth's talents might have been adopted; but what good will arise from your thinking so, if the general practice of society has fixed on this particular branch of knowledge as the criterion? Wheat or barley were as good grain, I suppose, as *sesamum*; but it was only to *sesamum* that the talisman gave way, and the rock opened; and it is equally certain that, if you are not a well-founded grammatical scholar in Greek and Latin, you will in vain present other qualifications to distinction. Besides, the study of grammar, from its very asperities, is calculated to teach youth that patient labour which is necessary to the usual exertion of the understanding upon every other branch of knowledge; and your great deficiency is want of steadiness and of resolute application to the dry as well as the interesting parts of your learning. But exerting yourself, as I have no doubt you will do, under the direction of so learned a man, and so excellent a teacher as Mr. Williams, and being without the temptations to idleness which occurred at home, I have every reason to believe that, to your natural quickness you will presently add such a *habit* of application and steadiness, as will make you a respected member of society, perhaps a distinguished one. It is very probable that the whole success of your future life may depend on the manner in which you employ *the next two years*; and I am therefore most anxious you should fully avail yourself of the opportunities now afforded you.

"You must not be too much disconcerted with the apparent dryness of your immediate studies. Language is the great mark by which man is distinguished from the beasts, and a strict acquaintance with the manner in which it is composed, becomes, as you follow it a little way, one of the most curious and interesting exercises of the intellect.

"We had our grand hunt on Wednesday last, a fine day, and plenty of sport. We hunted all over Huntly wood, and so on to Halidon and Prieston—saw twelve hares, and killed six, having very hard runs, and turning three packs of grouse completely. In absence of Walter and you, Stenhouse the horse-couper led the field, and rode as if he had been a piece of his horse, sweltering like a wild-drake all through Marriage-Moss at a motion betwixt swimming and riding. One unlucky accident befell. Queen Mab, who was bestrode by Captain Adam, lifted up her heels against Mr. Craig of Galashiels,* whose leg she greeted with a thump like a pistol-shot, while by the same movement she very nearly sent the noble Captain over her ears. Mr. Craig was helped from horse, but would not permit his boot to be drawn off, protesting he would faint if he saw the bone of his leg

* *Fivette*—a spaniel of Lady Scott's.

† *Urisk*—a small terrier of the long silky-haired Kintail breed.

* Mr. George Craig, factor to the laird of Gala, and manager of a little branch bank at Galashiels. This worthy man was one of the regular members of the Abbotsford hunt.

sticking through the stocking. Some thought he was reluctant to exhibit his legs in their primitive and unclothed simplicity, in respect they have an unhappy resemblance to a pair of tongs. As for the Captain, he declared that if the accident had happened *in action*, the surgeon and drum-boys would have had off, not his *boot* only, but his *leg to boot*, before he could have uttered a remonstrance. At length Gala and I prevailed to have the boot drawn, and to my great joy I found the damage was not serious, though the pain must have been severe.

"On Saturday we left Abbotsford, and dined and spent Sunday at Arniston, where we had many inquiries after you from Robert Dundas, who was so kind to you last year.

"I must conclude for the present, requesting your earnest pursuit of such branches of study as Mr. Williams recommends. In a short time, as you begin to comprehend the subjects you are learning, you will find the path turn smoother, and that which at present seems wrapped up in an inextricable labyrinth of thorns and briers, will at once become easy and attractive.

"Always, dear Charlie, your affectionate father,

W. S."

On the same day Scott wrote as follows to the manly and amiable author of "Sir Marmaduke Maxwell," who had shortly before sent the MS. of that romantic drama to Abbotsford for his inspection:—

To Mr. Allan Cunningham; care of F. Chantrey, Esq. R. A., London.

"Edinburgh, 14th November, 1820.

"My dear Allan,

"I have been meditating a long letter to you for many weeks past; but company, and rural business, and rural sports, are very unfavourable to writing letters. I have now a double reason for writing, for I have to thank you for sending me in safety a beautiful specimen of our English Michael's talents in the cast of my venerable friend Mr. Watt: it is a most striking resemblance, with all that living character which we are apt to think life itself alone can exhibit. I hope Mr. Chantrey does not permit his distinguished skill either to remain unexercised, or to be lavished exclusively on subjects of little interest. I would like to see him engaged on some subject of importance completely adapted to the purpose of his chisel, and demanding its highest powers. Pray remember me to him most kindly.

"I have perused twice your curious and interesting manuscript. Many parts of the poetry are eminently beautiful, though I fear the great length of the piece, and some obscurity of the plot, would render it unfit for dramatic representation. There is also a fine tone of supernatural impulse spread over the whole action, which I think a common audience would not be likely to adopt or comprehend—though I own that to me it has a very powerful effect. Speaking of dramatic composition in general, I think it is almost essential (though the rule be most difficult in practice) that the plot, or business of the piece, should advance with every line that is spoken. The fact is, the drama is addressed chiefly to the eyes, and as much as can be, by any possibility, represented on the stage, should neither be told or described. Of the miscellaneous part of a large audience, many do not understand, nay, many cannot hear, either narrative or description, but are solely intent upon the action exhibited. It is, I conceive, for this reason that very bad plays, written by performers themselves, often contrive to get through, and not without applause; while others, immeasurably superior in point of poetical merit, fail, merely because the author is not sufficiently possessed of the trick of the scene, or enough aware of the importance of a maxim pronounced by no less a performer than Punch himself—(at least he was the last authority from whom I heard it) —*Push on, keep moving!* Now, in your very ingenious dramatic effort, the interest not only stands still, but sometimes retrogrades. It contains, notwithstanding, many passages of eminent beauty, many specimens of most interesting dialogue; and, on the whole, if it is not fitted for the modern stage, I am not sure that its very imperfections do not render it more fit for the closet, for we certainly do not always read with the greatest pleasure those plays which act best.

"If, however, you should at any time wish to become a candidate for dramatic laurels, I would advise you, in the first place, to consult some professional person of judgment and taste. I should regard friend Terry as an excellent Mentor, and I believe he would concur with me in recommending that at least one third of the drama be retrenched, that the plot should be rendered simpler, and the motives more obvious; and I think the powerful language and many of the situations might then have their full effect upon the audience. I am uncertain if I have made myself sufficiently understood; but I would say, for example, that it is ill explained by what means Comyn and his gang, who land as shipwrecked men, become at once possessed of the old lord's domains, merely by killing and taking possession. I am aware of what you mean, namely, that being attached to the then rulers, he is supported in his ill-acquired power by their authority. But this is imperfectly brought out, and escaped me at the first reading. The superstitious motives, also, which induced the shepherds to delay their vengeance, are not likely to be intelligible to the generality of the hearers. It would seem more probable that the young Baron should have led his faithful vassals to avenge the death of his parents; and it has escaped me what prevents him from taking this direct and natural course. Besides it is, I believe, a rule (and it seems a good one) that one single interest, to which every other is subordinate, should occupy the whole play,—each separate object having just the effect of a mill-dam, sluicing off a certain portion of the sympathy, which should move on with increasing force and rapidity to the catastrophe. Now, in your work, there are several divided points of interest—there is the murder of the old Baron—the escape of his wife—that of his son—the loss of his bride—the villanous artifices of Comyn to possess himself of her person, and, finally, the fall of Comyn, and acceleration of the vengeance due to his crimes. I am sure your own excellent sense, which I admire as much as I do your genius, will give me credit for my frankness in these matters; I only know, that I do not know many persons on whose performances I would venture to offer so much criticism.

"I will return the manuscript under Mr. Freeling's Post-Office cover, and I hope it will reach you safe.—Adieu, my leal and esteemed friend—yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

Shortly afterwards Mr. Cunningham, thanking his critic, said he had not yet received back his MS.; but that he hoped the delay had been occasioned by Sir Walter's communication of it to some friend of theatrical experience. He also mentioned his having undertaken a collection of "The Songs of Scotland," with notes. The answer was in these terms:—

To Mr. Allan Cunningham.

"My dear Allan,

"It was as you supposed—I detained your manuscript to read it over with Terry. The plot appears to Terry as to me ill-combined, which is a great defect in a drama, though less perceptible in the closet than on the stage. Still if the mind can be kept upon one unbroken course of interest, the effect even in perusal is more gratifying. I have always considered this as the great secret in dramatic poetry, and conceive it one of the most difficult exercises of the invention possible to conduct a story through five acts, developing it gradually in every scene, so as to keep up the attention, yet never till the very conclusion permitting the nature of the catastrophe to become visible,—and all the while to accompany this by the necessary delineation of character and beauty of language. I am glad, however, that you mean to preserve in some permanent form your very curious drama, which, if not altogether fitted for the stage, cannot be read without very much and very deep interest.

"I am glad you are about Scottish song. No man—not Robert Burns himself—has contributed more beautiful effusions to enrich it. Here and there I would pluck a flower from your Posy to give what remains an effect of greater simplicity, but luxuriance can only be the fault of genius, and many of your songs are, I think, unmatched. I would instance—"It's hame and it's hame," which my daughter Mrs. Lockhart sings with such uncommon effect. You cannot do any thing either in the way of original composition, or collection, or criticism, that will not be highly acceptable to all who are worth pleasing in the Scottish public—and I pray you to proceed with it.

"Remember me kindly to Chantrey. I am happy my effigy is to go with that of Wordsworth,* for (differing from him in very many points of taste) I do not know a man more to be venerated for uprightness of heart and loftiness of genius. Why he will sometimes choose to crawl upon all fours, when God has given him so noble a countenance to lift to heaven, I am as little able to account for as for his quarrelling (as you tell me) with the wrinkles which time and meditation have stamped his brow withal.

"I am obliged to conclude hastily, having long letters to write—God wot upon very different subjects. I pray my

* Mr. Cunningham had told Scott that Chantrey's bust of Wordsworth (another of his noblest works) was also to be produced at the Royal Academy's Exhibition for 1821.

kind respects to Mrs. Chantrey.—Believe me, dear Allan, very truly yours, &c., WALTER SCOTT."

The following letter touches on the dropping of the Bill which had been introduced by Government for the purpose of degrading the consort of George the Fourth; the riotous rejoicings of the Edinburgh mob on that occasion; and Scott's acquiescence in the request of the guardians of the young Duke of Buccleuch, that he should act as chancellor of the jury about to *serve* his grace *heir* (as the law phrase goes) to the Scottish estates of his family.

To the Lord Montagu, &c., &c., &c.

"Edinburgh, 30th November, 1820.

"My dear Lord,

"I had your letter some time since, and have now to congratulate you on your two months' spell of labour-in-vain duty being at length at an end. The old sign of the Labour-in-vain Tavern was a fellow attempting to scrub a black-a-moor white; but the present difficulty seems to lie in showing that one *is* black. Truly, I congratulate the country on the issue; for, since the days of Queen Dollalolla* and the *Rumti-iddity* chorus in Tom Thumb, never was there so jolly a representative of royalty. A good ballad might be made by way of parody on Gay's Jonathan Wild,—

Her Majesty's trial has set us at ease,
And every wife round me may kiss if she please.

We had the Marquis of Bute and Francis Jeffrey very brilliant in George Street, and I think one grocer besides. I was hard threatened by letter, but I caused my servant to say in the quarter where I thought the threatening came from, that I should suffer my windows to be broken like a Christian, but if any thing else was attempted, I should become as great a heathen as the Dey of Algiers. We were passed over, but many houses were terribly *Cossacqué*, as was the phrase in Paris 1814 and 1815. The next night, being, like true Scotsmen, wise behind the hand, the bailies had a sufficient force sufficiently arranged, and put down every attempt to riot. If the same precautions had been taken before, the town would have been saved some disgrace, and the loss of at least £1000 worth of property. Hay Donaldson† is getting stout again, and up to the throat in business; there is no getting a word out of him that does not smell of parchment and special service. He asked me, as it is to be a mere *law* service, to act as chancellor on the Duke's inquest, which honourable office I will of course undertake with great willingness, and discharge, I mean the *hospitable* part of it, to the best of my power. I think you are right to avoid a more extended service, as £1000 certainly would not clear the expense, as you would have to dine at least four counties, and as sweetly sing, with Duke Wharton on Chevy Chase,

Pity it were
So much good wine to spill,
As these bold freeholders would drink,
Before they had their fill.

I hope we shall all live to see our young baron take his own chair, and feast the land in his own way. Ever your Lordship's most truly faithful

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—In the illumination row, young Romilly was knocked down and robbed by the mob, just while he was in the act of declaiming on the impropriety of having constables and volunteers to interfere with the harmless mirth of the people."

To Mr. Charles Scott, care of the Rev. John Williams, Lampeter.

"Edinburgh, 19th Dec., 1820.

"My dear Charles,

"We begin to be afraid that, in improving your head, you have lost the use of your fingers, or got so deep into the Greek and Latin grammar, that you have forgotten how to express yourself in your own language. To ease our anxious minds in these important doubts, we beg you will write as soon as possible, and give us a full account of your proceedings, as I do not approve of long intervals of silence, or think that you need to stand very rigorously upon the exchange of letters, especially as mine are so much the longest.

* *Queen.* "What though I now am half-seas o'er,
I scorn to baulk this bout;
Of stiff rack punch fetch bowls a score,
'Pore George, I'll see them out!
Chorus.—Rumti iddity, row, row, row,
If we'd a good sup, we'd take it now."

FIELDING'S *Tom Thumb*.

† This gentleman, Scott's friend and confidential solicitor, had obtained, (I believe) on his recommendation, the legal management of the Buccleuch affairs in Scotland.

"I rely upon it that you are now working hard in the classical mine, getting out the rubbish as fast as you can, and preparing yourself to collect the ore. I cannot too much impress upon your mind, that *labour* is the condition which God has imposed on us in every station of life—there is nothing worth having that can be had without it, from the bread which the peasant wins with the sweat of his brow, to the sports by which the rich man must get rid of his ennui. The only difference betwixt them is, that the poor man labours to get a dinner to his appetite, the rich man to get an appetite to his dinner. As for knowledge, it can no more be planted in the human mind without labour, than a field of wheat can be produced without the previous use of the plough. There is indeed this great difference, that chance or circumstances may so cause it that another shall reap what the farmer sows; but no man can be deprived, whether by accident or misfortune, of the fruits of his own studies, and the liberal and extended acquisitions of knowledge which he makes are all for his own use. Labour, my dear boy, therefore, and improve the time. In youth our steps are light, and our minds are ductile, and knowledge is easily laid up. But if we neglect our spring, our summers will be useless and contemptible, our harvest will be chaff, and the winter of our old age unrespected and desolate.

"It is now Christmas-tide, and it comes sadly round to me as reminding me of your excellent grandmother, who was taken from us last year at this time. Do you, my dear Charles, pay attention to the wishes of your parents while they are with you, that you may have no self-reproach when you think of them at a future period.

"You hear the Welsh spoken much about you, and if you can pick it up without interfering with more important labours, it will be worth while. I suppose you can easily get a grammar and dictionary. It is, you know, the language spoken by the Britons before the invasion of the Anglo-Saxons, who brought in the principal ingredients of our present language, called from thence English. It was afterwards, however, much mingled with Norman French, the language of William the Conqueror and his followers; so if you can pick up a little of the Cambro-British speech, it will qualify you hereafter to be a good philologist, should your genius turn towards languages. Pray, have you yet learned who Howel Dha was?—Glendower you are well acquainted with by reading Shakspeare. The wild, mysterious, barbaric grandeur with which he has invested that chieftain, has often struck me as very fine. I wish we had some more of him.

"We are all well here, and I hope to get to Abbotsford for a few days—they cannot be many—in the ensuing vacation, when I trust to see the planting has got well forward. All are well here, and Mr. Cadell* is come back, and gives a pleasant account of your journey. Let me hear from you very soon, and tell me if you expect any *skating*, and whether there is any ice in Wales. I presume there will be a merry Christmas, and beg my best wishes on the subject to Mr. Williams, his sister and family. The Lockharts dine with us, and the Scotts of Harden, James Scott with his pipes, and I hope Captain Adam. We will remember your health in a glass of claret just about six o'clock at night; so that you will know exactly (allowing for variation of time) what we are doing at the same moment.

"But I think I have written quite enough to a young Welshman, who has forgot all his Scots kith, kin, and allies. Mamma and Anne send many loves. Walter came like a shadow, and so departed—after about ten days' stay. The effect was quite dramatic, for the door was flung open as we were about to go down to dinner, and Turner announced *Captain Scott*. We could not conceive who was meant, when in walked Walter, as large as life. He is positively a new edition of the Irish giant. I beg my kind respects to Mr. Williams. At his leisure I should be happy to have a line from him. I am, my dear little boy, always your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

The next letter contains a brief allusion to an affair which, in the life of any other man of letters, would have deserved to be considered as of some consequence. The late Sir James Hall of Dunglass resigned, in November, 1820, the Presidency of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; and the Fellows, though they had on all former occasions selected a man of science to fill that post, paid Sir Walter the compliment of unanimously requesting him to be Sir James's successor in it. He felt and expressed a natural hesitation about accepting this honour—which at first sight seemed like invading the proper

* Mr. Robert Cadell, of the house of Constable, had this year conveyed Charles Scott from Abbotsford to Lampeter.

† Sir Walter's cousin, a son of his uncle Thomas. See *ante*.

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department of another order of scholars. But, when it was urged upon him that the Society is really a double one—embracing a section for literature as well as one of science—and that it was only due to the former to let it occasionally supply the chief of the whole body, Scott acquiesced in the flattering proposal; and his gentle skill was found effective, so long as he held the Chair, in maintaining and strengthening the tone of good feeling and good manners which can alone render the meetings of such a society either agreeable or useful. The new President himself soon began to take a lively interest in many of their discussions—those at least which pointed to any discovery of practical use;—and he, by and by, added some eminent men of science, with whom his acquaintance had hitherto been slight, to the list of his most valued friends. I may mention in particular Dr., now Sir David, Brewster.

Sir Walter also alludes to an institution of a far different description—that called "The Celtic Society of Edinburgh"—a club established mainly for the patronage of ancient Highland manners and customs, especially the use of "the Garb of Old Gaul"—though part of their funds have always been applied to the really important object of extending education in the wilder districts of the north. At their annual meetings Scott was, as may be supposed, a regular attendant. He appeared, as in duty bound, in the costume of the Fraternity, and was usually followed by "John of Skye," in a still more complete, or rather incomplete, style of equipment.

To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c. &c., Ditton Park.

"Edinburgh, 17th January, 1821.

"My dear Lord,

"We had a tight day of it on Monday last, both dry and wet. The dry part was as dry as may be, consisting in rehearsing the whole lands of the Buccleuch estate for five mortal hours, although Donaldson had kindly selected a clerk whose tongue went over baronies, lordships, and regalities, at as high a rate of top speed as ever Eclipse displayed in clearing the course at Newmarket. The evening went off very well—considering that while looking forward with the natural feelings of hope and expectation on behalf of our young friend, most of us who were present could not help casting looks of sad remembrance on the days we had seen. However, we did very well, and I kept the chair till eleven, when we had coffee, and departed, "no very fou, but gayly yet." Besides the law gentlemen and immediate agents of the family, I picked up on my own account Tom Ogilvie,* Sir Harry Hay Macdougal, Harden and his son, Gala, and Captain John Ferguson, whom I asked as from myself, stating that the party was to be quite private. I suppose there was no harm in this, and it helped us well on. I believe your nephew and my young chief enters life with as favourable auspices as could well attend him, for to few youths can attach so many good wishes, and *none* can look back to more estimable examples both in his father and grandfather. I think he will succeed to the warm and social affections of his relatives, which, if they sometimes occasion pain to those who possess them, contain also the purest sources of happiness as well as of virtue.

"Our late Pitt meeting amounted to about 800, a most tremendous multitude. I had charge of a separate room, containing a detachment of about 250, and gained a headach of two days, by roaring to them for five or six hours almost incessantly. The Foxites had also a very numerous meeting, 500 at least, but sad scamps. We had a most formidable band of young men, almost all born gentlemen, and zealous proselytes. We shall now begin to look anxiously to London for news. I suppose they will go by the ears in the House of Commons; but I trust Ministers will have a great majority. If not, they should go out, and let the others make the best of it with their acquitted Queen, who will be a ticklish card in their hand, for she is by nature *intrigante* more ways than one. The loss of Canning is a serious disadvantage. Many of our friends have good talents and good taste; but I think he alone has that higher order of parts which we call genius. I wish he had had more prudence to guide it. He has been a most unlucky politician. Adieu. Best love to all at Ditton, and great respect withal. My best compliments attend my young chief, now seated, to use an oriental phrase, upon the *Musnud*. I am almost knocked up with public meetings, for the triple Hecate was a joke to my plurality of offices this week. On Friday I had my Pittite stewardship; on Monday my chancellorship: yesterday my presidentship of the Royal Society, for I had a meeting of that learned body at my house last night, where mulled wine and punch were manufactured and consumed according to the latest philosophical discoveries. Besides all this, I have before my eyes the terrors of a certain Highland Association, who dined, bonneted and *kilted* in the old fashion, (all save myself, of course,) and armed to the teeth. This is rather severe service; but men who wear broadswords, dirks, and pistols, are not to be neglected in these days; and the Gael are very loyal lads, so it is as well to keep up an influence with them. Once more, my dear Lord, farewell, and believe always most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

* The late Thomas Elliott Ogilvie, Esq., of Chesters, in Roxburghshire—one of Sir Walter's chief friends among his country neighbours.

In the course of the riotous week commemorated in the preceding letter, appeared Kenilworth, in 3 vols. post 8vo., like Ivanhoe, which form was adhered to with all the subsequent novels of the series. Kenilworth was one of the most successful of them all at the time of publication; and it continues, and I doubt not will ever continue, to be placed in the very highest rank of prose fiction. The rich variety of character, and scenery, and incident in this novel, has never indeed been surpassed; nor, with the one exception of the Bride of Lammermoor, has Scott bequeathed us a deeper and more affecting tragedy than that of Amy Robsart.

CHAPTER LI.

VISIT TO LONDON—PROJECT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE—AFFAIRS OF THE 18TH HUSSARS—MARRIAGE OF CAPTAIN ADAM FERGUSON—LETTERS TO LORD SIDMOUTH—LORD MONTAGU—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM—MRS. LOCKHART—AND CORNET SCOTT—1821.

Before the end of January, 1821, Scott went to London, at the request of the other Clerks of Session, that he might watch over the progress of an Act of Parliament, designed to relieve them from a considerable part of their drudgery, in attesting recorded deeds by signature; and his stay was prolonged until near the beginning of the Summer term of his Court. His letters while in London are chiefly to his own family, and on strictly domestic topics: but I shall extract a few of them, chiefly (for reasons which I have already sufficiently intimated) those addressed to his son the Cornet. I need not trespass on the reader's attention by any attempt to explain in detail the matters to which these letters refer. It will be seen that Sir Walter had heard, with deep concern, some rumours of irregularity in the interior of the 18th Hussars; and that the consequent interference of the then Commander of the forces in Ireland, the late Sir David Baird, had been received in any thing but a spirit of humility. The reports that reached Scott proved to have been grossly exaggerated: but I presume there had been some relaxtion of discipline in the regiment, and Sir Walter was by no means sorry to learn, in the course of the spring, first, that his son had been detached on a small separate service; then that the corps was to be sent to India, in which case he would have a fair pretext for removing him into another regiment; and, finally, that the Duke of York had resolved on reducing the 18th. Cornet Scott—(who had never himself been suspected of sharing in any of the indiscretions which led to this step)—then travelled for some time in Germany, with a view to his improvement in the science of his profession. He afterwards spent a brief period, for the same purpose, in the Royal Military College of Sandhurst; and ere long he obtained a commission as lieutenant in the 15th, or King's Hussars—a regiment which has uniformly, I believe, been ranked among the most distinguished in the service—and in which his father lived to see him Msjor.

It will also be seen, that during this visit to London, Sir Walter was released from considerable anxiety on account of his daughter Sophia, whom he had left in a weak state of health at Edinburgh, by the intelligence of her safe accouchement of a boy, —John Hugh Lockhart, the "Hugh Littlejohn" of

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the Tales of a Grandfather. The approaching marriage of Captain, now Sir Adam Ferguson, to which some jocular allusions occur, may be classed with these objects of family interest; and that event was the source of unmixed satisfaction to Scott, as it did not interrupt his enjoyment of his old friend's society in the country; for the Captain, though he then pitched a tent for himself, did so at a very short distance from Huntly Burn. I believe the ensuing extracts will need no further commentary.

To Mrs. Lockhart, Great King Street, Edinburgh.

"Ditton Park, Feb. 18 1821.

"My dearest Sophia,

"I received as much pleasure, and was relieved from as much anxiety, as ever I felt in my life, by Lockhart's kind note, which acquainted me with the happy period that has been put to your suffering, and, as I hope and trust, to the complaints which occasioned it. You are now, my dearest girl, beginning a new course of pleasures, anxieties, and duties, and the best I can wish for you is, that your little boy may prove the same dutiful and affectionate child which you have always been to me, and that God may give him a sound and healthy mind, with a good constitution of body—the greatest blessing which this earth can bestow. Pray be extremely careful of yourself for some time. Young women are apt to injure their health by thinking themselves well too soon. I beg you to be cautious in this respect.

"The news of the young stranger's arrival was most joyfully received here, and his health and yours toasted in a bumper. Lady Anne is quite well, and Elizabeth also; and Lady Charlotte, who has rejoined them, is a most beautiful creature indeed. This place is all light and splendour, compared to London, where I was forced to use candles till ten o'clock at least. I have a gay time of it. To-morrow I return to town, and dine with old Sotheby; on Tuesday, with the Duke of Wellington; Wednesday, with Croker, and so on. Love to L., the Captain, and the Violet, and give your bantling a kiss extraordinary for Grandpapa. I hope Mungo* approves of the child, for that is a serious point. There are no dogs in the hotel where I lodge, but a tolerably conversible cat, who eats a mess of cream with me in the morning. The little chief and his brother have come over from Eton to see me, so I must break off.—I am, my dear love, most affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Walter Scott, Esq., Portobello Barracks, Dublin.

"Waterloo Hotel, Jermyn Street, Feb. 19, 1821.

"My dear Walter,

"I have just received your letter. I send you a draught for £50, which you must make go as far as you can.

"There is what I have no doubt is a very idle report here, of your paying rather marked attention to one young lady in particular. I beg you would do nothing that can justify such a rumour, as it would excite my *highest displeasure* should you either entangle yourself or any other person. I am, and always have been, quite frank with you, and beg you will be equally so with me. One should, in justice to the young women they live with, be very cautious not to give the least countenance to such rumours. They are not easily avoided, but are always highly prejudicial to the parties concerned; and what begins in folly ends in serious misery—*avis au lecteur*.

Believe me, dear Cornet, your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P.S.—I wish you could pick me up the Irish lilt of a tune to 'Patrick Fleming.' The song begins—

'Patrick Fleming was a gallant soldier,
He carried his musket over his shoulder.
When I cock my pistol, when I draw my raper,
I make them stand in awe of me, for I am a taker.
Falala,' &c.

"From another verse in the same song, it seems the hero was in such a predicament as your own.

'If you be Peter Fleming, as I suppose you be, sir,
We are three pedlers walking on so free, sir.
We are three pedlers a-walking on to Dublin,
With nothing in our pockets to pay for our lodging.
Falala,' &c."

To Walter Scott, Esq., 18th Hussars, Cappoquin.

"London, 17th March, 1821.

"My dear Commandant of Cappoquin,

"Wishing you joy of your new government, these are to inform you that I am still in London. The late aspersion on your regiment induced me to protract my stay here, with a view to see the Duke of York on your behalf, which I did yesterday. H. R. Highness expressed himself most obligingly disposed, and promised to consider what could best be done to forward your military education. I told him frankly, that in giving you to the King's service, I had done all that was in my power to show our attachment to his Majesty and the country which had been so kind to me, and that it was my utmost ambition that you should render yourself capable of serving them both well. He said he would give the affair his particular consideration, and see whether he could put you on the establishment at Sandhurst without any violent infringement on the rules; and hinted that he would make an exception to the rules of seniority of standing and priority of application in your favour when an opportunity occurs.

"From H. R. H's very kind expressions, I have little doubt you will have more than justice done you in the patronage necessary to facilitate your course through life; but it must be by your own exertions, my dearest boy, that you must render yourself qualified to avail yourself of the opportunities which you may have offered to you. Work therefore as hard as you can, and do not be discontented for want of assistance of masters, &c., because the knowledge which we acquire by our own unaided efforts, is much more tenaciously retained by the memory, while the exertion necessary to gain it strengthens the understanding. At the same time, I would inquire whether there may not be some catholic priest, or protestant clergyman, or scholar of any description, who for love or money, would give you a little assistance occasionally. Such persons are to be found almost every where; not professed teachers, but capable of smoothing the road to a willing student. Let me earnestly recommend in your reading to keep fast particular hours, and suffer no one thing to encroach on the other.

"Charles's last letter was uncommonly steady, and prepared me for one from Mr. Williams, in which he expresses satisfaction with his attention, and with his progress in learning, in a much stronger degree than formerly. This is truly comfortable, and may relieve me from the necessity of sending the poor boy to India.

"All in Edinburgh are quite well, and no fears exist, saving those of little Catherine* for the baby, lest the fairies take it away before the christening. I will send some books to you from hence, if I can find means to transmit them. I should like you to read with care the campaigns of Buonaparte, which have been written in French with much science.†

"I hope, indeed I am sure, I need not remind you to be very attentive to your duty. You have but a small charge, but it is a charge, and rashness or carelessness may lead to discredit in the commandant of Cappoquin, as well as in a field-marshal. In the exercise of your duty, be tender of the lower classes; and as you are strong, be merciful. In this you will do your master good service, for show me the manners of the man, and I will judge those of the master.

"In your present situation it may be interesting to you to know that the bill for Catholic Emancipation will pass the Commons without doubt, and very probably the Peers also, unless the Spiritual Lords make a great rally. Nobody here cares much about it, and if it does not pass this year, it will the next without doubt.

"Among other improvements, I wish you would amend your hand. It is a deplorable scratch, and far the worst of the family. Charles writes a firm good hand in comparison.

"You may address your next to Abbotsford, where I long to be, being heartily tired of fine company and fine living, from dukes and duchesses, down to turbot and plovers' eggs. It is very well for a while, but to be kept at it makes one feel like a poodle-dog compelled to stand for ever on his hind legs.—Most affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

During this visit to London, Sir Walter appears to have been consulted by several persons in authority as to the project of a Society of Literature, for which the King's patronage had been solicited, and which was established soon afterwards—though on a scale less extensive than had been proposed at the outset. He expressed his views on this subject in writing at considerable length to his friend the Hon. John Villiers, (now Earl of Clarendon;) but of that letter, described to me as a most admirable one, I have as yet failed to recover a copy. I have little doubt, that both the letter in question, and the following, addressed, soon after his arrival at Abbotsford, to the then Secretary of State for the Home Department, were placed in the hands of the King;

* Mungo was a favourite Newfoundland Dog.

* Mrs. Lockhart's maid.

† This letter was followed by a copy of General Jomini's celebrated work.

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but it seems probable that whatever his Majesty may have thought of Scott's representations, he considered himself as already, in some measure, pledged to countenance the projected academy.

To the Right Hon. the Lord Viscount Sidmouth, &c., &c., &c., Whitehall.

"Abbotsford, April 20, 1821.

"My dear Lord,

"Owing to my retreat to this place, I was only honoured with your Lordship's letter yesterday. Whatever use can be made of my letter to stop the very ill contrived project to which it relates, will answer the purpose for which it was written. I do not well remember the terms in which my remonstrance to Mr. Villiers was couched, for it was positively written betwixt sleeping and waking; but your Lordship will best judge how far the contents may be proper for his Majesty's eye; and if the sentiments appear a little in dishabille, there is the true apology that they were never intended to go to Court. From more than twenty years' intercourse with the literary world, during which I have been more or less acquainted with every distinguished writer of my day, and, at the same time, an accurate student of the habits and tastes of the reading public, I am enabled to say, with a feeling next to certainty, that the plan can only end in something very unpleasant. At all events, his Majesty should get out of it; it is nonsense to say or suppose that any steps have been taken which, in such a matter, can or ought to be considered as irrevocable. The fact is, that nobody knows as yet how far the matter has gone beyond the *projet* of some well-meaning but misjudging persons, and the whole thing is asleep and forgotten so far as the public is concerned. The Spanish proverb says, 'God help me from my friends, and I will keep myself from my enemies;' and there is much sense in it, for the zeal of misjudging adherents often contrives, as in the present case, to turn to matter of reproach the noblest feelings on the part of a sovereign.

"Let men of letters fight their own way with the public, and let his Majesty, according as his own excellent taste and liberality dictate, honour with his patronage, expressed in the manner fitted to their studies and habits, those who are able to distinguish themselves, and alleviate by his bounty the distresses of such as, with acknowledged merit, may yet have been unfortunate in procuring independence. The immediate and direct favour of the Sovereign is worth the patronage of ten thousand societies. But your Lordship knows how to set all this in a better light than I can, and I would not wish the cause of letters in better hands.

"I am now in a scene changed as completely as possible from those in which I had the great pleasure of meeting your Lordship lately, riding through the moors on a pony, instead of traversing the streets in a carriage, and drinking whisky-toddy with mine honest neighbours, instead of Champagne and Burgundy. I have gained, however, in point of exact political information; for I find we know upon Tweedside with much greater accuracy what is done and intended in the Cabinet, than ever I could learn when living with the Ministers five days in the week. Mine honest Teviotdale friends, whom I left in a high Queen-fever, are now beginning to be somewhat ashamed of themselves, and to make as great advances towards retracting their opinion as they are ever known to do, which amounts to this: 'God judge me, Sir W——, the King's no been so dooms far wrong after a' in yon Queen's job like;' which, being interpreted, signifies, 'We will fight for the King to the death.' I do not know how it was in other places; but I never saw so sudden and violent a delusion possess the minds of men in my life, even those of sensible, steady, well-intentioned fellows, that would fight knee-deep against the Radicals. It is well over, thank God.

"My best compliments attend the ladies. I ever am, my dear Lord, your truly obliged and faithful humble servant, WALTER SCOTT."

I have thought it right to insert the preceding letter, because it indicates with sufficient distinctness what Scott's opinions always were as to a subject on which, from his experience and position, he must have reflected very seriously. In how far the results of the establishment of the Royal Society of Literature have tended to confirm or to weaken the weight of his authority on these matters, I do not presume to have formed any judgment. He received, about the same time, a volume of poetry, by Allan Cunningham, which included the drama of Sir Marmaduke Maxwell; and I am happy to quote his letter of acknowledgment to that high-spirited and independent author in the same page with the foregoing monition to the dispensers of patronage.

To Mr. Allan Cunningham, Ecclestone Street, Pimlico.

"Abbotsford, 27th April.

"Dear Allan,

"Accept my kind thanks for your little modest volume, received two days since. I was acquainted with most of the pieces, and yet I perused them all with renewed pleasure, and especially my old friend Sir Marmaduke with his new face, and by assistance of an April sun, which is at length, after many a rough blast, beginning to smile on us. The drama has, in my conception, more poetical conception and poetical expression in it than most of our modern compositions. Perhaps, indeed, it occasionally sins even in the richness of poetical expression; for the language of passion, though bold and figurative, is brief and concise at the same time. But what would, in acting, be a more serious objection, is the complicated nature of the plot, which is very obscure. I hope you will make another dramatic attempt; and, in that case, I would strongly recommend that you should previously make a model or skeleton of your incidents, dividing them regularly into scenes and acts, so as to insure the dependence of one circumstance upon another, and the simplicity and union of your whole story. The common class of readers, and more especially of spectators, are thick-sculled enough, and can hardly comprehend what they see and hear, unless they are hemmed in, and guided to the sense at every turn.

"The unities of time and place have always appeared to me fopperies, as far as they require close observance of the French rules. Still, the nearer you can come to them, it is always, no doubt, the better, because your action will be more probable. But the unity of action—I mean that continuity which unites every scene with the other, and makes the catastrophe the natural and probable result of all that has gone before—seems to me a critical rule which cannot safely be dispensed with. Without such a regular deduction of incident, men's attention becomes distracted, and the most beautiful language, if at all listened to, creates no interest, and is out of place. I would give, as an example, the suddenly entertained, and as suddenly abandoned, jealousy of Sir Marmaduke, p. 85, as a useless excrescence in the action of the drama.

"I am very much unaccustomed to offer criticism, and when I do so, it is because I believe in my soul that I am endeavouring to pluck away the weeds which hide flowers well worthy of cultivation. In your case, the richness of your language, and fertility of your imagination, are the snares against which I would warn you. If the one had been poor, and the other costive, I would never have made remarks which could never do good, while they only gave pain. Did you ever read Savage's beautiful poem of the Wanderer? If not, do so, and you will see the fault which, I think, attaches to Lord Maxwell—a want of distinct precision and intelligibility about the story, which counteracts, especially with ordinary readers, the effect of beautiful and forcible diction, poetical imagery, and animated description.

"All this freedom you will excuse, I know, on the part of one who has the truest respect for the manly independence of character which rests for its support on honest industry, instead of indulging the foolish fastidiousness formerly supposed to be essential to the poetical temperament, and which has induced some men of real talents to become coxcombs—some to become sots—some to plunge themselves into want—others into the equal miseries of dependence, merely because, forsooth, they were men of genius, and wise above the ordinary, and, I say, the manly duties of human life.

'I'd rather be a kitten, and cry, Mew!'

than write the best poetry in the world on condition of laying aside common sense in the ordinary transactions and business of the world; and therefore, dear Allan, I wish much the better to the muse whom you meet by the fireside in your hours of leisure when you have played your part manfully through a day of labour. I should like to see her making those hours also a little profitable. Perhaps something of the dramatic romance, if you could hit on a good subject, and combine the scenes well, might answer. A beautiful thing, with appropriate music, scenes, &c. might be woven out of the Mermaid of Galloway.

"When there is any chance of Mr. Chantrey coming this way, I hope you will let me know; and if you come with him, so much the better. I like him as much for his manners as for his genius.

'He is a man without a clagg;
His heart is frank without a flaw.'

"This is a horrible long letter for so vile a correspond-

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out as I am. Once more, my best thanks for the little volume, and believe me yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

I now return to Sir Walter's correspondence with the Cornet at Cappoquin.

To Walter Scott, Esq., 18th Hussars.

"Abbotsford, April 21, 1821.

"My dear Walter,

". . . . A democrat in any situation is but a silly sort of fellow, but a democratical soldier is worse than an ordinary traitor by ten thousand degrees, as he forgets his military honour, and is faithless to the master whose bread he eats. Three distinguished heroes of this class have arisen in my time, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Colonel Despard, and Captain Thistlewood, and, with the contempt and abhorrence of all men, they died the death of infamy and guilt. If a man of honour is unhappy enough to entertain opinions inconsistent with the service in which he finds himself, it is his duty at once to resign his commission; in acting otherwise he disgraces himself for ever. . . . . The reports are very strange, also, with respect to the private conduct of certain officers. . . . . Gentlemen maintain their characters even in following their most licentious pleasures, otherwise they resemble the very scavengers in the streets. . . . . I had written you a long letter on other subjects, but these circumstances have altered my plans, as well as given me great uneasiness on account of the effects which the society you have been keeping may have had on your principles, both political and moral. Be very frank with me on this subject. I have a title to expect perfect sincerity, having always treated you with openness on my part.

"Pray write immediately, and at length.—I remain your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Abbotsford, April 28, 1821.

"Dear Walter,

". . . . The great point in the meanwhile is to acquire such preliminary information as may render you qualified to profit by Sandhurst when you get thither. Amongst my acquaintance, the men of greatest information have been those who seemed but indifferently situated for the acquisition of it, but who exerted themselves in proportion to the infrequency of their opportunities.

"The noble Captain Ferguson was married on Monday last. I was present at the bridal, and I assure you the like hath not been seen since the days of Lesmahago. Like his prototype, the Captain advanced in a jaunty military step, with a kind of leer on his face that seemed to quiz the whole affair. You should write to your brother sportsman and soldier, and wish the veteran joy of his entrance into the band of Benedicts. Odd enough that I should christen a grandchild and attend the wedding of a contemporary within two days of each other. I have sent John of Skye, with Tom, and all the rabblement which they can collect, to play the pipes, shout, and fire guns below the Captain's windows this morning: and I am just going over to hover about on my pony, and witness their reception. The happy pair returned to Huntly Burn on Saturday; but yesterday being Sunday, we permitted them to enjoy their pillows in quiet. This morning they must not expect to get off so well. Pray write soon, and give me the history of your still-huntings, &c.—Ever yours affectionately,

W. SCOTT."

To Charles Scott, Esq., care of the Rev. Mr. Williams, Lampeter.

"Abbotsford, 9th May, 1821.

"My dear Charles,

"I am glad to find, by your letter, just received, that you are reading Tacitus with some relish. His style is rather quaint and enigmatical, which makes it difficult to the student; but then his pages are filled with such admirable apothegms and maxims of political wisdom, as infer the deepest knowledge of human nature; and it is particularly necessary that any one who may have views as a public speaker should be master of his works, as there is neither ancient or modern who affords such a selection of admirable quotations. You should exercise yourself frequently in trying to make translations of the passages which most strike you, trying to invest the sense of Tacitus in as good English as you can. This will answer the double purpose of making yourself familiar with the Latin author, and giving you the command of your own language, which no person will ever have who does not study English composition in early life. . . . . I conclude somewhat abruptly, having trees to cut, and saucy Tom watching me like a Calmuck with the axe in his hand.—Yours affectionately, W. SCOTT."

To Walter Scott, Esq., 18th Hussars, Cappoquin.

"Abbotsford, 10th May, 1821.

"Dear Walter,

"I wrote yesterday, but I am induced immediately to answer your letter, because I think you expect from it an effect upon my mind rather different from what it produces. A man may be violent and outrageous in his liquor, but wine seldom makes a gentleman a blackguard, or instigates a loyal man to utter sedition. Wine unveils the passions and throws away restraint, but it does not create habits or opinions which did not previously exist in the mind. Besides, what sort of defence is this of intemperance? I suppose if a private commits riot, or is disobedient in his cups, his officers do not admit whisky to be an excuse. I have seen enough of that sort of society where habitual indulgence drowned at last every distinction between what is worthy and unworthy, and I have seen young men with the fairest prospects turn out degraded miserable outcasts before their life was half spent, merely from soaking and sotting, and the bad habits these naturally lead to. You tell me * * * and * * * frequent good society, and are well received in it, and I am very glad to hear this is the case. But such stories as these will soon occasion their seclusion from the *best* company. There may remain, indeed, a large enough circle, where ladies, who are either desirous to fill their rooms or to marry their daughters, will continue to receive any young man in a showy uniform, however irregular in private life; but if these cannot be called *bad* company, they are certainly any thing but *very good*, and the facility of access makes the *entrée* of little consequence.

"I mentioned in my last that you were to continue in the 18th until the regiment went to India, and that I trusted you would get the step within the twelve months that the corps yet remains in Europe, which will make your exchange easier. But it is of far more importance that you learn to command yourself than that you should be raised higher in commanding others. It gives me pain to write to you in terms of censure, but *my duty* must be done, else I cannot expect you to do *yours*. All here are well, and send love.—I am your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, 15th May, 1821.

"Dear Walter,

"I have your letter of May 6th, to which it is unnecessary to reply very particularly. I would only insinuate to you that the *lawyers* and *gossips* of Edinburgh, whom your military politeness handsomely classes together in writing to a lawyer, know and care as little about the 18th as they do about the 19th, 20th, or 21st, or any other regimental number which does not happen for the time to be at Piershill, or in the Castle. Do not fall into the error and pedantry of young military men, who, living much together, are apt to think themselves and their actions the subject of much talk and rumour among the public at large.—I will transcribe Fielding's account of such a person, whom he met with on his voyage to Lisbon, which will give two or three hours' excellent amusement when you choose to peruse it:—

'In his conversation it is true there was something military enough, as it consisted chiefly of oaths, and of the great actions and wise sayings of Jack, Will, and Tom of *ours*, a phrase eternally in his mouth, and he seemed to conclude that it conveyed to all the officers such a degree of public notoriety and importance that it entitled him, like the head of a profession, or a first minister, to be the subject of conversation amongst those who had not the least personal acquaintance with him.'

Avoid this silly narrowness of mind, my dear boy, which only makes men be looked on in the world with ridicule and contempt. Lawyer and gossip as I may be, I suppose you will allow I have seen something of life in most of its varieties; as much at least as if I had been, like you, eighteen months in a cavalry regiment, or, like Beau Jackson, in Roderick Random, had cruized for half-a-year in the chops of the Channel. Now, I have never remarked any one, be he soldier, or divine, or lawyer, that was exclusively attached to the narrow habits of his own profession, but what such person became a great twaddle in good society, besides what is of much more importance, becoming narrow-minded and ignorant of all general information.

"That this letter may not be unacceptable in all its parts, I enclose your allowance without stopping any thing for the hackney. Take notice, however, my dear Walter, that this is to last you till midsummer. We came from Abbotsford yesterday, and left all well, excepting that Mr. Laidlaw lost his youngest child, an infant, very unexpectedly. We found Sophia, Lockhart, and

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their child, in good health, and all send love.—I remain your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Walter Scott, Esq., 18th Hussars.

"Edinburgh, 26th May, 1821

"My dear Walter,

"I see you are of the mind of the irritable prophet Jonah, who persisted in maintaining 'he did well to be angry,' even when disputing with Omnipotence. I am aware that Sir David is considered as a severe and ill-tempered man; and I remember a story that, when report came to Europe that Tippoo's prisoners (of whom Baird was one) were chained together two and two, his mother said, 'God pity the poor lad that's chained to *our Davie*.' But though it may be very true that he may have acted towards you with caprice and severity, yet you are always to remember, 1st, That in becoming a soldier you have subjected yourself to the caprice and severity of superior officers, and have no comfort except in contemplating the prospect of commanding others in your turn. In the meanwhile, you have in most cases no remedy so useful as patience and submission. But, 2dly, As you seem disposed to admit that you yourselves have been partly to blame, I submit to you, that in turning the magnifying end of the telescope on Sir D's. faults, and the diminishing one on your own, you take the least useful mode of considering the matter. By studying *his* errors, you can acquire no knowledge that will be useful to you till you become Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, whereas, by reflecting on *your own*, Cornet Scott and his companions may reap some immediate moral advantage. Your fine of a dozen of claret, upon any one who shall introduce females into your mess in future, reminds me of the rule of a country club, that whoever 'behaved ungenteel,' should be fined in a pot of porter. Seriously, I think there was bad taste in the style of the forfeiture.

"I am well pleased with your map, which is very business-like. There was a great battle fought between the English and native Irish near the Blackwater, in which the former were defeated, and Bagenal the Knight-Marshal killed. Is there any remembrance of this upon the spot? There is a clergyman in Lismore, Mr. John Graham*—originally, that is by descent, a borderer. He lately sent me a manuscript which I intend to publish, and I wrote to him enclosing a cheque on Coutts. I wish you could ascertain if he received my letter safe. You can call on him with my compliments. You need only say I was desirous to know if he had received a letter from me lately. The manuscript was written by a certain Mr. Gwynne, a Welsh loyalist in the great Civil War, and afterwards an officer in the guards of Charles II. This will be an object for a ride to you.

"I presided last night at the dinner of the Celtic Society, 'all plaided and plumed in their tartan array,' and such jumping, skipping, and screaming, you never saw. Chief Baron Shepherd dined with us, and was very much pleased with the extreme enthusiasm of the Gael when liberated from the thraldom of breeches. You were voted a member by acclamation, which will cost me a tartan dress for your long limbs when you come here. If the King takes Scotland in coming or going to Ireland, (as has been talked of,) I expect to get you leave to come over.—I remain your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—I beg you will not take it into your wise noddle that I will act either hastily or unadvisedly in your matters. I have been more successful in life than most people, and know well how much success depends, first upon desert, and then on knowledge of the *carte de pays*."

The following letter begins with an allusion to a visit which Captain Ferguson, his bride, and his youngest sister, Miss Margaret Ferguson, had been paying at Ditton Park:—

To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c.

"Edinburgh, 21st May, 1821.

"My dear Lord,

"I was much diverted with the account of Adam and Eve's visit to Ditton, which, with its surrounding moat, might make no bad emblem of Eden, but for the absence of snakes and fiends. He is a very singular fellow; for, with all his humour and knowledge of the world, he by nature is a remarkably shy and modest man, and more afraid of the possibility of intrusion than would occur to any one who only sees him in the full stream of society. His sister Margaret is extremely like him in the turn of thought and of humour, and he has two others who are as great curiosities in their way. The eldest is a complete old maid, with all the gravity and shyness of the character, but not a grain of its bad humour or spleen; on the contrary, she is one of the kindest and most motherly creatures in the world. The second, Mary, was in her day a very pretty girl; but her person became deformed, and she has the sharpness of features with which that circumstance is sometimes attended. She rises very early in the morning, and roams over all my wild land in the neighbourhood, wearing the most complicated pile of handkerchiefs of different colours on her head, and a stick double her own height in her hand, attended by two dogs, whose powers of yelping are truly terrific. With such garb and accompaniments, she has very nearly established the character in the neighbourhood of being *something no canny*—and the urchins of Melrose and Darnick are frightened from gathering hazle-nuts and cutting wands in my clough, by the fear of meeting *the daft lady*. With all this quizzicality, I do not believe there ever existed a family with so much mutual affection and such an overflow of benevolence to all around them, from men and women down to hedge-sparrows and lame ass-colts, more than one of which they have taken under their direct and special protection.

"I am sorry there should be occasion for caution in the case of little Duke Walter, but it is most lucky that the necessity is early and closely attended to. How many actual valetudinarians have outlived all their robust contemporaries, and attained the utmost verge of human life, without ever having enjoyed what is usually called high health. This is taking the very worst view of the case, and supposing the constitution habitually delicate. But how often has the strongest and best confirmed health succeeded to a delicate childhood—and such, I trust, will be the Duke's case. I cannot help thinking that this temporary recess from Eton may be made subservient to Walter's improvement in general literature, and particularly in historical knowledge. The habit of reading useful, and, at the same time, entertaining books of history is often acquired during the retirement which delicate health in convalescence imposes on us. I remember we touched on this point at Ditton; and I think again, that though classical learning be the *Shibboleth* by which we judge, generally speaking, of the proficiency of the youthful scholar, yet, when this has been too exclusively and pedantically impressed on his mind as the one thing needful, he very often finds he has entirely a new course of study to commence just at the time when life is opening all its busy or gay scenes before him, and when study of any kind becomes irksome.

"For this species of instruction I do not so much approve of tasks and set hours for serious reading, as of the plan of endeavouring to give a taste for history to the youths themselves, and suffering them to gratify it in their own way, and at their own time. For this reason I would not be very scrupulous what books they began with, or whether they began at the middle or end. The knowledge which we acquire of free will and by spontaneous exertion, is like food eaten with appetite—it digests well, and benefits the system ten times more than the double cramming of an alderman. If a boy's attention can be drawn in conversation to any interesting point of history, and the book is pointed out to him where he will find the particulars conveyed in a lively manner, he reads the passage with so much pleasure that he very naturally recurs to the book at the first unoccupied moment to try if he cannot pick more amusement out of it; and when once a lad gets the spirit of information, he goes on himself with little trouble but that of selecting for him the best and most agreeable books. I think Walter has naturally some turn for history and historical anecdote, and would be disposed to read as much as could be wished in that most useful line of knowledge:—for in the eminent situation he is destined to by his birth, acquaintance with the history and institutions of his country, and her relative position with respect to others, is a *sine qua non* to his discharging its duties with propriety. All this is extremely like prosing, so I will harp on that string no longer.

"Kind compliments to all at Ditton; you say nothing of your own rheumatism. I am here for the session, unless the wind should blow me south to see the coronation, and I think 800 miles rather a long journey to see a show.

I am always, my dear Lord,

Yours, very affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

* This Mr. Graham is known as the author of a "History of the Siege of Londonderry," "Annals of Ireland," and various political tracts. Sir Walter Scott published Gwynne's memoirs, with a preface, &c., in 1822.

CHAPTER LII.

ILLNESS AND DEATH OF JOHN BALLANTYNE—EXTRACT FROM HIS POCKET-BOOK—LETTERS FROM BLAIR-ADAM—CASTLE-CAMPBELL—SIR SAMUEL SHEPHERD—"BAILIE MACKAY," &c.—CORONATION OF GEORGE IV.—CORRESPONDENCE WITH JAMES HOGG AND LORD

SIDMOUTH—LETTER ON THE CORONATION—ANECDOTES—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM'S MEMORANDA—COMPLETION OF CHANTREY'S BUST.—1821.

On the 4th of June, Scott being then on one of his short Sessional visits to Abbotsford, received the painful intelligence that his friend John Ballantyne's maladies had begun to assume an aspect of serious and even immediate danger. The elder brother made the communication in these terms:—

To Walter Scott, Bart. of Abbotsford, Melrose.

"Edinburgh, Sunday, 3d June, 1821.

"Dear Sir,

"I have this morning had a most heart-breaking letter from poor John, from which the following is an extract. You will judge how it has affected me, who, with all his peculiarities of temper, love him very much. He says—'A spitting of blood has commenced, and you may guess the situation into which I am plunged. We are all accustomed to consider death as certainly inevitable; but his obvious approach is assuredly the most detestable and abhorrent feeling to which human nature can be subject.'

"This is truly doleful. There is something in it more absolutely bitter to my heart than what I have otherwise suffered. I look back to my mother's peaceful rest, and to my infant's blessedness—if life be not the extinguishable worthless spark which I cannot think it—but here, cut off in the very middle of life, with good means and strong powers of enjoying it, and nothing but reluctance and repining at the close—I say the truth when I say that I would joyfully part with my right arm, to avert the approaching result. Pardon this, dear sir; my heart and soul are heavy within me. With the deepest respect and gratitude,

J. B."

At the date of this letter, the invalid was in Roxburghshire; but he came to Edinburgh a day or two afterwards, and died there on the 16th of the same month. I accompanied Sir Walter when one of their last interviews took place, and John's death-bed was a thing not to be forgotten. We sat by him for perhaps an hour, and I think half that space was occupied with his predictions of a speedy end, and details of his last will, which he had just been executing, and which lay on his coverlid; the other half being given, five minutes or so at a time, to questions and remarks, which intimated that the hope of life was still flickering before him—nay, that his interest in all its concerns remained eager. The proof-sheets of a volume of his Novelist's Library lay also by his pillow; and he passed from them to his will, and then back to them, as by jerks and starts the unwonted veil of gloom closed upon his imagination, or was withdrawn again. He had, as he said, left his great friend and patron £2000 towards the completion of the new Library at Abbotsford—and the spirit of the auctioneer virtuoso flashed up as he began to describe what would, he thought, be the best style and arrangement of the book-shelves. He was interrupted by an agony of asthma, which left him with hardly any signs of life; and ultimately, he did expire in a fit of the same kind. Scott was visibly and profoundly shaken by this scene and its sequel As we stood together a few days afterwards, while they were smoothing the turf over John's remains in the Canongate Churchyard, the heavens, which had been dark and slaty, cleared up suddenly, and the mid-summer sun shone forth in his strength. Scott, ever awake to the "skiey influences," cast his eye along the overhanging line of the Calton Hill, with its gleaming walls and towers, and then turning to the grave again, "I feel," he whispered in my ear, "I feel as if there would be less sunshine for me from this day forth."

As we walked homewards, Scott told me, among other favourable *traits* of his friend, one little story which I must not omit. He remarked one day to a poor student of divinity attending his auction, that he looked as if he were in bad health. The young man assented with a sigh. "Come," said Ballantyne, "I think I ken the secret of a sort of draft that would relieve you—particularly," he added, handing him a cheque for £5 or £10—"particularly, my dear, if taken upon an empty stomach."

John died in his elder brother's house in St. John Street; a circumstance which it gives me pleasure to record, as it confirms the impression of their affectionate feelings towards each other at this time, which the reader must have derived from James's letter to Scott last quoted. Their confidence and cordiality had undergone considerable interruption in the latter part of John's life; but the close was in all respects fraternal.

A year and a half before John's exit, namely, on the last day of 1819, he happened to lay his hand on an old pocket-book, which roused his reflections, and he filled two or three of its pages with a brief summary of the most active part of his life, which I think it due to his character, as well as Sir Walter Scott's, to transcribe in this place.

"31st Dec. 1819. In moving a bed from the fire-place to day up-stairs, I found an old memorandum-book, which enables me to trace the following recollections of *this day*, the last of the year.

"1801. A shopkeeper in Kelso; at this period my difficulties had not begun in business; was well, happy, and 27 years old; new then in a connexion which afterwards gave me great pain, but can never be forgotten.

"1802. 28 old: In Kelso as before—could scarcely be happier—hunted, shot, kept ·····'s company, and neglected business, the fruits whereof I soon found.

"1803. 29: Still fortunate, and happy from same cause. James in Edinburgh, thriving as a printer. When I was ennuied at home, visited him. Business neglected every way.

"1804. 30: Material change; getting into difficulties; all wrong, and changes in every way approaching.

"1805. 31: All consummated; health miserable all summer, and ··· designated in an erased mem., *the scoundrel*. I yet recollect the cause—can I ever forget it? My furniture, goods, &c. sold at Kelso, previous to my going to Edinburgh to become my brother's clerk; whither I *did* go, for which God be praised eternally, on Friday, 3d January, 1806, on £200 a-year. My effects at Kelso, with labour, paid my debts, and left me pennyless.

"From this period till 1808. 34: I continued in this situation—then the scheme of a bookselling concern in Hanover street was adopted, which I was to manage; it was £300 a-year, and one fourth of the profits besides.

"1809. 35: Already the business in Hanover Street getting into difficulty, from our ignorance of its nature, and most extravagant and foolish advances from its funds to the printing concern. I ought to have resisted this, but I was thoughtless, although not young, or rather reckless, and lived on as long as I could make ends meet.

"1810. 36: Bills increasing—the destructive system of accommodations adopted.

"1811. 37: Bills increased to a most fearful degree. Sir Wm. Forbes and Co. shut their account. No bank would discount with us, and every thing leading to irretrievable failure.

"1812. 38: The first partner stepped in, at a crisis so tremendous, that it yet shakes my soul to think of it. By the most consummate wisdom and resolution, and unheard of exertions, he put things in a train that finally (so early as 1817) paid even himself (who ultimately became the sole creditor of the house) *in full*, with a balance of a thousand pounds.

"1813. 39. In business as a literary auctioneer in Prince's Street; from which period to the present I have got gradually forward, both in that line and as third of a partner of the works of the Author of Waverley, so that I am now, at 45, worth about (I owe £2000) £5000, with however, alas, many changes—my strong constitution much broken; my father and mother dead, and James estranged—the chief enjoyment and glory of my life being the possession of the friendship and confidence of the greatest of men."

In communicating John's death to the Cornet, Sir Walter says, "I have had a very great loss in poor John Ballantyne, who is gone, after a long illness. He persisted to the very last in endeavouring to take exercise, in which he was often imprudent, and was up and dressed the very morning before his death. In his will the grateful creature has left me a legacy of £2000, life rented, however, by his wife; and the rest of his little fortune goes betwixt his two brothers. I shall miss him very much, both in business, and as an easy and lively companion, who was eternally active and obliging in whatever I had to do."

I am sorry to take leave of John Ballantyne with the remark, that his last will was a document of the same class with too many of his *states* and *calendars*. So far from having £2000 to bequeath to Sir Walter, he died as he had lived, ignorant of the situation of his affairs, and deep in debt.

The two following letters, written at Blair-Adam, where the Club were, as usual, assembled for the

dog-days, have been selected from among several which Scott at this time addressed to his friends in the South, with the view of promoting Mr. Mackay's success in his *debut* on the London boards as Bailie Jarvie.

"*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

"The immediate motive of my writing to you, my dearest friend, is to make Mrs. Agnes and you aware that a Scots performer, called Mackay, is going up to London to play Bailie Nicol Jarvie for a single night at Covent Garden, and to beg you of all dear loves to go and see him; for, taking him in that single character, I am not sure I ever saw any thing in my life possessing so much truth and comic effect at the same time: he is completely the personage of the drama, the purse-proud consequential magistrate, humane and irritable in the same moment, and the true Scotsman in every turn of thought and action: his variety of feelings towards Rob Roy, whom he likes, and fears, and despises, and admires, and pities, all at once, is exceedingly well expressed. In short, I never saw a part better sustained, certainly; I pray you to collect a party of Scotch friends to see it. I have written to Sotheby to the same purpose, but I doubt whether the exhibition will prove as satisfactory to those who do not know the original from which the resemblance is taken. I observe the English demand (as is natural) broad caricature in the depicting of national peculiarities: they did so as to the Irish, till Jack Johnstone taught them better, and at first I should fear Mackay's reality will seem less ludicrous than Liston's humorous extravagances. So let it not be said that a dramatic genius of Scotland wanted the countenance and protection of Joanna Baillie: the Doctor and Mrs. Baillie will be much diverted if they go also, but somebody said to me that they were out of town. The man, I am told, is perfectly respectable in his life and habits, and consequently deserves encouragement every way. There is a great difference betwixt his *bailie* and all his other performances: one would think the part made for him, and him for the part—and yet I may do the poor fellow injustice, and what we here consider as a falling off may arise from our identifying Mackay so completely with the worthy Glasgow magistrate, that recollections of Nicol Jarvie intrude upon us at every corner, and mar the personification of any other part which he may represent for the time.

"I am here for a couple of days with our Chief Commissioner, late Willie Adam, and we had yesterday a delightful stroll to Castle Campbell, the Rumbling Brig, Cauldron Linns, &c: the scenes are most romantic, and I know not by what fatality it has been, that living within a step of them, I never visited any of them before. We had Sir Samuel Shepherd with us, a most delightful person, but with too much English fidgetiness about him for crags and precipices,—perpetually afraid that rocks would give way under his weight which had over-brow'd the torrent for ages, and that good well-rooted trees, moored so as to resist ten thousand tempests, would fall because he grasped one of their branches; he must certainly be a firm believer in the simile of the lover of your native and, who complains—

> 'I leant my back unto an aik,
> I thought it was a trusty tree,
> But first it bow'd and then it brake,' &c. &c. &c.

Certes these Southrons lack much the habits of the wood and wilderness, for here is a man of taste and genius, a fine schol r and a most interesting companion, haunted with fears that would be entertained by no shop-keeper from the Luckenbooths or the Saut Market. A sort of *Cockneyism* of one kind or another pervades their men of professional habits, whereas every Scotchman, with very few exceptions, holds country exercises of all kinds to be part of his nature, and is ready to become a traveller or even a soldier on the slightest possible notice. The habits of the moorfowl shooting, salmon-fishing, and so forth, may keep this much up among the gentry, a name which our pride and pedigree extend so much wider than in England; and it is worth notice that these amusements being cheap and tolerably easy come at by all the petty dunnywassels, have a more general influence on the national character than fox-hunting, which is confined to those who can mount and keep a horse worth at least 100 guineas. But still this hardly explains the general and wide difference betwixt the comtries in this particular. Happen how it will, the advantage is much in favour of Scotland: it is true that it contributes to prevent our producing such very accomplished lawyers, divines, or artisans,* as when the whole mind is bent with undivided attention upon attaining one branch of knowledge,—but it gives a strong and muscular character to the people in general, and saves men from all sorts of causeless fears and flutterings of the heart, which give quite as much misery as if there were real cause for entertaining apprehension. This is not furiously to the purpose of my letter, which, after recommending Monsieur Mackay, was to tell you that we are all well and happy. Sophia is getting stout and pretty, and is one of the wisest and most important little mammas that can be seen anywhere. Her bower is *bigged in gude green wood*, and we went last Saturday in a body to enjoy it, and to consult about furniture, and we have got the road stopt which led up the hill, so it is now quite solitary, and approached through a grove of trees, actual well grown trees, not Lilliputian forests like those of Abbotsford. The season is dreadfully backward. Our ashes and oaks are not yet in leaf, and will not be, I think, in any thing like full foliage this year, such is the rigour of the east winds.—Always, my dear and much respected friend, most affectionately yours,

W. Scott.

"Blair-Adam, 11 June, 1821,
In full sight of Lochleven.

"P. S.—Pray read, or have read to you by Mrs. Agnes, the *Annals of the Parish*. Mr. Galt wrote the worst tragedies ever seen, and has now written a most excellent novel, if it can be called so."

To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c., London.

"Blair-Adam, June 11, 1821.

"My dear Lord,

"There is a man going up from Edinburgh to play one night at Covent Garden, whom, as having the very unusual power of presenting on the stage a complete Scotsman, I am very desirous you should see. He plays Bailie Nicol Jarvie in Rob Roy, but with a degree of national truth and understanding, which makes the part equal to any thing I have ever seen on the stage, and I have seen all the best comedians for these forty years. I wish much, if you continue in town till he comes up, that you would get into some private box and take a look of him. Sincerely, it is a real treat—the English will not enjoy it, for it is no broad enough, or sufficiently caricatured for their apprehensions, but to a Scotsman it is inimitable, and you have the Glasgow Bailie before you, with all his bustling conceit and importance, his real benevolence, and his irritable habits. He will want in London a fellow who, in the character of the Highland turnkey, held the back-hand to him admirably well. I know how difficult it is for folks of condition to get to the theatre, but this is worth an exertion, and, besides, the poor man (who I understand is very respectable in private life) will be, to use an admirable simile (by which one of your father's farmers persuaded the Duke to go to hear his son, a probationer in divinity, preach his first sermon in the town of Ayr,) *like a cow in a fremd loaning*, and glad of Scots countenance.

"I am glad the Duke's cold is better—his stomach will not be put to those trials which ours underwent in our youth, when deep drinking was the fashion. I hope he will always be aware, however, that his is not a strong one.

"Campbell's Lives of the Admirals is an admirable book, and I would advise your Lordship e'en to redeem your pledge to the Duke on some rainy day. You do not run the risk from the perusal which my poor mother apprehended. She always alleged it sent her eldest son to the navy, and did not see with indifference any of her younger olive branches engaged with Campbell, except myself, who stood in no danger of the cockpit or quarter-deck. I would not swear for Lord John though. Your Lordship's tutor was just such a well-meaning person as mine, who used to take from me old Lindsay of Pitscottie, and set me down to get by heart Rollin's infernal list of the Shepherd Kings, whose hard names could have done no good to any one on earth, unless he wished to raise the devil, and lacked language to conjure with.—Always, my dear Lord, most truly yours,

Walter Scott"

The coronation of George IV., preparations for which were (as has been seen) in active progress by March, 1820, had been deferred, in consequence of the unhappy affair of the Queen's Trial. The 19th of July, 1821, was now announced for this so-

* The great engineer, James Watt of Birmingham—in whose talk Scott took much delight—told him, that though hundreds probably of his northern countrymen had sought employment at his establishment, he never could get one of them to become a first-rate artisan. "Many of them," said he, "were too good for that, and rose to be valuable clerks and book-keepers; but those incapable of this sort of advancement had always the same insuperable aversion to toiling so long at any one point of mechanism as to gain the highest wages among the workmen." I have no doubt Sir Walter was thinking of Mr. Watt's remark when he wrote the sentence in the text.

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lemnity, and Sir Walter resolved to be among the spectators. It occurred to him that if the Ettrick Shepherd were to accompany him, and produce some memorial of the scene likely to catch the popular ear in Scotland, good service might thus be done to the cause of loyalty; but this was not his only consideration. Hogg had married a handsome and most estimable young woman, a good deal above his own original rank in life, the year before; and expecting with her a dowry of £1000, he had forthwith revived the grand ambition of an earlier day, and become the candidate for an extensive farm on the Buccleuch estate, at a short distance from Altrive Lake. Various friends, supposing his worldly circumstances to be much improved, had supported his application, and Lord Montagu had received it in a manner for which the Shepherd's letters to Scott express much gratitude. Misfortune pursued the Shepherd—the unforeseen bankruptcy of his wife's father interrupted the stocking of the sheep walk; and the arable part of the new possession was sadly mismanaged by himself. Scott hoped that a visit to London, and a coronation poem, or pamphlet, might end in some pension or post that would relieve these difficulties, and he wrote to Hogg, urging him to come to Edinburgh, and embark with him for the great city. Not doubting that this proposal would be eagerly accepted, he, when writing to Lord Sidmouth, to ask a place for himself in the Hall and Abbey of Westminster, mentioned that Hogg was to be his companion, and begged suitable accommodation for him also. Lord Sidmouth, being overwhelmed with business connected with the approaching pageant, answered by the pen of the Under-Secretary of State, Mr Hobhouse, that Sir Walter's wishes, both as to himself and the Shepherd, should be gratified, *provided* they would both dine with him the day after the coronation, in Richmond park, "where," says the letter before me, "his Lordship will invite the Duke of York and a few other Jacobites to meet you." All this being made known to the tenant of Mount-Benger, he wrote to Scott, as he says, "with the tear in his eye," to signify, that if he went to London, he must miss attending the great annual Border fair, held on St. Boswell's Green, in Roxburghshire, on the 18th of every July; and that his absence from that meeting so soon after entering upon business as a store-farmer, would be considered by his new compeers as highly imprudent and discreditable. "In short," James concludes, "the thing is impossible. But as there is no man in his Majesty's dominions admires his great talents for government, and the energy and dignity of his administration, so much as I do, I will write something at home, and endeavour to give it you before you start." The Shepherd probably expected that these pretty compliments would reach the royal ear; but however that may have been, his own Muse turned a deaf ear to him—at least I never heard of any thing that he wrote on this occasion.

Scott embarked without him, on board a new steam ship called *the City of Edinburgh*, which, as he suggested to the master, ought rather to have been christened *the New Reekie*. This vessel was that described and lauded in the following letter:—

To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c.

"Edinburgh, July 1, 1821.

"My dear Lord,

"I write just now to thank you for your letter. I have been on board the steam-ship, and am so delighted with it, that I think I shall put myself aboard for the coronation. It runs at nine knots an hour, (*me ipso teste,*) against wind and tide, with a deck as long as a frigate's to walk upon, and to sleep on also, if you like, as I have always preferred a cloak and a mattress to these crowded cabins. This reconciles the speed and certainty of the mail-coach with the ease and convenience of being on ship-board. So I really think I will run up to see the grandee show and run down again. I scorn to mention economy, though the expense is not one fifth, and that is something in hard times, especially to me, who to choose, would always rather travel in a public conveyance, than with my domestic's good company in a po-chay.

"But now comes the news of news. I have been instigating the great Caledonian Boar, James Hogg, to undertake a similar trip—with the view of turning an honest penny, to help out his stocking, by writing some sort of Shepherd's Letters, or the like, to put the honest Scots bodies up to this whole affair. I am trying with Lord Sidmouth to get him a place among the newspaper gentry to see the ceremony. It is seriously worth while to get such a popular view of the whole, as he will probably hit off.

"I have another view for this poor fellow. You have heard of the Royal Literary Society, and how they propose to distribute solid pudding, *alias* pensions, to men of genius. It is, I think, a very problematical matter, whether it will do the good which is intended; but if they do mean to select worthy objects of encouragement, I really know nobody that has a better or an equal claim to poor Hogg. Our friend Villiers takes a great charge of this matter, and good-naturedly forgave *my* stating to him a number of objections to the first concoction, which was to have been something resembling the French Academy. It has now been much modified. Perhaps there may be some means fallen upon, with your Lordship's assistance, of placing Hogg under Mr. Villiers' view. I would have done so myself, but only, I have battled the point against the whole establishment so keenly, that it would be too bad to bring forward a protegé of my own to take the advantage of it. They intended at one time to give pensions of about £100 a-year to thirty persons. I know not where they could find half-a-dozen with such pretensions as the Shepherd's.

"There will be risk of his being lost in London, or kidnapped by some of those ladies who open literary *menageries* for the reception of *lions*. I should like to see him at a rout of blue-stockings. I intend to recommend him to the protection of John Murray the bookseller; and I hope he will come equipped with plaid, kent, and colley.*

"I wish to heaven Lord Melville would either keep the Admiralty, or in Hogg's phrase—

——'O I would eagerly press him
The keys of the *east* to require,'—

for truly the Board of Control is the Corn Chest for Scotland, where we poor gentry must send our youngest sons, as we send our black cattle to the south.

Ever most truly yours,
WALTER SCOTT."

From London, on the day after the coronation, Sir Walter addressed a letter, descriptive of the ceremonial, to his friend James Ballantyne, who published it in his newspaper. It has been since reprinted—but not in any collection of Scott's own writings; and I therefore insert it here. It will probably possess considerable interest for the student of English history and manners in future times; for the coronation of George the Fourth's successor was conducted on a vastly inferior scale of splendour and expense—and the precedent of curtailment in any such matters is now seldom neglected.

To the Editor of the Edinburgh Weekly Journal.

"London, July 20th, 1821.

"Sir,

"I refer you to the daily papers for the details of the great National Solemnity which we witnessed yesterday, and will hold my promise absolved by sending a few general remarks upon what I saw, with surprise amounting to astonishment, and which I shall never forget. It is, indeed, impossible to conceive a ceremony more august and imposing in all its parts, and more calculated to make the deepest impression both on the eye and on the feelings. The most minute attention must have been bestowed to arrange all the subordinate parts in harmony with the rest; so that, amongst so much antiquated ceremonial, imposing singular dresses, duties, and characters, upon persons accustomed to move in the ordinary routine of society, nothing occurred either awkward or ludicrous which could mar the general effect of the solemnity. Considering that it is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, I own I considered it as surprising that the whole ceremonial of the day should have passed away without the slightest circumstance which could derange the general tone of solemn feeling which was suited to the occasion.

"You must have heard a full account of the only disagreeable event of the day. I mean the attempt of the

* *Kent* is the shepherd's staff—*Colley*, his dog. Scott alludes to the old song of the *Lea Rig*—

"Nae herds wi' kent and colley there," &c.

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misguided lady, who has lately furnished so many topics of discussion, to intrude herself upon a ceremonial, where, not being in her proper place, to be present in any other must have been voluntary degradation. That matter is a fire of straw which has now burnt to the very embers, and those who try to blow it into life again, will only blacken their hands and noses, like mischievous children dabbling among the ashes of a bonfire. It seems singular, that being determined to be present at all hazards, this unfortunate personage should not have procured a Peer's ticket, which, I presume, would have insured her admittance. I willingly pass to pleasanter matters.

"The effect of the scene in the Abbey was beyond measure magnificent. Imagine long galleries stretched among the aisles of that venerable and august pile—those which rise above the altar pealing back their echoes to a full and magnificent choir of music—those which occupied the sides filled even to crowding with all that Britain has of beautiful and distinguished, and the cross-gallery most appropriately occupied by the Westminster schoolboys, in their white surplices, many of whom might on that day receive impressions never to be lost during the rest of their lives. Imagine this, I say, and then add the spectacle upon the floor—the altar surrounded by the Fathers of the Church—the King encircled by the Nobility of the land and the Counsellors of his throne, and by warriors, wearing the honoured marks of distinction bought by many a glorious danger—add to this the rich spectacle of the aisles crowded with waving plumage, and coronets, and caps of honour, and the sun, which brightened and saddened as if on purpose, now beaming in full lustre on the rich and varied assemblage, and now darting a solitary ray, which catched, as it passed, the glittering folds of a banner, or the edge of a group of battle-axes or partisans, and then rested full on some fair form, 'the Cynosure of neighbouring eyes,' whose circlet of diamonds glistened under its influence. Imagine all this, and then tell me if I have made my journey of four hundred miles to little purpose. I do not love your *cui bono* men, and therefore I will not be pleased if you ask me in the damping tone of sullen philosophy, what good all this has done the spectators? If we restrict life to its real animal wants and necessities, we shall indeed be satisfied with 'food, clothes, and fire;' but Divine Providence, who widened our sources of enjoyment beyond those of the animal creation, never meant that we should bound our wishes within such narrow limits; and I shrewdly suspect that those *non est tanti* gentlefolks only depreciate the natural and unaffected pleasure which men like me receive from sights of splendour and sounds of harmony, either because they would seem wiser than their simple neighbours at the expense of being less happy, or because the mere pleasure of the sight and sound is connected with associations of a deeper kind, to which they are unwilling to yield themselves.

"Leaving these gentlemen to enjoy their own wisdom, I still more pity those, if there be any, who (being unable to detect a peg on which to hang a laugh) sneer coldly at this solemn festival, and are rather disposed to dwell on the expense which attends it, than on the generous feelings which it ought to awaken. The expense, so far as it is national, has gone directly and instantly to the encouragement of the British manufacturer and mechanic; and so far as it is personal to the persons of rank attendant upon the Coronation, it operates as a tax upon wealth and consideration for the benefit of poverty and industry; a tax willingly paid by the one class, and not the less acceptable to the other, because it adds a happy holiday to the monotony of a life of labour.

"But there were better things to reward my pilgrimage than the mere pleasures of the eye and ear; for it was impossible, without the deepest veneration, to behold the voluntary and solemn interchange of vows betwixt the King and his assembled People, whilst he, on the one hand, called God Almighty to witness his resolution to maintain their laws and privileges, whilst they called, at the same moment, on the Divine Being, to bear witness that they accepted him for their liege Sovereign, and pledged to him their love and their duty. I cannot describe to you the effect produced by the solemn, yet strange mixture of the words of Scripture, with the shouts and acclamations of the assembled multitude, as they answered to the voice of the Prelate who demanded of them whether they acknowledged as their Monarch the Prince who claimed the sovereignty in their presence. It was peculiarly delightful to see the King receive from the royal brethren, but in particular from the Duke of York, the fraternal kiss in which they acknowledged their sovereign. There was an honest tenderness, an affectionate and sincere reverence, in the embrace interchanged betwixt the Duke of York and his Majesty, that approached almost to a caress, and impressed all present with the electrical conviction, that the nearest to the throne in blood was the nearest also in affection. I never heard plaudits given more from the heart than those that were thundered upon the royal brethren when they were thus pressed to each other's bosoms,—it was an emotion of natural kindness, which, bursting out amidst ceremonial grandeur, found an answer in every British bosom. The King seemed much affected at this and one or two other parts of the ceremonial, even so much so, as to excite some alarm among those who saw him as nearly as I did. He completely recovered himself, however, and bore (generally speaking) the fatigue of the day very well. I learn from one near his person, that he roused himself with great energy, even when most oppressed with heat and fatigue, when any of the more interesting parts of the ceremony were to be performed, or when any thing occurred which excited his personal and immediate attention. When presiding at the banquet amid the long line of his Nobles, he looked 'every inch a King;' and nothing could exceed the grace with which he accepted and returned the various acts of homage rendered to him in the course of that long day.

"It was also a very gratifying spectacle to those who think like me, to behold the Duke of Devonshire and most of the distinguished Whig nobility assembled round the throne on this occasion; giving an open testimony that the differences of political opinions are only skin-deep wounds, which assume at times an angry appearance, but have no real effect on the wholesome constitution of the country.

"If you ask me to distinguish who bore him best, and appeared most to sustain the character we annex to the assistants in such a solemnity, I have no hesitation to name Lord Londonderry, who, in the magnificent robes of the Garter, with the cap and high plume of the order, walked alone, and by his fine face, and majestic person, formed an adequate representative of the order of Edward III., the costume of which was worn by his Lordship only. The Duke of Wellington, with all his laurels, moved and looked deserving the baton, which was never grasped by so worthy a hand. The Marquis of Anglesea showed the most exquisite grace in managing his horse, notwithstanding the want of his limb, which he left at Waterloo. I never saw so fine a bridle-hand in my life, and I am rather a judge of 'noble horsemanship.' Lord Howard's horse was worse bitted than those of the two former noblemen, but not so much so as to derange the ceremony of retiring back out of the Hall.

"The Champion was performed (as of right) by young Dymocke, a fine-looking youth, but bearing, perhaps, a little too much the appearance of a maiden-knight to be the challenger of the world in a King's behalf. He threw down his gauntlet, however, with becoming manhood, and showed as much horsemanship as the crowd of knights and squires around him would permit to be exhibited. His armour was in good taste, but his shield was out of all propriety, being a round *rondache*, or Highland target, a defensive weapon, which it would have been impossible to use on horseback, instead of being a three-corner'd, or *heater-shield*, which in time of the tilt was suspended round the neck. Pardon this antiquarian scruple, which, you may believe, occurred to few but myself. On the whole, this striking part of the exhibition somewhat disappointed me, for I would have had the Champion less embarrassed by his assistants, and at liberty to put his horse on the *grand pas*. And yet the young Lord of Scrivelsbaye looked and behaved extremely well.

"Returning to the subject of costume, I could not but admire what I had previously been disposed much to criticise,—I mean the fancy dress of the Privy-Councillors, which was of white and blue satin, with trunk-hose and mantles, after the fashion of Queen Elizabeth's time. Separately, so gay a garb had an odd effect on the persons of elderly or ill-made men; but when the whole was thrown into one general body, all these discrepancies disappeared, and you no more observed the particular manner or appearance of an individual than you do that of a soldier in the battalion which marches past you. The whole was so completely harmonized in actual colouring, as well as in association with the general mass of gay and gorgeous and antique dress which floated before the eye, that it was next to impossible to attend to the effect of individual figures. Yet a Scotsman will detect a Scotsman amongst the most crowded assemblage, and I must say that the Lord Justice-Clerk of Scotland showed to as great advantage in his robes of Privy-Councillor as any by whom that splendid dress was worn on this great occasion. The common Court-dress, used by the Privy-Councillors at the last coronation, must have had a poor effect in comparison of the present, which formed a gradation in the scale of gorgeous ornament, from the unwieldy splendour of the heralds, who glowed like huge masses of cloth of gold and silver, to the more chastened robes

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and ermine of the Peers. I must not forget the effect produced by the Peers' placing their coronets on their heads, which was really august.

"The box assigned to the foreign Ambassadors presented almost brilliant effect, and was perfectly in a blaze with diamonds. When the sunshine lighted on Prince Esterhazy, in particular, he glimmered like a galaxy. I cannot learn positively if he had on that renowned coat which has visited all the courts of Europe save ours, and is said to be worth £100,000, or some such trifle, and which costs the Prince £100 or two every time he puts it on, as he is sure to lose pearls to that amount. This was a hussar dress, but splendid in the last degree, perhaps too fine for good taste, at least it would have appeared so any where else. Beside the Prince sat a good-humoured lady, who seemed all eyes and ears, (his daughter-in-law I believe,) who wore as many diamonds as if they had been Bristol stones. An honest Persian was also a remarkable figure, from the dogged and imperturbable gravity with which he looked on the whole scene, without ever moving a limb or a muscle during the space of four hours. Like Sir Willful Witwoud, I cannot find that your Persian is orthodox; for if he scorned every thing else, there was a Mahometan paradise extended on his right hand along the seats which were occupied by the Peeresses and their daughters, which the Prophet himself might have looked on with emotion. I have seldom seen so many elegant and beautiful girls as sat mingled among the noble matronage of the land; and the waving plumage of feathers, which made the universal head-dress, had the most appropriate effect in setting off their charms.

"I must not omit that the foreigners, who are apt to consider us as a nation *ens frac*, and without the usual ceremonials of dress and distinction, were utterly astonished and delighted to see the revival of feudal dresses and feudal grandeur, when the occasion demanded it, and that in a degree of splendour which they averred they had never seen paralleled in Europe.

"The duties of service at the Banquet, and of attendance in general, was performed by pages drest very elegantly, in Henry Quatre coats of scarlet, with gold lace, blue sashes, white silk hose, and white rosettes. There were also marshal's-men for keeping order, who wore a similar dress, but of blue, and having white sashes. Both departments were filled up almost entirely by young gentlemen, many of them of the very first condition, who took these menial characters to gain admission to the show. When I saw many of my young acquaintances thus attending upon their fathers and kinsmen, the Peers, Knights, and so forth, I could not help thinking of Crabbe's lines, with a little alteration:—

> 'Twas schooling pride to see the menial wait,
> Smile on his father, and receive his plate.

It must be owned, however, that they proved but indifferent valets, and were very apt, like the clown in the pantomime, to eat the cheer they should have handed to their masters, and to play other *tours de page*, which reminded one of the caution of our proverb, 'not to man yourself with your kin.' The Peers, for example, had only a cold collation, while the Aldermen of London feasted on venison and turtle; and similar errors necessarily befell others in the confusion of the evening. But those slight mistakes, which indeed were not known till afterwards, had not the slightest effect on the general grandeur of the scene.

"I did not see the procession between the Abbey and Hall. In the morning a few voices called, *Queen, Queen*, as Lord Londonderry passed, and even when the Sovereign appeared. But these were only signals for the loud and reiterated acclamations in which these tones of discontent were completely drowned. In the return, no one dissonant voice intimated the least dissent from the shouts of gratulation which poured from every quarter; and certainly never Monarch received a more general welcome from his assembled subjects.

"You will have from others full accounts of the variety of entertainments provided for John Bull in the Parks, the River, in the Theatres, and elsewhere. Nothing was to be seen or heard but sounds of pleasure and festivity; and whoever saw the scene at any one spot, was convinced that the whole population was assembled there, while others found a similar concourse of revellers in every different point. It is computed that about FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND PEOPLE shared in the Festival in one way or another; and you may imagine the excellent disposition by which the people were animated, when I tell you, that, excepting a few windows broken by a small body-guard of ragamuffins, who were in immediate attendance on the Great Lady in the morning, not the slightest political violence occurred to disturb the general harmony—and that the assembled populace seemed to be universally actuated by the spirit of the day, loyalty, namely, and good humour. Nothing occurred to damp those happy dispositions; the weather was most propitious, and the arrangements so perfect, that no accident of any kind is reported as having taken place. And so concluded the coronation of GEORGE IV., whom God long preserve. Those who witnessed it, have seen a scene calculated to raise the country in their opinion, and to throw into the shade all scenes of a similar magnificence, from the Field of the Cloth of Gold down to the present day. I remain, your obedient servant,

AN EYE-WITNESS."

At the close of this brilliant scene, Scott received a mark of homage to his genius which delighted him not less than Laird Nippy's reverence for *the Sheriff's Knoll*, and the Birmingham Cutler's dear acquisition of his signature on a visiting ticket. Missing his carriage, he had to return home on foot from Westminster, after the banquet—that is to say, between two and three o'clock in the morning—when he and a young gentleman, his companion, found themselves locked in the crowd, somewhere near Whitehall, and the bustle and tumult were such that his friend was afraid some accident might happen to the lame limb. A space for the dignitaries was kept clear at that point by the Scots Greys. Sir Walter addressed a serjeant of this celebrated regiment, begging to be allowed to pass by him into the open ground in the middle of the street. The man answered shortly that his orders were strict—that the thing was impossible. While he was endeavoring to persuade the sergeant to relent, some new wave of turbulence approached from behind, and his young companion exclaimed in a loud voice, "Take care, Sir Walter Scott, take care!" The stalwart dragoon, on hearing the name, said, "What! Sir Walter Scott? He shall get through anyhow!" He then addressed the soldiers near him—"Make room, men, for Sir Walter Scott, our illustrious countryman!" The men answered, "Sir Walter Scott! God bless him!"—and he was in a moment within the guarded line of safety.

I shall now take another extract from the *memoranda*, with which I have been favoured by my friend Allan Cunningham. After the particulars formerly quoted about Scott's sitting to Chantrey, in the spring of 1820, he proceeds as follows:—

"I saw Sir Walter again, when he attended the coronation, in 1821. In the meantime his bust had been wrought in marble, and the sculptor desired to take the advantage of his visit to communicate such touches of expression or lineament as the new material rendered necessary. This was done with a happiness of eye and hand almost magical: for five hours did the poet sit, or stand, or walk, while Chantrey's chisel was passed again and again over the marble, adding something at every touch.

"'Well, Allan,' he said, when he saw me at this last sitting, 'were you at the coronation? It was a splendid sight.' 'No, Sir Walter,' I answered—'places were dear and ill to get: I am told it was a magnificent scene; but having seen the procession of King Crispin at Dumfries, I was satisfied.' I said this with a smile: Scott took it as I meant it, and laughed heartily. 'That is not a bit better than Hogg,' he said. 'He stood balancing the matter whether to go to the coronation or the fair of Saint Boswell—and the fair carried it.'

"During this conversation, Mr. Bolton the engineer came in. Something like a cold acknowledgment passed between the poet and him. On his passing into an inner room, Scott said, 'I am afraid Mr. Bolton has not forgot a little passage that once took place between us. We met in a public company, and in reply to the remark of some one, he said, 'That's like the old saying—in every corner of the world you will find a Scot, a rat, and a Newcastle grindstone.' This touched my Scotch spirit, and I said, 'Mr. Bolton, you ought to have added, *and a Birmingham button*.' There was a laugh at this, and Mr. Bolton replied, 'We make something better in Birmingham than buttons—we make steam-engines, sir.'

"'I like Bolton,' thus continued Sir Walter, 'he is a brave man, and who can dislike the brave?—He showed this on a remarkable occasion. He had engaged to coin for some foreign prince a large quantity of gold. This was found out by some desperadoes, who resolved to rob the premises, and as a preliminary step tried to bribe the porter. The porter was an honest fellow—he told Bolton that he was offered a hundred pounds to be blind and deaf next night. "Take the money," was the answer, "and I shall protect the place." Midnight came—the

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gates opened as if by magic; the interior doors, secured with patent locks, opened as if of their own accord, and three men with dark lanterns entered and went straight to the gold. Bolton had prepared some flax steeped in turpentine—he dropt fire upon it, a sudden light filled all the place, and with his assistants he rushed forward on the robbers. The leader saw in a moment he was betrayed, turned on the porter, and shooting him dead, burst through all obstruction, and with an ingot of gold in his hand, scaled the wall and escaped.'

"'That is quite a romance in robbing,' I said, and I had nearly said more, for the cavern scene and death of Meg Merrilees rose in my mind—perhaps the mind of Sir Walter was taking the direction of the Solway too, for he said, 'How long have you been from Nithsdale?' 'A dozen years.' 'Then you will remember it well. I was a visiter there in my youth; my brother was at Closeburn school, and there I found Crechope Linn, a scene ever present to my fancy. It is at once fearful and beautiful. The stream jumps down from the moorlands, saws its way into the free-stone rock of a hundred feet deep, and, in escaping to the plain, performs a thousand vagaries. In one part it has actually shaped out a little chapel—the peasants call it the Sutors' Chair. There are sculptures on the sides of the linn too, not such as Mr. Chantrey casts, but etchings scraped in with a knife, perhaps, or a harrow-tooth. Did you ever hear,' said Sir Walter, 'of Patrick Maxwell, who, taken prisoner by the King's troops, escaped from them on his way to Edinburgh, by flinging himself into that dreadful linn on Moffatt water, called the Douglasses Beef-tub?' 'Frequently,' I answered; 'the country abounds with anecdotes of those days; the popular feeling sympathizes with the poor Jacobites, and has recorded its sentiments in many a tale and many a verse.' 'The Ettrick Shepherd has collected not a few of those things,' said Scott, 'and I suppose many snatches of song may yet be found.' C. 'I have gathered many such things myself, Sir Walter, and as I still propose to make a collection of all Scottish songs of poetic merit, I shall work up many of my stray verses and curious anecdotes in the notes.' S. 'I am glad that you are about such a thing; any help which I can give you, you may command; ask me any questions, no matter how many, I shall answer them if I can. Don't be timid in your selection; our ancestors fought boldly, spoke boldly, and sang boldly too. I can help you to an old characteristic ditty not yet in print:

> 'There dwalt a man into the west,
> And O gin he was cruel,
> For on his bridal night at e'en
> He gat up and grat for gruel.
> They brought to him a gude sheep's head,
> A bason, and a towel,
> Gar take thae whim-whams far frae me,
> I winna want my gruel.'

"C. I never heard that verse before; the hero seems related to the bridegroom of Nithsdale—

> 'The bridegroom grat as the sun gade down,
> The bridegroom grat as the sun gade down,
> To ony man I'll gie a hunder marks sae free,
> This night that will bed wi' a bride for me.'

"S. A cowardly loon enough. I know of many crumbs and fragments of verse which will be useful to your work: the Border was once peopled with poets, for every one that could fight could make ballads, some of them of great power and pathos. Some such people as the minstrels were living less than a century ago.' C. 'I knew a man, the last of a race of district tale-tellers, who used to boast of the golden days of his youth, and say, that the world, with all its knowledge, was grown six-pence a day worse for him.' S. 'How was that? how did he make his living? by telling tales, or singing ballads?' C. 'By both: he had a devout tale for the old, and a merry song for the young; he was a sort of beggar.' S. 'Out upon thee, Allan, dost thou call that begging? Why, man, we make our bread by story-telling, and honest bread it is.'"

I ought not to close this extract, without observing that Sir F. Chantrey presented the original bust, of which Mr. Cunningham speaks, to Sir Walter himself; by whose remote descendants it will undoubtedly be held in additional honour on that account. The poet had the farther gratification of learning that three copies were executed in marble before the original quitted the studio: One for Windsor Castle—a second for Apsley House—and a third for the friendly sculptor's own private collection. The *legitimate* casts of this bust have since been multiplied beyond perhaps any example whatever. Mr. Cunningham remembers not fewer than fifteen hundred of them (price four guineas each) being ordered *for exportation*—chiefly to the United States of America—within one year. Of the myriads, or rather millions, of inferior copies manufactured and distributed by unauthorized persons, it would be in vain to attempt any calculation.

CHAPTER LIII.

PUBLICATION OF MR. ADOLPHUS'S LETTERS ON THE AUTHORSHIP OF WAVERLEY.—1821.

During Scott's visit to London, in July, 1821, there appeared a work which was read with eager curiosity and delight by the public—with much private diversion besides by his friends—and which he himself must have gone through with a very odd mixture of emotions. I allude to the volume entitled "Letters to Richard Heber, Esq., containing critical remarks on the series of novels beginning with Waverley, and an attempt to ascertain their authors;" which was soon known to have been penned by Mr. John Leicester Adolphus, a distinguished alumnus of the University then represented in Parliament by Sir Walter's early friend Heber. Previously to the publication of these Letters, the opinion that Scott was the author of Waverley had indeed become well settled in the English, to say nothing of the Scottish mind; a great variety of circumstances, external as well as internal, had by degrees co-operated to its general establishment; yet there were not wanting persons who still dissented, or at least affected to dissent from it. It was reserved for the enthusiastic industry, and admirable ingenuity of this juvenile academic, to set the question at rest, by an accumulation of critical evidence which no sophistry could evade, and yet produced in a style of such high-bred delicacy, that it was impossible for the hitherto 'veiled prophet' to take the slightest offence with the hand that had for ever abolished his disguise. The only sceptical scruple that survived this exposition, was extinguished in due time by Scott's avowal of the *sole and unassisted* authorship of his novels; and now Mr. Adolphus's Letters have shared the fate of other elaborate arguments, the thesis of which has ceased to be controverted. Hereafter, I am persuaded, his volume will be revived for its own sake;—but, in the meantime, regarding it merely as forming, by its original effect, an epoch in Scott's history, I think it my duty to mark my sense of its importance in that point of view, by transcribing the writer's own summary of its

"CONTENTS.

"LETTER I.—Introduction—General reasons for believing the novels to have been written by the author of Marmion.

"LETTER II.—Resemblance between the novelist and poet in their tastes, studies, and habits of life, as illustrated by their works—Both Scotchmen—Habitual residents in Edinburgh—Poets—Antiquaries—German and Spanish scholars—Equal in classical attainments—Deeply read in British history—Lawyers—Fond of field sports—Of dogs—Acquainted with most manly exercises—Lovers of military subjects—The novelist apparently not a soldier.

"LETTER III.—The novelist is, like the poet, a man of good society—His stories never betray forgetfulness of honourable principles, or ignorance of good manners—Spirited pictures of gentlemanly character—Colonel Mannering—Judicious treatment of elevated historical personages.—The novelist quotes and praises most contemporary poets, except the author of Marmion—Instances in which the poet has appeared to slight his own unacknowledged, but afterwards avowed productions.

"LETTER IV.—Comparison of the works themselves—All distinguished by good morals and good sense—the latter particularly shown in the management of character—Prose style—its general features—Plainness and facility—Grave banter—Manner of telling a short story—Negligence—Scotticisms—Great propriety and correctness occasionally, and sometimes unusual sweetness.

LETTER V.—Dialogue in the novels and poems—Neat colloquial turns in the former, such as cannot be expected in romantic poetry—Happy adaptation of dialogue to character, whether merely natural, or artificially modi

fied, as by profession, local habits, &c.—Faults of dialogue, as connected with the character of speakers—Quaintness of language and thought—Bookish air in conversation—Historical personages alluding to their own celebrated acts and sayings—Unsuccessful attempts at broad vulgarity—Beauties of composition peculiar to the dialogue—Terseness and spirit—These qualities well displayed in quarrels; but not in scenes of polished raillery—Eloquence.

"LETTER VI.—The poetry of the author of Marmion generally characterized—His habits of composition and turn of mind, as a poet, compared with those of the novelist—Their descriptions simply conceived and composed, without abstruse and far-fetched circumstances or refined comments—Great advantage derived by both from accidental combinations of images, and the association of objects in the mind with persons, events, &c.—Distinctness and liveliness of effect in narrative and description—Narrative usually picturesque or dramatic, or both—Distinctness, &c. of effect, produced in various ways—Striking pictures of individuals—Their persons, dress, &c.—Descriptions sometimes too obviously picturesque—Subjects for painters—Effects of light frequently noticed and finely described—Both writers excel in grand and complicated scenes—Among detached and occasional ornaments, the similes particularly noticed—Their frequency and beauty—Similes and metaphors sometimes quaint and pursued too far.

"LETTER VII.—Stories of the two writers compared—These are generally connected with true history, and have their scene laid in a real place—Local peculiarities diligently attended to—Instances in which the novelist and poet have celebrated the same places—they frequently describe these as seen by a traveller (the hero, or some other principal personage) for the first time—Dramatic mode of relating story—Soliloquies—Some scenes degenerate into melodrame—Lyrical pieces introduced sometimes too theatrically—Comparative unimportance of heroes—Various causes of this fault—Heroes rejected by ladies, and marrying others whom they had before slighted—Personal struggle between a civilized and a barbarous hero—Characters resembling each other—Female portraits in general—Fathers and daughters—Characters in Paul's Letters—Wycliffe and Risingham—Glossin and Hatteraick—Other characters compared.—Long periods of time abruptly passed over—Surprises, unexpected discoveries, &c.—These sometimes too forced and artificial—Frequent recourse to the marvellous—Dreams well described—Living persons mistaken for spectres—Deaths of Burley, Risingham, and Rashleigh.

"LETTER VIII.—Comparison of particular passages—Descriptions—Miscellaneous thoughts—Instances, in which the two writers have resorted to the same sources of information, and borrowed the same incidents, &c.—Same authors quoted by both—the poet, like the novelist, fond of mentioning his contemporaries, whether as private friends or as men publicly distinguished—Author of Marmion never notices the Author of Waverley (see Letter III.)—Both delight in frequently introducing an antiquated or fantastic dialect—Peculiarities of expression common to both writers—Conclusion."

I wish I had space for extracting copious specimens of the felicity with which Mr. Adolphus works out these various points of his problem. As it is, I must be contented with a narrow selection—and I shall take two or three of the passages which seem to me to connect themselves most naturally with the main purpose of my own compilation.

"A thorough knowledge and statesmanlike understanding of the domestic history and politics of Britain at various and distant periods; a familiar acquaintance with the manners and prevailing spirit of former generations, and with the characters and habits of their most distinguished men, are of themselves no cheap or common attainments; and it is rare indeed to find them united with a strong original genius, and great brilliancy of imagination. We know, however, that the towering poet of Flodden-field is also the diligent editor of Swift and Dryden, of Lord Somers's Tracts, and of Sir Ralph Sadler's State Papers; that in these and other parts of his literary career he has necessarily plunged deep into the study of British history, biography, and antiquities, and that the talent and activity which he brought to these researches have been warmly seconded by the zeal and liberality of those who possessed the amplest and rarest sources of information. 'The muse found him,' as he himself said long ago, 'engaged in the pursuit of historical and traditional antiquities, and the excursions which he has made in her company have been of a nature which increases his attachment to his original study.' Are we then to suppose, that another writer has combined the same powers of fancy with the same spirit of investigation, the same perseverance, and the same good fortune? and shall we not rather believe, that the labour employed in the illustration of Dryden has helped to fertilise the invention which produced Montrose and Old Mortality? . . . . . .

"However it may militate against the supposition of his being a poet, I cannot suppress my opinion, that our novelist is a 'man of law.' He deals out the peculiar terms and phrases of that science (as practised in Scotland) with a freedom and confidence beyond the reach of any uninitiated person. If ever, in the progress of his narrative, a legal topic presents itself, (which very frequently happens,) he neither declines the subject, nor timidly slurs it over, but enters as largely and formally into all its technicalities, as if the case were actually 'before the fifteen.' The manners, humours, and professional *bavardage* of lawyers, are sketched with all the ease and familiarity which result from habitual observation. In fact, the subject of law, which is a stumblingblock to others, is to the present writer a spot of repose; upon this theme he lounges and gossips, he is *discinctus et soleatus*, and, at times, almost forgets that when an author finds himself at home and perfectly at ease, he is in great danger of falling asleep.—If, then, my inferences are correct, the unknown writer who was just now proved to be an excellent poet, must also be pronounced a follower of the law: the combination is so unusual, at least on this side of the Tweed, that, as Juvenal says on a different occasion—

> ——————— 'bimembri
> Hoc monstrum puero, vel mirandis sub aratro
> Piscibus inventis, et fœtæ comparo mulæ.'

Nature has indeed presented us with one such prodigy in the author of Marmion; and it is probable, that in the author of Waverley, we only see the same specimen under a different aspect; for, however sportive the goddess may be, she has too much wit and invention to wear out a frolic by many repetitions. . . . . .

"A striking characteristic of both writers is their ardent love of rural sports, and all manly and robust exercises.—But the importance given to the canine race in these works ought to be noted as a characteristic feature by itself. I have seen some drawings by a Swiss artist, who was called the Raphael of cats; and either of the writers before us might, by a similar phrase, be called the Wilkie of dogs. Is it necessary to justify such a compliment by examples? Call Yarrow, or Lufra, or poor Fangs, Colonel Mannering's Pluto, Henry Morton's Elphin, or Hobbie Elliot's Kilbuck, or Wolf of Avenel Castle:—see Fitz-James's hounds returning from the pursuit of the lost stag—

> 'Back limped with slow and crippled pace
> The sulky leaders of the chase'—

or swimming after the boat which carries their Master—

> 'With heads erect and whimpering cry
> The hounds behind their passage ply.'

See Captain Clutterbuck's dog *quizzing* him when he missed a bird, or the scene of 'mutual explanation and remonstrance' between 'the venerable patriarchs old Pepper and Mustard,' and Henry Bertram's rough terrier Wasp. If these instances are not sufficient, turn to the English blood-hound assailing the young Buccleuch—

> 'And hark! and hark! the deep-mouthed bark
> Comes nigher still and nigher;
> Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
> His tawny muzzle tracked the ground,
> And his red eye shot fire.
> Soon as the wildered child saw he,
> He flew at him right furiously. . . . .
> I ween you would have seen with joy
> The bearing of the gallant boy. . . . . .
> So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
> At cautious distance hoarsely bayed,
> But still in act to spring.

Or Lord Ronald's deer-hounds, in the haunted forest of Glenfinlas—

> "Within an hour return'd each hound;
> In rush'd the rousers of the deer;
> They howl'd in melancholy sound,
> Then closely couch beside the seer. . . . . .
> Sudden the hounds erect their ears,
> And sudden cease their moaning howl;
> Close press'd to Moy, they mark their fears
> By shivering limbs, and stifled growl.
> Untouch'd the harp began to ring,
> As softly, slowly, oped the door,' &c.

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Or look at Cedric the Saxon, in his antique hall, attended by his greyhounds and bloodhounds, and the terriers which 'waited with impatience the arrival of the supper; but with the sagacious knowledge of physiognomy peculiar to their race, forbore to intrude upon the moody silence of their master.' To complete the picture, 'One grisly old wolf-dog alone, with the liberty of an indulged favourite, had planted himself close by the chair of state, and occasionally ventured to solicit notice by putting his large hairy head upon his master's knee, or pushing his nose into his hand. Even he was repelled by the stern command, "Down, Balder, down! I am not in the humour for foolery."'

"Another animated sketch occurs in the way of similar kind.—'The interview between Ratcliffe and Sharpitlaw had an aspect different from all these. They sat for five minutes silent, on opposite sides of a small table, and looked fixedly at each other, with a sharp, knowing, and alert cast of countenance, not unmingled with an inclination to laugh, and resembled, more than any thing else, two dogs, who, preparing for a game at romps, are seen to couch down, and remain in that posture for a little time, watching each other's movements, and waiting which shall begin the game.'

"Let me point out a still more amusing study of canine life: 'While the Antiquary was in full declamation, Juno, who held him in awe, according to the remarkable instinct by which dogs instantly discover those who like or dislike them, had peeped several times into the room, and, encountering nothing very forbidding in his aspect, had at length presumed to introduce her full person, and finally, becoming bold by impunity, she actually ate up Mr. Oldbuck's toast, as, looking first at one, then at another of his audience, he repeated with self-complacence,

"Weave the warp, and weave the woof,"—

"You remember the passage in the Fatal Sisters, which, by the way, is not so fine as in the original—But, hey-day! my toast has vanished! I see which way—Ah, thou type of womankind, no wonder they take offence at thy generic appellation!"—(So saying, he shook his fist at Juno, who scoured out of the parlour.)

"In short, throughout these works, wherever it is possible for a dog to contribute in any way to the effect of a scene, we find there the very dog that was required, in his proper place and attitude. In Branksome Hall, when the feast was over,

'The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretched upon the rushy floor,
And urged, in dreams, the forest race
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.'

The gentle Margaret, when she steals secretly from the castle,

'Pats the shaggy blood-hound
As he rouses him up from his lair.'

When Waverley visits the Baron of Bradwardine, in his concealment at Janet Gellatley's, Ban and Buscar play their parts in every point with perfect discretion; and in the joyous company that assembles at Little Veolan, on the Baron's enlargement, these honest animals are found 'stuffed to the throat with food, in the liberality of Macwheeble's joy,' and 'snoring on the floor.' In the perilous adventure of Henry Bertram, at Portanferry gaol, the action would lose half its interest, without the by-play of little Wasp. At the funeral ceremony of Duncraggan, (in the Lady of the Lake,) a principal mourner is

——'Stumah, who, the bier beside,
His master's corpse with wonder eyed;
Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
Could send like lightning o'er the dew.'

Ellen Douglas smiled (or did not smile)

——'to see the stately drake,
Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
While her vexed spaniel from the beach,
Bayed at the prize beyond his reach.'

"I will close this growing catalogue of examples with one of the most elegant descriptions that ever sprang from a poet's fancy:

'Delightful praise! like summer rose,
That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
The bashful maiden's cheek appeared,
For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.
The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,
The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide;
The loved caresses of the maid
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;
And, at her whistle, on her hand
The falcon took his favourite stand,
Closed his dark wing, relaxed his eye,
Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.'

"Their passion for martial subjects, and their success in treating them, form a conspicuous point of resemblance between the novelist and poet. No writer has appeared in our age (and few have ever existed) who could vie with the author of Marmion in describing battles and marches, and all the terrible grandeur of war, except the author of Waverley. Nor is there any man of original genius and powerful inventive talent as conversant with the military character, and as well schooled in tactics, as the author of Waverley, except the author of Marmion. Both seem to exult in camps, and to warm at the approach of a soldier. In every warlike scene that awes and agitates, or dazzles and inspires, the poet triumphs; but where any effect is to be produced by dwelling on the minutiæ of military habits and discipline, or exhibiting the blended hues of individual humour and professional peculiarity, as they present themselves in the mess-room or the guard-room, every advantage is on the side of the novelist. I might illustrate this position by tracing all the gradations of character marked out in the novels, from the Baron of Bradwardine to Tom Halliday: but the examples are too well known to require enumeration, and too generally admired to stand in need of panegyric. Both writers, then, must have bestowed a greater attention on military subjects, and have mixed more frequently in the society of soldiers, than is usual with persons not educated to the profession of arms.

"It may be asked why we should take for granted that the writer of these novels is not himself a member of the military profession? The conjecture is a little improbable, if we have been right in concluding that the minuteness and multiplicity of our author's legal details are the fruit of his own study and practice; although the same person may certainly, at different periods of life, put on the helmet and the wig, the gorget and the band; attend courts and lie in trenches; head a charge and lead a cause. I cannot help suspecting, however, (it is with the greatest diffidence I venture the remark,) that in those warlike recitals which so strongly interest the great body of readers, an army critic would discover several particulars that savour more of the amateur than of the practised campaigner. It is not from any technical impropriety (if such exist) that I derive this observation, but, on the contrary, from a too great minuteness and over-curious diligence, at times perceptible in the military details; which, amidst a seeming fluency and familiarity, betray, I think, here and there, the lurking vestiges of labour and contrivance, like the marks of pickaxes in an artificial grotto. The accounts of operations in the field, if not more circumstantial than a professional author would have made them, are occasionally circumstantial on points which such an author would have thought it idle to dwell upon. A writer who derived his knowledge of war from experience would, no doubt, like the Author of Waverley, delight in shaping out imaginary manœuvres, or in filling up the traditional outline of those martial enterprises and conflicts, which have found a place in history; perhaps, too, he would dwell on these parts of his narrative a little longer than was strictly necessary; but in describing (for example) the advance of a party of soldiers, threatened by an ambuscade, he would scarcely think it worth while to relate at large that the captain 'reformed his line of march, commanded his soldiers to unsling their firelocks and fix their bayonets, and formed an advanced and rear-guard, each consisting of a non-commissioned officer and two privates, who received strict orders to keep an alert look-out:' or that when the enemy appeared, 'he ordered the rear-guard to join the centre, and both to close up to the advance, doubling his files, so as to occupy with his column the whole practicable part of the road,' &c. Again, in representing a defeated corps retiring and pressed by the enemy, he would probably never think of recording (as our novelist does in his incomparable narrative of the engagement at Drumclog) that the commanding officer gave such directions as these—'Let Allan form the regiment, and do you two retreat up the hill in two bodies, each halting alternately as the other falls back. I'll keep the rogues in check with the rear-guard, making a stand and facing from time to time.' I do not offer these observations for the purpose of depreciating a series of military pictures, which have never been surpassed in richness, animation, and distinctness; I will own, too, that such details as I have pointed out are the fittest that could be selected for the generality of novel-readers; I merely contend that a writer practically acquainted with war would either have passed over these circumstances as too common to require particular mention, or if he had thought it necessary

to enlarge upon these, would have dwelt with proportionate minuteness on incidents of a less ordinary kind, which the recollections of a soldier would have readily supplied, and his imagination would have rested on with complacency. He would, in short, have left as little undone for the military, as the present author has for the legal part of his narratives. But the most ingenious writer, who attempts to discourse with technical familiarity on arts or pursuits with which he is not habitually conversant, will too surely fall into a superfluous particularity on common and trivial points, proportioned to his deficiency in those nicer details which imply practical knowledge." . . . . . .

'The prince of darkness is a gentleman.'*

"Another point of resemblance between the Author of Waverley and him of Flodden Field is that both are unquestionably men of good society. Of the anonymous writer I infer this from his works; of the poet it is unnecessary to deduce such a character from his writings, because they are not anonymous. I am the more inclined to dwell upon this merit in the novelist, on account of its rarity; for among the whole multitude of authors, well or ill educated, who devote themselves to poetry or to narrative or dramatic fiction, how few there are who give any proof in their works, of the refined taste, the instinctive sense of propriety, the clear spirit of honour, nay, of the familiar acquaintance with conventional forms of good-breeding, which are essential to the character of a gentleman! Even of the small number who, in a certain degree, possess these qualifications, how rarely do we find one who can so conduct his fable, and so order his dialogue throughout, that nothing shall be found either repugnant to honourable feelings or inconsistent with polished manners! How constantly, even in the best works of fiction, are we disgusted with such offences against all generous principle, as the reading of letters by those for whom they were not intended; taking advantage of accidents to overhear private conversation; revealing what in honour should have remained secret; plotting against men as enemies, and at the same time making use of their services; dishonest practices on the passions or sensibilities of women by their admirers; falsehoods, not always indirect; and an endless variety of low artifices, which appear to be thought quite legitimate if carried on through subordinate agents. And all these knaveries are assigned to characters which the reader is expected to honour with his sympathy, or at least to receive into favour before the story concludes.

"The sins against propriety in manners are as frequent and as glaring. I do not speak of the hoyden vivacity, harlot tenderness, and dancing-school affability, with which vulgar novel-writers always deck out their countesses and principessas, chevaliers, dukes, and marquises; but it would be easy to produce, from authors of a better class, abundant instances of bookish and laborious pleasantry, of pert and insipid gossip or mere slang, the wrecks, perhaps, of an obsolete fashionable dialect, set down as the brilliant conversation of a witty and elegant society; incredible outrages on the common decorum of life, represented as traits of eccentric humour; familiar raillery pushed to downright rudeness; affectation or ill-breeding over-coloured so as to become insupportable insolence; extravagant rants on the most delicate topics indulged in before all the world; expressions freely interchanged between gentlemen, which, by the customs of that class, are neither used nor tolerated; and quarrels carried on most bombastically and abusively, even to mortal defiance, without a thought bestowed upon the numbers, sex, nerves, or discretion of the bystanders.

"You will perceive that in recapitulating the offences of other writers, I have pronounced an indirect eulogium on the Author of Waverley. No man, I think, has a clearer view of what is just and honourable in principle and conduct, or possesses in a higher degree that elegant taste, and that chivalrous generosity of feeling, which, united with exact judgment, give an author the power of comprehending and expressing, not merely the right and fit, but the graceful and exalted in human action. As an illustration of these remarks, a somewhat homely one perhaps, let me call to your recollection the incident, so wild and extravagant in itself, of Sir Piercie Shafton's elopement with the miller's daughter. In the address and feeling with which the author has displayed the high-minded delicacy of Queen Elizabeth's courtier to the unguarded village nymph, in his brief reflections arising out of this part of the narrative, and indeed in his whole conception and management of the adventure, I do not know whether the moralist or the gentleman is most to be admired: it is impossible to praise too warmly either the sound taste, or the virtuous sentiment, which have imparted so much grace and interest to such a hazardous episode.

"It may, I think, be generally affirmed, on a review of all the six-and-thirty volumes, in which this author has related the adventures of some twenty or more heroes and heroines, (without counting second-rate personages,) that there is not an unhandsome action or degrading sentiment recorded of any person who is recommended to the full esteem of the reader. To be blameless on this head, is one of the strongest proofs a writer can give of honourable principles implanted by education and refreshed by good society.

"The correctness in morals is scarcely more remarkable than the refinement and propriety in manners, by which these novels are distinguished. Where the character of a gentleman is introduced, we generally find it supported without affectation or constraint, and often with so much truth, animation, and dignity, that we forget ourselves into a longing to behold and converse with the accomplished creature of imagination. It is true that the volatile and elegant man of wit and pleasure, and the gracefully fantastic petite-maitresse, are a species of character scarcely ever attempted, and even the few sketches we meet with in this style are not worthy of so great a master. But the aristocratic country gentleman, the ancient lady of quality, the gallant cavalier, the punctilious young soldier, and the jocund veteran, whose high mind is mellowed, not subdued by years, are drawn with matchless vigour, grace, and refinement. There is, in all these creations, a spirit of gentility, not merely of that negative kind which avoids giving offence, but of a strong, commanding, and pervading quality, blending unimpaired with the richest humour and wildest eccentricity, and communicating an interest and an air of originality to characters which, without it, would be wearisome and insipid, or would fade into commonplace. In Waverley, for example, if it were not for this powerful charm, the severe but warm-hearted Major Melville and the generous Colonel Talbot, would become mere ordinary machines for carrying on the plot; and Sir Everard, the hero of an episode that might be coveted by Mackenzine, would encounter the frowns of every impatient reader, for unprofitably retarding the story at its first outset.

"But without dwelling on minor instances, I will refer you at once to the character of Colonel Mannering, as one of the most striking representations I am acquainted with, of a gentleman in feelings and in manners, in habits, taste, predilections; nay, if the expression may be ventured, a gentleman even in prejudices, passions, and caprices. Had it been less than all I have described; had any refinement, any nicety of touch, been wanting, the whole portrait must have been coarse, common, and repulsive, hardly distinguishable from the moody father and domineering chieftain of every hackneyed romance-writer. But it was no vulgar hand that drew the lineaments of Colonel Mannering: no ordinary mind could have conceived that exquisite combination of sternness and sensibility, injurious haughtiness and chivalrous courtesy: the promptitude, decision, and imperious spirit of a military disciplinarian; the romantic caprices of an untameable enthusiast; generosity impatient of limit or impediment; pride scourged but not subdued by remorse; and a cherished philosophical severity, maintaining ineffectual conflicts with native tenderness and constitutional irritability. Supposing that it had entered into the thoughts of an inferior writer to describe a temper of mind at once impetuous, kind, arrogant, affectionate, stern, sensitive, deliberate, fanciful; supposing even that he had had the skill to combine these different qualities harmoniously and naturally, yet how could he have attained the Shakesperian felicity of those delicate and unambitious touches, by which this author shapes and chisels out individual character from general nature, and imparts a distinct personality to the creature of his invention? Such are (for example) the slight tinge of superstition, contracted by the romantic young Astrologer in his adventure at Ellangowan, not wholly effaced in maturer life, and extending itself by contagion to the mind of his daughter," &c. &c.

—It would have gratified Mr. Adolphus could he have known, when he penned these pages, a circumstance which the reperusal of them brings to my memory. When Guy Mannering was first published, the Ettrick Shepherd said to Professor Wilson, "I have done wi' doubts now. Colonel Mannering is just Walter Scott, painted by himself." This was repeated to James Ballantyne, and he again mentioned it to Scott—who smiled in approbation of the Shepherd's shrewdness, and often afterwards, when the printer expressed an opinion in which he could not concur, would cut him short with—"James—James—you'll find that Colonel

* *King Lear*, Act III. Sc. 4.

Mannering has laid down the law on this point." ——I resume my extract—

"All the productions I am acquainted with, both of the poet and of the prose writer, recommend themselves by a native piety and goodness, not generally predominant in modern works of imagination; and which, where they do appear, are too often disfigured by eccentricity, pretension, or bad taste. In the works before us there is a constant tendency to promote the desire of excellence in ourselves, and the love of it in our neighbours, by making us think honourably of our general nature. Whatever kindly or charitable affection, whatever principle of manly and honest ambition exists within us, is roused and stimulated by the perusal of these writings; our passions are won to the cause of justice, purity, and self-denial; and the old, indissoluble ties that bind us to country, kindred, and birth-place, appear to strengthen as we read, and brace themselves more firmly about the heart and imagination. Both writers, although peculiarly happy in their conception of all chivalrous and romantic excellencies, are still more distinguished by their deep and true feeling and expressive delineation of the graces and virtues proper to domestic life. The gallant, elevated, and punctilious character which a Frenchman contemplates in speaking of 'un honnête homme,' is singularly combined, in these authors, with the genial, homely good qualities, that win from a Caledonian the exclamation of 'honest man!' But the crown of their merits, as virtuous and moral writers, is the manly and exemplary spirit with which, upon all seasonable occasions, they pay honour and homage to religion, ascribing to it its just pre-eminence among the causes of human happiness, and dwelling on it as the only certain source of pure and elevated thoughts, and upright, benevolent, and magnanimous actions.

"This then is common to the books of both writers: that they furnish a direct and distinguished contrast to the atrabilious gloom of some modern works of genius, and the wanton, but not artless levity of others. They yield a memorable, I trust an immortal, accession to the evidences of a truth not always fashionable in literature, that the mind of man may put forth all its bold luxuriance of original thought, strong feeling, and vivid imagination, without being loosed from any sacred and social bond, or pruned of any legitimate affection; and that the Muse is indeed a 'heavenly goddess,' and not a graceless, lawless runagate,

'ἀφρήτωρ, ἀθέμιστος, ἀνέστιος' —

"Good sense, the sure foundation of excellence in all the arts, is another leading characteristic of these productions. Assuming the author of Waverley and the author of Marmion to be the same person, it would be difficult in our times to find a second equally free from affectation, prejudice, and every other distortion or depravity of judgment, whether arising from ignorance, weakness, or corruption of morals. It is astonishing that so voluminous and successful a writer should so seldom be betrayed into any of those 'fantastic tricks' which, in such a man, make 'the angels weep,' and (*è converso*) the critics laugh. He adopts no fashionable cant, colloquial, philosophical, or literary; he takes no delight in being unintelligible; he does not amuse himself by throwing out those fine sentimental and metaphysical threads which float upon the air, and tease and tickle the passengers, but present no palpable substance to their grasp; he aims at no beauties that 'scorn the eye of vulgar light;' he is no dealer in paradoxes; no affecter of new doctrines in taste or morals; he has no eccentric sympathies or antipathies; no maudlin philanthropy, or impertinent cynicism; no non-descript hobby-horse; and with all his matchless energy and originality of mind, he is content to admire popular books, and enjoy popular pleasures; to cherish those opinions which experience has sanctioned; to reverence those institutions which antiquity has hallowed; and to enjoy, admire, cherish, and reverence all these, with the same plainness, simplicity, and sincerity as our ancestors did of old.

. . . . . .

"I cannot help dwelling for a moment on the great similarity of manner apparent in the female portraits of the two writers. The pictures of their heroines are executed with a peculiar fineness, delicacy, and minuteness of touch, and with a care at times almost amounting to timidity, so that they generally appear more highly finished, but less boldly and strikingly thrown out, than the figures with which they are surrounded. Their elegance and purity are always admirable, and are happily combined, in most instances, with unaffected ease and natural spirit. Strong practical sense is their most prevailing characteristic, unaccompanied by any repulsive air of selfishness, pedantry, or unfeminine harshness. Few writers have ever evinced, in so strong a degree, as the authors of Marmion and Waverley, that manly regard, and dignified but enthusiastic devotion, which may be expressed by the term loyalty to the fair sex, the honourable attribute of chivalrous and romantic ages. If they touch on the faults of womankind, their satire is playful, not contemptuous; and their acquaintance with female manners, graces, and foibles, is apparently drawn, not from libertine experience, but from the guileless familiarity of domestic life.

"Of all human ties and connexions there is none so frequently brought in view, or adorned with so many touches of the most affecting eloquence by both these writers, as the pure and tender relation of father and daughter. Douglas and Ellen in the Lady of the Lake will immediately occur to you as a distinguished example. Their mutual affection and solicitude; their pride in each other's excellencies; the parent's regret of the obscurity to which fate has doomed his child; and the daughter's self-devotion to her father's welfare and safety, constitute the highest interest of the poem, and that which is most uniformly sustained; nor does this or any other romance of the same author contain a finer stroke of passion than the over boiling of Douglas's wrath, when, mixed as a stranger with the crowd at Stirling, he sees his daughter's favourite Lufra chastised by the royal huntsman.

"In Rokeby the filial attachment and duteous anxieties of Matilda form the leading feature of her character, and the chief source of her distresses. The intercourse between King Arthur and his daughter Gyneth, in The Bridal of Triermain, is neither long, nor altogether amicable; but the monarch's feelings on first beholding that beautiful 'slip of wilderness,' and his manner of receiving her before the queen and court, are too forcibly and naturally described to be omitted in this enumeration.

"Of all novels, there are at most but two or three in which a fond father and affectionate daughter may not be pointed out among the principal characters, and in which the main interest of many scenes does not arise out of that paternal and filial relation. What a beautiful display of natural feeling, under every turn of circumstances that can render the situations of child and parent agonizing or delightful, runs through the history of David Deans and his two daughters! How affecting is the tale of Leicester's unhappy Countess, after we have seen her forsaken father consuming away with moody sorrow in his joyless manor-house! How exquisite are the grouping and contrast of Isaac, the kind but sordid Jew, and his heroic Rebecca, of the buckram Baron of Bradwardine and the sensitive Rose, the reserved but ardent Mannering, and the flighty coquette Julia! In the Antiquary, and Bride of Lammermoor, anxiety is raised to the most painful height by the spectacle of father and daughter exposed together to imminent and frightful peril. The heroines in Rob Roy and the Black Dwarf are duteous and devoted daughters, the one of an unfortunate, the other of an unworthy parent. In the whole story of Kenilworth there is nothing that more strongly indicates a master-hand than the paternal carefulness and apprehensions of the churl Foster; and among the most striking scenes in A Legend of Montrose, is that in which Sir Duncan Campbell is attracted by an obscure yearning of the heart toward his unknown child, the supposed orphan of Darnlinvarach."

It would be impossible for one to follow out Mr. Adolphus in his most ingenious tracings of petty coincidence in thought, and, above all, in expression, between the poet of Marmion and the novelist of Waverley. His apology for the minuteness of his detail in that part of his work, is, however, too graceful to be omitted:—"It cannot, I think, appear frivolous or irrelevant, in the inquiry we are pursuing, to dwell on these minute coincidences. Unimportant indeed they are if looked upon as subjects of direct criticism; but considered with reference to our present purpose, they resemble those light substances which, floating on the trackless sea, discover the true setting of some mighty current: they are the buoyant driftwood which betrays the hidden communication of two great poetic oceans."

I conclude with re-quoting a fragment from one of the quaint tracts of Sir Thomas Urquhart. The following is the epigraph of Mr. Adolphus's 5th Letter:—

"O with how great liveliness did he represent the conditions of all manner of men!—From the overweening monarch to the peevish swaine, through all intermediate degrees of the superficial courtier or proud warrior, dissembled churchman, doting old man, cozening lawyer, lying traveler, covetous merchant, rude seaman, pedantick scolar, the amorous shepheard, envious artisan, vain-

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glorious master and tricky servant; —— He had all the jeers, squibs, flouts, bits, quips, taunts, whims, jests, flinches, gybes, mokes, jerks, with all the several kinds of equivocations and other sophistical captions, that could properly be adapted to the person by whose representation he intended to inveagle the company into a fit of mirth!"

I have it not in my power to produce the letter in which Scott conveyed to Heber his opinion of this work. I know, however, that it ended with a request that he should present Mr. Adolphus with his thanks for the handsome terms in which his poetical efforts had been spoken of throughout, and request him, in the name of the *author of Marmion*, not to revisit Scotland without reserving a day for Abbotsford; and the *Eidolon* of the author of *Waverley* was made, a few months afterwards, to speak as follows in the Introduction to the Fortunes of Nigel:—"These letters to the member for the University of Oxford, show the wit, genius, and delicacy of the author, which I heartily with to see engaged on a subject of more importance; and show, besides, that the preservation of my character of *incognito* has engaged early talent in the discussion of a curious question of evidence. But a cause, however ingeniously pleaded, is not therefore gained. You may remember the neatly-wrought chain of circumstantial evidence, so artificially brought forward to prove Sir Philip Francis's title to the Letters of Junius, seemed at first irrefragable; yet the influence of the reasoning has passed away, and Junius, in the general opinion, is as much unknown as ever. But on this subject I will not be soothed or provoked into saying one word more. To say who I am not, would be one step towards saying who I am; and as I desire not, any more than a certain Justice of Peace mentioned by Shenstone, the noise or report such things make in the world, I shall continue to be silent on a subject which, in my opinion, is very undeserving the noise that has been made about it, and still more unworthy of the serious employment of such ingenuity as has been displayed by the young letter-writer."*

CHAPTER LIV.

NEW BUILDINGS AT ABBOTSFORD—CHIEFSWOOD—WILLIAM ERSKINE—LETTER TO COUNTESS PURGSTALL—PROGRESS OF THE PIRATE—PRIVATE LETTERS IN THE REIGN OF JAMES I.—COMMENCEMENT OF THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL—SECOND SALE OF COPYRIGHTS—CONTRACT FOR "FOUR WORKS OF FICTION"—ENORMOUS PROFITS OF THE NOVELIST, AND EXTRAVAGANT PROJECTS OF CONSTABLE—THE PIRATE PUBLISHED—LORD BYRON'S CAIN, DEDICATED TO SCOTT—AFFAIR OF THE BEACON NEWSPAPER—FRANCK'S NORTHERN MEMOIRS—AND NOTES OF LORD FOUNTAIN-HALL, PUBLISHED.—1821.

When Sir Walter returned from London, he brought with him Mr. Blore's detailed plans for the completion of Abbotsford; the wall and gateway of the court in front, and the beautiful open screen-work of stone connecting the house with the garden; this last having been originally devised by himself, and constituting certainly the most graceful feature about the edifice. The foundations towards the river were forthwith laid, and some little progress was made during the autumn; but he was very reluctant to authorize the demolition of the rustic porch of the old cottage, with its luxuriant overgrowth of roses and jessamines; kept it standing for months after his work-people complained of the obstruction—and indeed could not make up his mind to sign the death-warrant of this favourite bower until winter had robbed it of its beauties. He then made an excursion from Edinburgh, on purpose to be present at its downfall—saved as many of the creepers as seemed likely to survive removal, and planted them with his own hands, about a somewhat similar porch, erected expressly for their reception, at his daughter Sophia's little cottage of Chiefswood.

* See *Waverley Novels*, vol. xxvi., p. 34.

There my wife and I spent this summer and autumn of 1821—the first of several seasons, which will ever dwell on my memory as the happiest of my life. We were near enough Abbotsford to partake as often as we liked of its brilliant and constantly varying society; yet could do so without being exposed to the worry and exhaustion of spirit which the daily reception of new comers entailed upon all the family, except Sir Walter himself. But, in truth, even he was not always proof against the annoyances connected with such a style of open-house-keeping. Even his temper sunk sometimes under the solemn applauses of learned dulness, the vapid raptures of painted and periwigged dowagers, the horseleech avidity with which underbred foreigners urged their questions, and the pompous simpers of condescending magnates. When sore beset at home in this way, he would every now and then discover that he had some very particular business to attend to on an outlying part of his estate, and craving the indulgence of his guests overnight, appear at the cabin in the glen before its inhabitants were astir in the morning. The clatter of Sibyl Grey's hoofs, the yelping of Mustard and Spice, and his own joyous shout of *reveillée* under our windows, were the signal that he had burst his toils, and meant for that day to "take his ease in his inn." On descending, he was to be found seated with all his dogs and ours about him, under a spreading ash that overshadowed half the bank between the cottage and the brook, pointing the edge of his wood-man's axe for himself, and listening to Tom Purdie's lecture touching the plantation that most needed thinning. After breakfast, he would take possession of a dressing-room up stairs, and write a chapter of *The Pirate*; and then, having made up and despatched his packet for Mr. Ballantyne, away to join Purdie wherever the foresters were at work—and sometimes to labour among them as strenuously as John Swanston himself—until it was time either to rejoin his own party at Abbotsford, or the quiet circle of the cottage. When his guests were few and friendly, he often made them come over and meet him at Chiefswood in a body towards evening; and surely he never appeared to more amiable advantage than when helping his young people with their little arrangements upon such occasions. He was ready with all sorts of devices to supply the wants of a narrow establishment; he used to delight particularly in sinking the wine in a well under the *brae* ere he went out, and hawling up the basket just before dinner was announced—this primitive process being, he said, what he had always practised when a young house-keeper, and in his opinion far superior in its results to any application of ice; and, in the same spirit, whenever the weather was sufficiently genial, he voted for dining out of doors altogether, which at once got rid of the inconvenience of very small rooms, and made it natural and easy for the gentlemen to help the ladies, so that the paucity of servants went for nothing. Mr. Rose used to amuse himself with likening the scene and the party to the closing act of one of those little French dramas, where "Monsieur le Comte," and "Madame la Comtesse" appear feasting at a village bridal under the trees; but in truth, our "M. le Comte" was only trying to live over again for a few simple hours his own old life of Lasswade.

When circumstances permitted, he usually spent one evening at least in the week at our little cottage; and almost as frequently he did the like with the Fergusons, to whose table he could bring chance visitors, when he pleased, with equal freedom as to his daughter's. Indeed it seemed to be much a matter of chance, any fine day when there had been no alarming invasion of the Southron, whether the three families (which, in fact, made but one) should dine at Abbotsford, at Huntley Burn, or at Chiefswood; and at none of them was the party considered quite complete, unless it included also Mr. Laidlaw. Death has laid a heavy hand upon that circle—as happy a circle I believe as ever met. Bright eyes now closed in dust, gay voices for ever

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silenced, seem to haunt me as I write. With three exceptions, they are all gone. Even since the last of these volumes was finished, she whom I may now sadly record as, next to Sir Walter himself, the chief ornament and delight of all those simple meetings—she to whose love I owed my own place in them—Scott's eldest daughter, the one of all his children who in countenance, mind, and manners, most resembled himself, and who indeed was as like him in all things as a gentle innocent woman can ever be to a great man, deeply tried and skilled in the struggles and perplexities of active life—she, too, is no more. And in the very hour that saw her laid in her grave, the only other female survivor, her dearest friend, Margaret Ferguson, breathed her last also.—But enough—and more than I intended—I must resume the story of Abbotsford.

During several weeks of that delightful summer, Scott had under his roof Mr. William Erskine and two of his daughters; this being, I believe, their first visit to Tweedside since the death of Mrs. Erskine in September, 1819. He had probably made a point of having his friend with him at this particular time, because he was desirous of having the benefit of his advice and corrections from day to day as he advanced in the composition of the Pirate—with the localities of which romance the Sheriff of Orkney and Zetland was of course thoroughly familiar. At all events, the constant and eager delight with which Erskine watched the progress of the tale, has left a deep impression on my memory; and indeed I heard so many of its chapters first read from the MS. by him, that I can never open the book now without thinking I hear his voice. Sir Walter used to give him at breakfast the pages he had written that morning; and very commonly, while he was again at work in his study, Erskine would walk over to Chiefswood, that he might have the pleasure of reading them aloud to my wife and me under our favourite tree, before the packet had to be sealed up for the printer, or rather for the transcriber in Edinburgh. I cannot paint the delight and the pride with which he acquitted himself on such occasions. The little artifice of his manner was merely superficial, and was wholly forgotten as tender affection and admiration, fresh as the impulses of childhood, glistened in his eye, and trembled in his voice.

This reminds me that I have not yet attempted any sketch of the person and manners of Scott's most intimate friend. Their case was no contradiction to the old saying, that the most attached comrades are often very unlike each other in character and temperament. The mere physical contrast was as strong as could well be, and this is not unworthy of notice here; for Erskine was, I think, the only man in whose society Scott took great pleasure, during the more vigorous part of his life, that had neither constitution nor inclination for any of the rough bodily exercises in which he himself delighted. The Counsellor (as Scott always called him) was a little man of feeble make, who seemed unhappy when his pony got beyond a foot-pace, and had never, I should suppose, addicted himself to any out-of-doors sport whatever. He would, I fancy, have as soon thought of slaying his own mutton as of handling a fowling-piece: he used to shudder when he saw a party equipped for coursing, as if murder were in the wind; but the cool meditative angler was in his eyes the abomination of abominations. His small elegant features, hectic cheek, and soft hazel eyes, were the index of the quick sensitive gentle spirit within. He had the warm heart of a woman, her generous enthusiasm, and some of her weaknesses. A beautiful landscape, or a fine strain of music, would send the tears rolling down his cheek; and though capable, I have no doubt, of exhibiting, had his duty called him to do so, the highest spirit of a hero or a martyr, he had very little command over his nerves amidst circumstances such as men of ordinary mould (to say nothing of iron fabrics like Scott's) regard with indifference. He would dismount to lead his horse down what his friend hardly perceived to be a descent at all; grew pale at a precipice; and, unlike the White Lady of Avenel, would go a long way round for a bridge.

Erskine had as yet been rather unfortunate in his professional career, and thought a sheriffship by no means the kind of advancement due to his merits, and which his connexion might naturally have secured for him. These circumstances had, at the time when I first observed him, tinged his demeanour; he had come to intermingle a certain wayward snappishness now and then with his forensic exhibitions, and in private seemed inclined (though altogether incapable of abandoning the Tory party) to say bitter things of people in high places; but with these exceptions, never was benevolence towards all the human race more lively and overflowing than his evidently was, even when he considered himself as one who had reason to complain of his luck in the world. Now, however, these little asperities had disappeared; one great real grief had cast its shadow over him, and submissive to the chastisement of heaven, he had no longer any thoughts for the petty misusage of mankind. Scott's apprehension was, that his ambition was extinguished with his resentment; and he was now using every endeavour, in connexion with their common friend, the Lord Advocate Rae, to procure for Erskine that long-coveted seat on the bench, about which the subdued widower himself had ceased to occupy his mind. By and by these views were realized to Scott's high satisfaction, and for a brief season with the happiest effect on Erskine's own spirits; but I shall not anticipate the sequel.

Meanwhile he shrunk from the collisions of general society in Edinburgh, and lived almost exclusively in his own little circle of intimates. His conversation, though somewhat precise and finical on the first impression, was rich in knowledge. His literary ambition, active and aspiring at the outset, had long before this time merged in his profound veneration for Scott; but he still read a great deal, and did so as much I believe with a view to assisting Scott by hints and suggestions, as for his own amusement. He had much of his friend's tact in extracting the picturesque from old, and, generally speaking, dull books; and in bringing out his stores he often showed a great deal of quaint humour and sly wit.

Scott, on his side, respected, trusted, and loved him, much as an affectionate husband does the wife who gave him her heart in youth, and thinks his thoughts rather than her own in the evening of life; he soothed, cheered, and sustained Erskine habitually; I do not believe a more entire and perfect confidence ever subsisted than theirs was and always had been in each other; and to one who had duly observed the creeping jealousies of human nature, it might perhaps seem doubtful on which side the balance of real nobility of heart and character, as displayed in their connexion at the time of which I am speaking, ought to be cast.

Among the common friends of their young days, of whom they both delighted to speak—and always spoke with warm and equal affection—was the sister of their friend Cranstoun, the confidant of Scott's first unfortunate love, whom neither had now seen for a period of more than twenty years. This lady had undergone domestic afflictions more than sufficient to have crushed almost any spirit but her own. Her husband, the Count Purgstall, had died some years before this time, leaving her an only son, a youth of the most amiable disposition, and possessing abilities which, had he lived to develope them, must have secured for him a high station in the annals of genius. This hope of her eyes, the last heir of an illustrious lineage, followed his father to the tomb in the nineteenth year of his age. The desolate Countess was urged by her family in Scotland to return, after this bereavement, to her native country; but she had vowed to her son on his deathbed, that one day her dust should be mingled with his; and no argument could induce her to depart from the resolution of remaining in solitary Styria. By her desire, a valued friend of

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the house of Purgstall, who had been born and bred up on their estates, the celebrated Orientalist, Joseph von Hammer, compiled a little memoir of "The Two Last Counts of Purgstall," which he put forth, in January, 1821, under the title of "Denkmahl," or Monument; and of this work the Countess sent a copy to Sir Walter, (with whom her correspondence had been during several years suspended,) by the hands of her eldest brother, Mr. Henry Cranstoun, who had been visiting her in Styria, and who at this time occupied a villa within a few miles of Abbotsford. Scott's letter of acknowledgment never reached her; and indeed I doubt if it were ever despatched. He appears to have meditated a set of consolatory verses for its conclusion, and the muse not answering his call at the moment, I suspect he had allowed the sheet, which I now transcribe, to fall aside and be lost sight of among his multifarious masses of MS.

To the Countess Purgstall, &c. &c.

"My dear and much valued Friend,

"You cannot imagine how much I was interested and affected by receiving your token of your kind recollection, after the interval of so many years. Your brother Henry breakfasted with me yesterday, and gave me the letter and the book, which served me as a matter of much melancholy reflection for many hours.

"Hardly any thing makes the mind recoil so much upon itself, as the being suddenly and strongly recalled to times long past, and that by the voice of one whom we have so much loved and respected. Do not think I have ever forgotten you, or the many happy days I passed in Frederick Street, in society which fate has separated so far, and for so many years.

"The little volume was particularly acceptable to me, as it acquainted me with many circumstances, of which distance and imperfect communication had left me either entirely ignorant, or had transmitted only inaccurate information.

"Alas! my dear friend, what can the utmost efforts of friendship offer you, beyond the sympathy which, however sincere, must sound like an empty compliment in the ear of affliction. God knows with what willingness I would undertake anything which might afford you the melancholy consolation of knowing how much your old and early friend interests himself in the sad event which has so deeply wounded your peace of mind. The verses, therefore, which conclude this letter, must not be weighed according to their intrinsic value, for the more inadequate they are to express the feelings they would fain convey, the more they show the author's anxious wish to do what may be grateful to you.

"In truth, I have long given up poetry. I have had my day with the public; and being no great believer in poetical immortality, I was very well pleased to rise a winner, without continuing the game, till I was beggared of any credit I had acquired. Besides, I felt the prudence of giving way before the more forcible and powerful genius of Byron. If I were either greedy, or jealous of poetical fame—and both are strangers to my nature—I might comfort myself with the thought, that I would hesitate to strip myself to the contest so fearlessly as Byron does; or to command the wonder and terror of the public, by exhibiting, in my own person, the sublime attitude of the dying gladiator. But with the old frankness of twenty years since, I will fairly own, that this same delicacy of mine may arise more from conscious want of vigour, and inferiority, than from a delicate dislike to the nature of the conflict. At any rate, there is a time for every thing, and without swearing oaths to it, I think my time for poetry has gone by.

"My health suffered horridly last year, I think from over labour and excitation; and though it is now apparently restored to its usual tone, yet during the long and painful disorder, (spasms in the stomach,) and the frightful process of cure, by a prolonged use of calomel, I learned that my frame was made of flesh, and not of iron, a conviction which I will long keep in remembrance, and avoid any occupations, so laborious and agitating, as poetry must be, to be worth any thing.

"In this humour, I often think of passing a few weeks on the continent—a summer vacation if I can—and of course my attraction to Gratz would be very strong. I fear this is the only chance of our meeting in this world, we, who once saw each other daily! For I understand from George and Henry, that there is little chance of your coming here. And when I look around me, and consider how many changes you will see in feature, form, and fashion, amongst all you knew and loved; and how much, no sudden squall, or violent tempest, but the slow and gradual progress of life's long voyage, has severed all the gallant fellowships whom you left spreading their sails to the morning breeze, I really am not sure that you would have much pleasure.

"The gay and wild romance of life is over with all of us. The real, dull, and stern history of humanity has made a far greater progress over our heads; and age, dark and unlovely, has laid his crutch over the stoutest fellow's shoulders. One thing your old society may boast, that they have all run their course with honour, and almost all with distinction; and the brother suppers of Frederick Street have certainly made a very considerable figure in the world, as was to be expected, from her talents under whose auspices they were assembled.

"One of the most pleasant sights which you would see in Scotland, as it now stands, would be your brother George in possession of the most beautiful and romantic place in Clydesdale—Corehouse. I have promised often to go out with him, and assist him with my deep experience as a planter and landscape gardener. I promise you my oaks will outlast my laurels; and I pique myself more upon my compositions for manure than on any other compositions whatsoever to which I was ever accessary. But so much does business of one sort or other engage us both, that we never have been able to fix a time which suited us both; and with the utmost wish to make out the party, perhaps we never may.

"This is a melancholy letter, but it is chiefly so from the sad tone of yours—who have had such real disasters to lament—while mine is only the humorous sadness, which a retrospect on human life is sure to produce on the most prosperous. For my own course of life, I have only to be ashamed of its prosperity, and afraid of its termination; for I have little reason, arguing on the doctrine of chances, to hope that the same good fortune will attend me for ever. I have had an affectionate and promising family, many friends, few unfriends, and I think, no enemies—and more of fame and fortune than mere literature ever produced for a man before.

"I dwell among my own people, and have many whose happiness is dependent on me, and which I study to the best of my power. I trust my temper, which you know is by nature good and easy, has not been spoiled by flattery or prosperity; and therefore I have escaped entirely that irritability of disposition which I think is planted, like the slave in the poet's chariot, to prevent his enjoying his triumph.

"Should things, therefore, change with me—and in these times, or indeed in any times, such change is to be apprehended—I trust I shall be able to surrender these adventitious advantages, as I would my upper dress, as something extremely comfortable, but which I can make shift to do without." . . .

As I may have no occasion hereafter to allude to the early friend with whose sorrows Scott thus sympathized amidst the meridian splendours of his own worldly career, I may take this opportunity of mentioning, that Captain Basil Hall's conjecture of her having been the original of Diana Vernon, appeared to myself from the first chimerical; and that I have since heard those who knew her best in the days of her intercourse with Sir Walter, express the same opinion in the most decided manner. But to return.

While the Pirate was advancing under Mr. Erskine's eye, Scott had even more than the usual allowance of minor literary operations on hand. He edited a reprint of a curious old book, called, "Franck's Northern Memoir, and the Contemplative Angler;" and he also prepared for the press, a volume published soon after, under the title of "Chronological Notes on Scottish Affairs, 1680 to 1701, from the Diary of Lord Fountainhall." The professional writings of that celebrated old lawyer had been much in his hands from his early years, on account of the incidental light which they throw on the events of a most memorable period in Scottish history; and he seems to have contemplated some more considerable selection from his remains, but to have dropped these intentions, on being given to understand that they might interfere with those of Lord Fountainhall's accomplished representative, the present Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, Baronet.

* In communicating this letter to my friend Captain Hall, when he was engaged in his Account of a Visit to Madame de Purgstall during the last months of her life, I suggested to him, in consequence of an expression about Scott's health, that it must have been written in 1820. The date of the "Denkmahl," to which it refers, is, however, sufficient evidence that I ought to have said 1821.

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It is, however, to be regretted, that Sir Thomas's promise of a Life of his eminent ancestor has not yet been redeemed.

In August appeared the volume of the Novelist's Library, containing Scott's Life of Smollett; and it being now ascertained that John Ballantyne had died a debtor, the editor offered to proceed with this series of prefaces, on the footing that the whole profits of the work should go to his widow. Mr. Constable, whose health was now beginning to break, had gone southwards in quest of more genial air, and was at Hastings when he heard of this proposition. He immediately wrote to me, entreating me to represent to Sir Walter that the undertaking having been coldly received at first, was unlikely to grow in favour if continued on the same plan—that in his opinion the bulk of the volumes, and the small type of their text, had been unwisely chosen for a work of mere entertainment, and could only be suitable for one of reference; that Ballantyne's Novelist's Library, therefore, ought to be stopped at once, and another in a lighter shape, to range with the late collected edition of the first series of the Waverley Romances, announced with his own name as publisher, and Scott's as editor. He proposed at the same time to commence the issue of a Select Library of English Poetry, with prefaces and a few notes by the same hand; and calculating that each of these collections should extend to twenty-five volumes, and that the publication of both might be concluded within two years—'the writing of the prefaces, &c., forming perhaps an occasional relief from more important labours'!—the bookseller offered to pay their editor in all the sum of £6000; a small portion of which sum, as he hinted, would undoubtedly be more than Mrs. John Ballantyne could ever hope to derive from the prosecution of her husband's last publishing adventure. Various causes combined to prevent the realization of these magnificent projects. Scott now, as at the beginning of his career of speculation, had views about what a collection of English Poetry should be, in which even Constable could not, on consideration, be made to concur; and I have already explained the coldness with which he regarded further attempts upon our Elder Novelists. The Ballantyne Library crept on to the tenth volume, and was then dropt abruptly; and the double negotiation with Constable was never renewed.

Lady Louisa Stuart had not, I fancy, read Scott's Lives of the Novelists, until, some years after this time, they were collected into two little piratical duodecimos by a Parisian bookseller; and on her then expressing her admiration of them, together with her astonishment that the speculation, of which they formed a part, should have attracted little notice of any sort, he answered as follows:—"I am delighted they afford any entertainment, for they are rather flimsily written, being done merely to oblige a friend: they were yoked to a great, ill-conditioned, lubberly, double-columned book, which they were as useful to tug along as a set of fleas would be to draw a mail coach. It is very difficult to answer your ladyship's curious question concerning change of taste; but, whether in young or old, it takes place insensibly without the parties being aware of it. A grand aunt of my own, Mrs. Keith of Ravelstone, who was a person of some condition, being a daughter of Sir John Swinton of Swinton—lived with unabated vigour of intellect to a very advanced age. She was very fond of reading, and enjoyed it to the last of her long life. One day she asked me, when we happened to be alone together, whether I had ever seen Mrs. Behn's novels?—I confessed the charge.—Whether I could get her a sight of them?—I said, with some hesitation, I believed I could; but that I did not think she would like either the manners, or the language, which approached too near that of Charles II.'s time to be quite proper reading. 'Nevertheless,' said the good old lady, 'I remember them being so much admired, and being so much interested in them myself, that I wish to look at them again.' To hear was to obey. So I sent Mrs. Aphra Behn, curiously sealed up, with 'private and confidential' on the packet, to my gay old grand-aunt. The next time I saw her afterwards, she gave me back Aphra, properly wrapped up, with nearly these words:—'Take back your bonny Mrs. Behn; and if you will take my advice, put her in the fire, for I found it impossible to get through the very first novel. But is it not,' she said, 'a very odd thing, that I, an old woman of eighty and upwards, sitting alone, feel myself ashamed to read a book which, sixty years ago, I have heard read aloud for the amusement of large circles, consisting of the first and most creditable society in London.' This, of course, was owing to the gradual improvement of the national taste and delicacy. The change that brings into and throws out of fashion particular styles of composition, is something of the same kind. It does not signify what the greater or less merit of the book is;—the reader, as Tony Lumpkin says, must be in a concatenation accordingly—the fashion, or the general taste, must have prepared him to be pleased, or put him on his guard against it. It is much like *dress*. If Clarissa should appear before a modern party in her lace ruffles and head dress, or Lovelace in his wig, however genteelly powdered, I am afraid they would make no conquests; the fashion which makes conquests of us in other respects is very powerful in literary composition, and adds to the effect of some works, while in others it forms their sole merit."

Among other miscellaneous work of this autumn, Scott amused some leisure hours with writing a series of "Private Letters," supposed to have been discovered in the repositories of a Noble English Family, and giving a picture of manners in town and country during the early part of the reign of James I. These letters were printed as fast as he penned them, in a handsome quarto form, and he furnished the margin with a running commentary of notes, drawn up in the character of a disappointed chaplain, a keen Whig, or rather Radical, overflowing on all occasions with spleen against Monarchy and Aristocracy. When the printing had reached the 72d page, however, he was told candidly by Erskine, by James Ballantyne, and also by myself, that, however clever his imitation of the epistolary style of the period in question, he was throwing away in these letters the materials of as good a romance as he had ever penned; and a few days afterwards he said to me—patting Sibyl's neck till she danced under him—"You were all quite right: if the letters had passed for genuine they would have found favour only with a few musty antiquaries, and if the joke were detected, there was not story enough to carry it off. I shall burn the sheets, and give you Bonny King Jamie and all his tail in the old shape, as soon as I can get Captain Goffe within view of the gallows."

Such was the origin of the "Fortunes of Nigel." As one set of the uncompleted Letters has been preserved, I shall here insert a specimen of them, in which the reader will easily recognise the germ of more than one scene of the novel.

"*Jenkin Harman to the Lord* ——.

"My Lord,

"Towching this new mishappe of Sir Thomas, whereof your Lordshippe makes querie of me, I wolde hartilie that I could, truth and my bounden dutie alweys firste satisfied, make suche answer as were fullie plesaunte to me to write, or unto your Lordshippe to reade. But what remedy? young men will have stirring bloodes; and the courtier-like gallants of the time will be gamesome and dangerous, as they have bene in dayes past. I think your Lordshippe is so wise, as to caste one eye backe to your own more juvenile time, whileat you looke forward with the other upon this mischaunce, which, upon my lyfe, will be founde to be no otherwise harmful to Sir Thomas than as it shews him an hastie Hotspur of the day, suddenlie checking at whatsoever may seem to amirche his honour. As I am a trew man, and your Lordship's poore kinsman and bounden servant, I think ther lives not a gentleman more trew to his friende than Sir Thomas; and although ye be but brothers uterine, yet so dearly doth he holde your favour, that his father, were the gode knight alyve, should not have more swaye with him than shalle your Lordship; and, also, it is no kindly part to sow discord betwene brethrene; for, as the holy Psalmist saythe, '*Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres*,' &c. And moreover, it nedes not to tell your Lordshippe that Sir Thomas is suddene in his anger; and it was but

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on Wednesday last that he said to me, with moche distemperature,—Master Jenkin, I be tolde that ye meddle and make betwene me and my Lorde my brother; wherfore, take this for feyr warninge, that when I shall fynde you so dooying, I will incontinent put my dagger to the hilte in you:—and this was spoken with all ernestness of visage and actioun, grasping of his poinard's handle, as one who wolde presentlie make his words good. Surely my Lord, it is not fair carriage towarde your pore kinsman if anie out of your house make such reports of me, and of that which I have written to you in sympleness of herte, and in obedience to your commandement, which is my law on this matter. Truely, my Lord, I wolde this was well looked to, otherweys my rewarde for trew service might be to handsell with my herte's blode the steel of a Milan poignado. Natheless, I will procede with my mater, fal back fal edge, trustyng all utterly in the singleness of my integretie, and in your Lordshippe's discretioun.

"My Lorde, the braule which hath befallen chaunced this waye, and not otherwise. It hap'd that one Raines, the master of the ordinarie where his honour Sir Thomas eteth well nie daile (when he is not in attendance at courte, wherein he is perchance more slacke than were wise,) shoulde assemble some of the beste who haunte his house, havyng diet ther for money. The purpose, as shewn forthe, was to tast a new piece of choice wyne, and ther Sir Thomas must nedes be, or the purpose holdes not, and the Alicant becometh Bastard. Wel, my Lord, dice ther wer and music, lustie heithes and dizzie braines,—some saye fair ladyes also, of which I know nought, save that suche cockatrices hatch wher such cockes of the game do haunt. Alweys ther was revel and wassail enow and to spare. Now it chaunced, that whilst one Dutton, of Graie's Inn, an Essex man, held the dice, Sir Thomas filleth a fulle carouse to the helth of the fair Ladie Elizabeth. Trulie, my Lord, I cannot blame his devotioun to so fair a saint, though I may wish the chapel for his adoration had been better chosen, and the companie more suitable; *sed respice finem.* The pledge being given, and alle men on foote, aye, and some on knee, to drink the same, young Philip Darcy, a near kinsman of my Lorde's, or so callyng himself, takes on him to check at the helthe, askyng Sir Thomas if he were willinge to drink the same in a Venetian glasse? the mening of whiche hard sentence your Lordshippe shal esilie construe. Whereupon Sir Thomas, your Lordshippe's brother, somewhat shrewishly demanded whether that were his game or his ernest; to which demaunde the uther answers recklessly as he that wolde not be brow-beaten, that Sir Thomas might take it for game or ernest as him listed. Whereupon your Lordshippe's brother, throwing down withal the woodcocke's bill, with which, as the fashioun goes, he was picking his teeth, answered redily, he cared not that for his game or ernest, for that neither were worth a bean. A small matter this to make such a storie, for presentlie young Darcie up with the wine-pot in which they had assaid the freshe hogshede, and heveth it at Sir Thomas, which vessel missing of the mark it was ayin'd at, encountreth the hede of Master Dutton, when the outside of the flaggon did that which peradventure the inside had accomplish'd somewhat later in the evening, and stretcheth him on the flore; and then the crie arose, and you might see twenty swords oute at once, and none rightly knowing wherfor. And the groomes and valets, who waited in the street and in the kitchen, and who, as seldom failes, had been as busy with the beer as their masters with the wine, presentlie fell at odds, and betoke themselves to their weapons; so ther was bouncing of bucklers, and bandying of blades, instede of clattering of quart pottles, and chiming of harpis and fiddle. At length comes the wache, and, as oft happens in the like affrays, alle men join ageynst them, and they are beten baie. An honest man, David Booth, constable of the night, and a chandler by trade, is sorely hurt. The crie rises of Prentices, prentices. Clubs, clubs, for word went that the court-gallants and the Graie's-Inn men had murther'd a citizen; all menne take the street, and the whole ward is uppe, none well knowing why. Menewhile our gallants had the lucke and sense to disperse their company, some getting them into the Temple, the gates wherof were presentlie shut to prevent pursuite I warrant, and some taking boat as they might; water thus saving whom wyne had endaunger'd. The Alderman of the ward, worthy Master Danvelt, with Master Deputy, and others of repute, bestow'd themselves not a litel to compose the tumult, and so al past over for the evening.

"My Lord, this is the hole of the mater, so far as my earnest and anxious serch had therein, as well for the sake of my blode relation to your honorable house, as frome affectioun to my kinsman Sir Thomas, and especiallie in humble obedience to your regarded commandes. As for other offences given by Sir Thomas, whereof idle brultes are curreht, as that he should have call'd Master Darcie a codshead or an woodcocke, I can lerne of no such termes nor anie nere to them, only that when he said he cared not for his game or ernest, he flung down the woodcock's bill, to which it may be there was sticking a part of the head, though my informant saithe otherwise; and he stode so close by Sir Thomas, that he herde the quart-pot whissel as it flew betwixt their two hedes. Of damage done among the better sort, there is not muche; some cuts and thrusts ther wer, that had their sequents in blood and woundes, but none dedlie. Of the rascal sort, one fellowe is kill'd, and sundrie hurt. Hob Hilton, your brother's grome, for lifle a maymed man, having a slash over the right hande, for faulte of a gauntlet. Marry he has been a brave knave and a sturdie: and if it pleses your goode Lordshippe, I fynd he wolde gladlie be prefer'd, when tym is fitting, to the office of bedle. He hath a burlie frame, and scare-babe visage; he shall do wel enoughe in such charge, though lackyng the use of four fingers." The hurtyng of the constabel is a worse mater; as also the anger that is between the courtiers and Graie's-Inn men; so that yf close hede be not given, I doubt me we shall here of more *Gesta Graiorum.* Thei will not be persuaded but that the quarrel betwixt Sir Thomas and young Darcie was simulate; and that Master Dutton's hurte wes wilful; whereas, on my lyfe, it will not be founde so.

"The counseyl hath taen the mater up, and I here H. M. spoke many things gravely and solidly, and as one who taketh to hert such unhappie chaunces, both against brauling and drinking. Sir Thomas, with others, hath put in plegge to be forthcoming; and so strictly taken up wes the unhappie mater of the Scots Lord,† that if Booth shulde die, which God forefend, there might be a fereful reckoning. For one chyzen sayeth, I trust falslie, he saw Sir Thomas draw back his hand, having in it a drawn sword, just as the constabel felle. It seems but too constant that thei were within but short space of ech other when this unhappy chaunce befel. My Lord, it is not for me to saie what course your Lordshippe should steer in this storm, onlie that the Lord Chancellour's gode worde wil, as resen is, do yeman's service. Schulde it come to fine, or imprisonment, as is to be fered, why should not your Lordshippe cast the weyght into the balance for that restraint which goode Sir Thomas must nedes bear himselt, rather than for such penalty as must nedes pinche the purses of his frendes. Your Lordship always knoweth best; but surely the yonge knyght hath but litel reson to expect that you shulde further engage yourself in such bondes as might be necessary to bring this fine into the Chequer. Nether have wise men helde it unfit that heated bloode be coold by sequestration for a space from temptation. There is dout, moreover, whether he may not hold himself bounden, according to the forme of faythe which such gallants and stirring spirits profess, to have further meeting with Master Philip Darcie, or this same Dutton, or with bothe, on this rare dependance of an woodcocke's hede, and a quart-pot; certeynly, methoughte, the last tym we met, and when he bare himself towards me, as I have premonish'd your Lordshippe, that he was fitter for quiet residence under safe keeping, than for a free walk amongst peceful men.

"And thus, my Lord, ye have the whole mater before you; trew ye shall find it,—my dutie demands it,—unpleasing, I cannot amende it: But I truste neither more evil *in esse* nor *in posse*, than I have set forth as above. From one, who is ever your Lordshippe's most bounden to command, &c.—J. H."

I think it must have been about the middle of October that he dropped the scheme of this fictitious correspondence. I well remember the morning that he began the Fortunes of Nigel. The day being destined for Newark Hill, I went over to Abbotsford before breakfast, and found Mr. Terry (who had been staying there for some time) walking about with his friend's master-mason, of whose proceedings he took a fatherly charge, as he might well do, since the plan of the building had been in a considerable measure the work of his own taste. While Terry and I were chatting, Scott came out, bareheaded, with a bunch of MS. in his hand, and said, "Well, lads, I've laid the keel of a new lugger this morning—here it is—be off to the water-side, and let me hear how you like it." Terry took the papers, and walking up and down by the river, read to me

* "The death of the *rascal* sort is mentioned as he would have commemorated that of a dog; and his readiest plan of providing for a profligate menial, is to place him in superintendence of the unhappy poor, over whom his fierce looks, and rough demeanour are to supply the means of authority, which his arm can no longer enforce by actual violence!"

† "Perhaps the case of Lord Sanquhar. His Lordship had the misfortune to be hanged, for causing a poor fencing-master to be assassinated, which seems the unhappy matter alluded to."

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the first chapter of Nigel. He expressed great delight with the animated opening, and especially with the contrast between its thorough stir of London life, and a chapter about Norna of the Fitful-Head, in the third volume of the Pirate, which had been given to him in a similar manner the morning before. I could see that (according to the Sheriff's phrase) *he smelt roast meat*; here there was every prospect of a fine field for the art of *Terryfication*. The actor, when our host met us returning from the haugh, did not fail to express his opinion that the new novel would be of this quality. Sir Walter, as he took the MS. from his hand, eyed him with a gay smile, in which genuine benevolence mingled with mock exultation, and then throwing himself into an attitude of comical dignity, he rolled out in the tones of John Kemble, one of the loftiest bursts of Ben Jonson's Mammon—

"Come on, sir. Now you set your foot on shore
In *Novo orbe*—
——Pertinax, my Surly,*
Again I say to thee aloud, Be rich,
This day thou shalt have ingots."—

This was another period of "refreshing the machine." Early in November, I find Sir Walter writing thus to Constable's partner, Mr. Cadell: "I want two books, Malcolm's London Redivivus, or some such name, and Derham's Artificial Clockmaker." [The reader of Nigel will understand these requests.] "All good luck to you, commercially and otherwise. I am grown a shabby letter-writer, for my eyes are not so young as they were, and I grudge every thing that does not go to press." Such a feeling must often have been present with him; yet I can find no period when he grudged writing a letter that might by possibility be of use to any of his family or friends; and I must quote one of the many which about this very time reached his second son.

To Mr. Charles Scott, care of the Rev. Mr. Williams, Lampeter.

"21st Nov. 1821.

"My dear Charles,

"I had the pleasure of your letter two days since, being the first symptom of your being alive and well which I have had *directly* since you left Abbotsford. I beg you will be more frequent in your communications, which must always be desirable when you are at such a distance. I am very glad to hear you are attending closely to make up lost time. Sport is a good thing both for health and pastime; but you must never allow it to interfere with serious study. You have, my dear boy, your own fortune to make, with better assistance of every kind than I had when the world first opened on me; and I assure you that had I not given some attention to learning, (I have often regretted that, from want of opportunity, indifferent health, and some indolence, I did not do all I might have done,) my own situation, and the advantages which I may be able to procure for you, would have been very much bounded. Consider, therefore, study as the principal object. Many men have read and written their way to independence and fame; but no man ever gained it by exclusive attention to exercises or to pleasures of any sort. You do not say any thing of your friend Mr. Surtees,† who I hope is well. We all remember him with much affection, and should be sorry to think we were forgotten.

"Our Abbotsford hunt went off extremely well. We killed seven hares, I think, and our dogs behaved very well. A large party dined, and we sat down about twenty-five at table. Every gentleman present sung a song, *tant bien que mal*, excepting Walter, Lockhart, and I myself. I believe I should add the melancholy Jaques, Mr. Waugh, who, on this occasion, however, was not melancholy.‡ In short, we had a very merry and social party.

"There is, I think, no news here. The hedger, Captain Davidson,* has had a bad accident, and injured his leg much by the fall of a large stone. I am very anxious about him as a faithful and honest servant. Every one else at Abbotsford, horses and dogs included, are in great preservation.

"You ask me about reading history. You are quite right to read Clarendon—his style is a little long-winded; but, on the other hand, his characters may match those of the ancient historians, and one thinks they would know the very men if you were to meet them in society. Few English writers have the same precision, either in describing the actors in great scenes, or the deeds which they performed. He was, you are aware, himself deeply engaged in the scenes which he depicts, and therefore colours them with the individual feeling, and sometimes, doubtless, with the partiality of a partisan. Yet I think he is, on the whole, a fair writer; for though he always endeavours to excuse King Charles, yet he points out his mistakes and errors, which, certainly, were neither few nor of slight consequence. Some of his history regards the country in which you are now a resident; and you will find that much of the fate of that Great Civil War turned on the sucessful resistance made by the city of Gloucester, and the relief of that place by the Earl of Essex, by means of the trained bands of London, a sort of force resembling our local militia or volunteers. They are the subject of ridicule in all the plays and poems of the time; yet the sort of practice of arms which they had acquired, enabled them to withstand the charge of Prince Rupert and his gallant cavalry, who were then foiled for the first time. Read, my dear Charles, read, and read that which is useful. Man only differs from birds and beasts, because he has the means of availing himself of the knowledge acquired by his predecessors. The swallow builds the same nest which its father and mother built; and the sparrow does not improve by the experience of its parents. The son of the learned pig, if it had one, would be a mere brute, fit only to make bacon of. It is not so with the human race. Our ancestors lodged in caves and wigwams, where we construct palaces for the rich, and comfortable dwellings for the poor; and why is this—but because our eye is enabled to look back upon the past, to improve upon our ancestors' improvements, and to avoid their errors? This can only be done by studying history, and comparing it with passing events. God has given you a strong memory, and the power of understanding that which you give your mind to with attention—but all the advantage to be derived from these qualities must depend on your own determination to avail yourself of them, and improve them to the uttermost. That you should do so will be the greatest satisfaction I can receive in my advanced life, and when my thoughts must be entirely turned on the success of my children. Write to me more frequently, and mention your studies particularly, and I will on my side be a good correspondent.

"I beg my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Williams. I have left no room to sign myself your affectionate father,

W. S."

To return to business and Messrs. Constable. Sir Walter concluded before he went to town in November another negotiation of importance with this house. They agreed to give for the remaining copyright of the four novels published between December, 1819, and January, 1821—to wit, Ivanhoe, the Monastery, the Abbot, and Kenilworth—the sum of five thousand guineas. The stipulation about not revealing the author's name, under a penalty of £2000, was repeated. By these four novels, the fruits of scarcely more than twelve months' labour, he had already cleared at least £10,000 before this bargain was completed. They, like their predecessors, were now issued in a collective shape, under the title of "*Historical Romances*, by the Author of Waverley."

I cannot pretend to guess what the actual state of Scott's pecuniary affairs was at the time when John Ballantyne's death relieved them from one great source of complication and difficulty. But I have said enough to satisfy every reader, that when he began the second, and far the larger division of his building at Abbotsford, he must have contemplated the utmost sum it could cost him as a mere trifle in relation to the resources at his command. He must have reckoned on clearing £30,000 at least in the course of a couple of years by the novels written within such a period. The publisher of his

* The fun of this application of "my Surly" will not escape any one who remembers the kind and good-humoured Terry's power of assuming a peculiarly saturnine aspect. This queer grimness of look was invaluable to the comedian in several of his best parts; and in private he often called it up when his heart was most cheerful.

† Mr. Villiers Surtees, a school-fellow of Charles Scott's at Lampeter, had spent the vacation of this year at Abbotsford. He is now one of the Supreme Judges at the Mauritius.

‡ Mr. Waugh was a retired West Indian, of very dolorous aspect, who had settled at Melrose, built a large house there, surrounded it and his garden with a huge wall, and seldom emerged from his own precincts except upon the grand occasion of the Abbotsford Hunt. The villagers called him "the Melancholy Man"—and considered him as already "dreein' his dole for doings amang the poor niggers."

* This hedger had got the title of Captain, in mockery of his gallantry at some *row*.

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Tales, who best knew how they were produced, and what they brought of gross profit, and who must have had the strongest interest in keeping the author's name untarnished by any risk or reputation of failure, would willingly, as we have seen, have given him £6000 more within a space of two years for works of a less serious sort, likely to be despatched at leisure hours, without at all interfering with the main manufacture. But alas!—even this was not all. Messrs. Constable had such faith in the prospective fertility of his imagination, that they were by this time quite ready to sign bargains and grant bills for novels and romances to be produced hereafter, but of which the subjects and the names were alike unknown to them and to the man from whose pen they were to proceed. A forgotten satirist well says,

> "The active principle within
> Works on some brains the effect of gin;"

but in his case, every external influence combined to stir the flame, and swell the intoxication of restless exuberant energy. His allies knew, indeed, what he did not, that the sale of his novels was rather less than it had been in the days of Ivanhoe; and hints had sometimes been dropped to him that it might be well to try the effects of a pause. But he always thought—and James Ballantyne had decidedly the same opinion—that his best things were those which he threw off the most easily and swiftly; and it was no wonder that his booksellers, seeing how immeasurably even his worst excelled in popularity, as in merit, any other person's best, should have shrunk from the experiment of a decisive damper. On the contrary they might be excused for from time to time flattering themselves that if the books sold at a less rate, this might be counterpoised by still greater rapidity of production. They could not make up their minds to cast the peerless vessel adrift; and, in short, after every little whisper of prudential misgiving, echoed the unfailing burden of Ballantyne's song—to push on, hoisting more and more sail as the wind lulled.

He was as eager to do as they could be to suggest—and this I well knew at the time. I had, however, no notion, until all his correspondence lay before me, of the extent to which he had permitted himself thus early to build on the chances of life, health, and continued popularity. Before the Fortunes of Nigel issued from the press, Scott had exchanged instruments, and received his bookseller's bills, for no less than four "works of fiction"—not one of them otherwise described in the deeds of agreement—to be produced in unbroken succession, each of them to fill at least three volumes, but with proper saving clauses as to increase of copy-money, in case any of them should run to four. And within two years all this anticipation had been wiped off by Peveril of the Peak, Quentin Durward, St. Ronan's Well, and Redgauntlet; and the new castle was by that time complete, and overflowing with all its splendour; but by that time the end also was approaching!

The splendid Romance of the Pirate was published in the beginning of December, 1821; and the wild freshness of its atmosphere, the beautiful contrast of Minna and Brenda, and the exquisitely drawn character of Captain Cleveland, found the reception which they deserved. The work was analyzed with remarkable care in the Quarterly Review—by a critic second to few, either in the manly heartiness of his sympathy with the felicities of genius, or in the honest acuteness of his censure in cases of negligence and confusion. This was the second of a series of articles in that Journal, conceived and executed in a tone widely different from those given by Mr. Gifford himself to Waverley, Guy Mannering, and the Antiquary. I fancy the old gentleman had become convinced that he had made a grievous mistake in this matter, before he acquiesced in Scott's proposal about "quartering the child" in January, 1816; and if he was fortunate in finding a contributor able and willing to treat the rest of Father Jedediah's progeny with excellent skill, and in a spirit more accordant with the just and general sentiments of the public, we must also recognise a pleasing and honourable trait of character in the frankness with which the recluse and often despotic editor now resigned the pen to Mr. Senior.

On the 13th December, Sir Walter received a copy of CAIN, as yet unpublished, from Lord Byron's bookseller, who had been instructed to ask whether he had any objection to having the "Mystery" dedicated to him. He replied in these words:

To John Murray, Esq., Albemarle Street, London.

"Edinburgh, 17th December, 1821.

"My dear Sir,

"I accept with feelings of great obligation the flattering proposal of Lord Byron to prefix my name to the very grand and tremendous drama of Cain. I may be partial to it, and you will allow I have cause; but I do not know that his Muse has ever taken so lofty a flight amid her former soarings. He has certainly matched Milton on his own ground. Some part of the language is bold, and may shock one class of readers, whose tone will be adopted by others out of affectation or envy. But then they must condemn the Paradise Lost, if they have a mind to be consistent. The fiend-like reasoning and bold blasphemy of the fiend and of his pupil, lead exactly to the point which was to be expected—the commission of the first murder, and the ruin and despair of the perpetrator.

"I do not see how any one can accuse the author himself of Manicheism. The devil takes the language of that sect, doubtless; because, not being able to deny the existence of the Good Principle, he endeavours to exalt himself—the Evil Principle—to a seeming equality with the Good; but such arguments, in the mouth of such a being, can only be used to deceive and to betray. Lord Byron might have made this more evident, by placing in the mouth of Adam, or of some good and protecting spirit, the reasons which render the existence of moral evil consistent with the general benevolence of the Deity. The great key to the mystery is, perhaps, the imperfection of our own faculties, which see and feel strongly the partial evils which press upon us, but know too little of the general system of the universe, to be aware how the existence of these is to be reconciled with the benevolence of the great Creator.—Ever yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

In some preceding narratives of Sir Walter Scott's Life, I find the principal feature for 1821 to be an affair of which I have as yet said nothing; and which, notwithstanding the examples I have before me, I must be excused for treating on a scale commensurate with his real share and interest therein. I allude to an unfortunate newspaper, by name *The Beacon*, which began to be published in Edinburgh in January, 1821, and was abruptly discontinued in the August of the same year. It originated in the alarm with which the Edinburgh Tories contemplated the progress of Radical doctrines during the agitation of the Queen's business in 1820—and the want of any adequate counteraction on the part of the Ministerial newspapers in the north. James Ballantyne had on that occasion swerved from his banner—and by so doing given not a little offence to Scott. He approved, therefore, of the project of a new Weekly Journal, to be conducted by some steadier hand; and when it was proposed to raise the requisite capital for the speculation by private subscription, expressed his willingness to contribute whatever sum should be named by other gentlemen of his standing. This was accepted of course; but every part of the advice with which the only man in the whole conclave that understood a jot about such things coupled his tender of alliance, was departed from in practice. No experienced and responsible editor, of the sort he pointed out as indispensable, was secured; the violence of disaffected spleen was encountered by a vein of satire which seemed more fierce than frolicsome; the Law Officers of the Crown, whom he had most strenuously cautioned against any participation in the concern, were rash enough to commit themselves in it; the subscribers, like true Scotchmen, in place of paying down their money, and thinking no more of that part of the matter, chose to put their names to a bond of security on which the sum total was to be advanced by bankers, and

thus by their own overcaution as to a few pounds, laid the foundation for a long train of humiliating distresses and disgraces; and finally, when the rude drollery of the young hot-bloods to whom they had entrusted the editorship of their paper produced its natural consequences, and the ferment of Whig indignation began to boil over upon the dignified patrons of what was denounced as a systematic scheme of calumny and defamation—these seniors shrunk from the dilemma as rashly as they had plunged into it, and instead of compelling the juvenile allies to adopt a more prudent course, and gradually give the journal a tone worthy of open approbation, they, at the first blush of personal difficulty, left their instruments in the lurch, and, without even consulting Scott, ordered the Beacon to be extinguished at an hour's notice.

A more pitiable mass of blunder and imbecility was never heaped together than the whole of this affair exhibited; and from a very early period Scott was so disgusted with it that he never even saw the newspaper, of which Whigs and Radicals believed, or affected to believe, that the conduct and management were in some degree at least under his dictation. The results were lamentable: the Beacon was made the subject of Parliamentary discussion, from which the then heads of Scotch Toryism did not escape in any very consolatory plight; but above all, the Beacon bequeathed its rancour and rashness, though not its ability, to a Glasgow Paper of similar form and pretensions, entitled The Sentinel. By that organ the personal quarrels of the Beacon were taken up and pursued with relentless industry; and finally, the Glasgow editors disagreeing, some moment of angry confusion betrayed a box of MSS., by which the late Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck was revealed as the writer of certain truculent enough pasquinades. A leading Edinburgh Whig, who had been pilloried in one or more of these, challenged Boswell—and the Baronet fell in as miserable a quarrel as ever cost the blood of a high-spirited gentleman.

This tragedy occurred in the early part of 1822; and soon afterwards followed those debates on the whole business in the House of Commons, for which, if any reader feels curiosity about them, I refer him to the Parliamentary Histories of the time. A single extract from one of Scott's letters to a member of the then Government in London will be sufficient for my purpose: and abundantly confirm what I have said as to his personal part in the affairs of the Beacon.

To J. W. Croker, Esq., Admiralty.

"My dear Croker,

". . . . I had the fate of Cassandra in the Beacon matter from beginning to end. I endeavoured in vain to impress on them the necessity of having an editor who was really up to the business, and could mix spirit with discretion—one of those "gentlemen of the press," who understand the exact lengths to which they can go in their vocation. Then I wished them in place of that *Bond*, to have each thrown down his hundred pounds, and never inquired more about it—and lastly, I exclaimed against the Crown Counsel being at all concerned. In the two first remonstrances I was not listened to—in the last I thought myself successful, and it was not till long afterwards that I heard they had actually subscribed the Bond. Then the hasty renunciation of the thing, as if we had been doing something very atrocious, put me mad altogether. The younger brethren too, allege that they are put into the front of the fight, and deserted on the first pinch; and on my word I cannot say the accusation is altogether false, though I have been doing my best to mediate betwixt the parties, and keep the peace if possible. The fact is, it is a blasted business, and will continue long to have bad consequences.—Yours in all love and kindness,

WALTER SCOTT."

CHAPTER LV.

WILLIAM ERSKINE PROMOTED TO THE BENCH—JOANNA BAILLIE'S MISCELLANY—HALIDON HILL AND MACDUFF'S CROSS—LETTERS TO LORD MONTAGU—LAST PORTRAIT BY RAEBURN—CONSTABLE'S LETTER ON THE APPEARANCE OF THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL—HALIDON HILL PUBLISHED.—1822.

In January, 1822, Sir Walter had the great satisfaction of seeing Erskine at length promoted to a seat on the Bench of the Court of Session, by the title of Lord Kinnedder; and his pleasure was enhanced doubtless by the reflection that his friend owed this elevation very much, if not mainly, to his own unwearied exertions on his behalf. This happy event occurred just about the time when Joanna Baillie was distressed by hearing of the sudden and total ruin of an old friend of hers, a Scotch gentleman long distinguished in the commerce of the city of London: and she thought of collecting among her literary acquaintance such contributions as might, with some gleanings of her own portfolios, fill up a volume of poetical miscellanies, to be published, by subscription, for the benefit of the merchant's family. In requesting Sir Walter to write something for this purpose, she also asked him to communicate the scheme, in her name, to various common friends in the North—among others, to the new Judge. Scott's answer was—

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 10, 1822.

"My dear Friend,

"No one has so good a title as you to command me in all my strength, and in all my weakness. I do not believe I have a single scrap of unpublished poetry, for I was never a willing composer of occasional pieces, and when I have been guilty of such effusions, it was to answer the purpose of some publisher of songs, or the like immediate demand. The consequence is, that all these trifles have been long before the public, and whatever I add to your collection must have the grace of novelty, in case it should have no other. I do not know what should make it rather a melancholy task for me nowadays to sit down to versify—I did not use to think it so—but I have ceased, I know not why, to find pleasure in it, and yet I do not think I have lost any of the faculties I ever possessed for the task; but I was never fond of my own poetry, and am now much out of conceit with it. All this another person, less candid in construction than yourself, would interpret into a hint to send a good dose of praise—but you know we have agreed long ago to be above ordinances, like Cromwell's saints. When I go to the country upon the 12th of March, I will try what the water-side can do for me, for there is no inspiration in causeways and kennels, or even the Court of Session. You have the victory over me now, for I remember laughing at you for saying you could only write your beautiful lyrics upon a fine warm day. But what is this something to be? I wish you would give me a subject, for that would cut off half my difficulties.

"I am delighted with the prospect of seeing Miss Edgeworth, and making her personal acquaintance. I expect her to be just what you describe, a being totally void of affectation, and who, like one other lady of my acquaintance, carries her literary reputation as freely and easily as the milk-maid in my country does the *kebbuck*, which she carries on her head, and walks as gracefully with it as a duchess. Some of the fair sex, and some of the foul sex too, carry their renown in London fashion on a yoke and a pair of pitchers. The consequence is, that besides poking frightfully, they are hitting every one on the shins with their buckets. Now this is all nonsense, too fantastic to be written to any body but a person of good sense. By the way, did you know Miss Austen, authoress of some novels which have a great deal of nature in them?—nature in ordinary and middle life, to be sure, but valuable from its strong resemblance and correct drawing. I wonder which way she carried her pail?"

"I did indeed rejoice at Erskine's promotion. There is a degree of melancholy attending the later stage of a barrister's profession, which, though no one cares for

* When the late collection of Sir Walter Scott's Prose Miscellanies was preparing, the publisher of the Quarterly Review led me into a mistake, which I may as well take this opportunity of apologizing for. Glancing hastily over his private records, he included in his list of Sir Walter's contributions to his journal an article on Miss Austen's novels; and as the opinions which the article expresses on their merits and defects harmonized with the usual tone of Scott's conversation, I saw no reason to doubt that he had drawn it up, although the style might have been considerably *doctored* by Mr. Gifford. I have since learned, that the review was in fact written by Dr. Whately, now Archbishop of Dublin.—Miss Austen's novels, especially Emma and Northanger Abbey, were great favourites with Scott, and he often read chapters of them to his evening circle.

sentimentalities attendant on a man of fifty or thereabout, in a rusty black bombazine gown, are not the less cruelly felt; their business sooner or later fails, for younger men will work cheaper, and longer, and harder—besides that the cases are few, comparatively, in which senior counsel are engaged, and it is not etiquette to ask any one in that advanced age to take the whole burden of a cause. Insensibly, without decay of talent, and without losing the public esteem, there is a gradual decay of employment, which almost no man ever practised thirty years without experiencing; and thus the honours and dignities of the Bench, so hardly earned, and themselves leading but to tolls of another kind, are peculiarly desirable. Erskine would have sat there ten years ago, but for wretched intrigues. He has a very poetical and elegant mind, but I do not know of any poetry of his writing, except some additional stanzas to Collins' ode on Scottish superstitions, long since published in the Border Minstrelsy. I doubt it would not be consistent with his high office to write poetry now, but you may add his name, with Mrs. Scott's (Heaven forgive me! I should have said Lady Scott's) and mine, to the subscription-list. I will not promise to get you more, for people always look as if you were asking the guinea for yourself—there John Bull has the better of Sawney; to be sure he has more guineas to bestow, but we retain our reluctance to part with hard cash, though profuse enough in our hospitality. I have seen a laird, after giving us more champagne and claret than we cared to drink, look pale at the idea of paying a crown in charity.

"I am seriously tempted, though it would be sending coals to Newcastle with a vengeance, not to mention salt to Dysart, and all other superfluous importations—I am, I say, strangely tempted to write for your Protegés a dramatic scene on an incident which happened at the battle of Halidon Hill (I think.) It was to me a nursery-tale, often told by Mrs. Margaret Swinton, sister of my maternal grandmother; a fine old lady of high blood, and of as high a mind, who was lineally descended from one of the actors. The anecdote was briefly thus. The family of Swinton is very ancient, and was once very powerful, and at the period of this battle the knight of Swinton was gigantic in stature, unequalled in strength, and a sage and experienced leader to boot. In one of those quarrels which divided the kingdom of Scotland in every corner, he had slain his neighbour, the head of the Gordon family, and an inveterate feud had ensued; for it seems that powerful as the Gordons always were, the Swintons could then hide a bang with them.' Well, the battle of Halidon began, and the Scottish army, unskilfully disposed on the side of a hill where no arrow fell in vain, was dreadfully galled by the archery of the English, as usual; upon which Swinton approached the Scottish General, requesting command of a body of cavalry, and pledging his honour that he would, if so supported, charge and disperse the English archers—one of the manœuvres by which Bruce gained the battle of Bannockburn. This was refused, out of stupidity or sullenness, by the General, on which Swinton expressed his determination to charge at the head of his own followers, though totally inadequate for the purpose. The young Gordon heard the proposal, son of him whom Swinton had slain, and with one of those irregular bursts of generosity and feeling which redeem the dark ages from the character of utter barbarism, he threw himself from his horse, and kneeled down before Swinton.—'I have not yet been knighted,' he said, 'and never can I take the honour from the hand of a truer, more loyal, more valiant leader, than he who slew my father: grant me,' he said, 'the boon I ask, and I unite my forces to yours, that we may live and die together.' His feudal enemy became instantly his godfather in chivalry, and his ally in battle. Swinton knighted the young Gordon, and they rushed down at the head of their united retainers, dispersed the archery, and would have turned the battle, had they been supported. At length they both fell, and all who followed them were cut off, and it was remarked, that while the fight lasted, the old giant guarded the young man's life more than his own, and the same was indicated by the manner in which his body lay stretched over that of Gordon. Now, do not laugh at my Berwickshire *burr*, which I assure you is literally and lineally handed down to me by my grandmother, from this fine old Goliah. Tell me, if I can clamper up the story into a sort of single scene, will it answer your purpose? I would rather try my hand in blank verse than rhyme.

"The story, with many others of the same kind, is consecrated to me by the remembrance of the narrator, with her brown silk gown, and triple ruffles, and her benevolent face, which was always beside our beds when there were childish complaints among us. Poor Aunt Margaret had a most shocking fate, being murdered by a favourite maid-servant in a fit of insanity, when I was about ten years old; the catastrophe was much owing to the scrupulous delicacy and high courage of my poor relation, who would not have the assistance of men called in for exposing the unhappy wretch her servant. I think you will not ask for a letter from me in a hurry again, but, as I have no chance of seeing you for a long time, I must be contented with writing. My kindest respects attend Mrs. Agnes, your kind brother and family, and the Richardsons, little and big, short and tall; and believe me most truly yours, W. Scott.

"P. S.—Sophia is come up to her Sunday dinner, and begs to send a thousand remembrances, with the important intelligence that her baby actually says ma-ma, and bow wow, when he sees the dog. Moreover, he is christened John Hugh; and I intend to plant two little knolls at their cottage, to be called Mount Saint John, and Hugomont. The Papa also sends his respects."

About this time Cornet Scott, being for a short period in Edinburgh, sat to William Allan for that admirable portrait which now hangs (being the only picture in the room) over the mantelpiece of the Great Library at Abbotsford. Sir Walter, in extolling this performance to Lord Montagu, happened to mention that an engraving was about to appear from Mr. Allan's "Death of Archbishop Sharp," and requested his lordship to subscribe for a copy of it. Lord Montagu read his letter hurriedly, and thought the forthcoming engraving was of the Cornet and his charger. He signified that he would very gladly have *that*; but took occasion to remind Sir Walter that the Buccleuch family had not forget his old promise to sit to Raeburn himself for a portrait, to be hung up at Bowhill. Scott's letter of explanation includes his opinion of Horace Walpole's posthumous "Memoirs."

To the Lord Montagu.

"Abbotsford, 15th March, 1822.

"My dear Lord,

"It is close firing to reply to your kind letter so soon, but I had led your Lordship into two mistakes, from writing my former letter in a hurry; and therefore, to try whether I cannot contradict the old proverb of 'two blacks not making a white, I write this in a hurry to mend former blunders.

"In the first place, I never dreamed of asking you to subscribe to a print of my son—it will be time for him to be *copperplated*, as Joseph Gillon used to call it, when he is major-general. I only meant to ask you to take a print of the Murder of Archbishop Sharp, and to mention historically that the same artist, who made a capital picture of that event, had painted for me a very good portrait of my son. I suppose I may apply your Lordship's kind permission to the work for which I *did* mean to require your patronage; and for a Scottish subject of interest by a Scottish artist of high promise, I will presume to reckon also on the patronage of my young chief. I had no idea of sitting for my own picture; and I think it will be as well to let Duke Walter, when he feels his own ground in the world, take his own taste in the way of adorning his house. Two or three years will make him an adequate judge on such a subject, and if they will not make me more beautiful, they have every chance of making me more picturesque. The distinction was ably drawn in the case of parsons' horses, by Sydney Smith, in one of his lectures:—'The rector's horse is *beautiful*—the curate's is picturesque.' If the portrait had been begun, that were another matter; as it is, the Duke, when he is two or three years older, shall command my picture, as the original, *à vendre et à pendre*—an admirable expression of devotion, which I picked up from a curious letter of Lord Lovat's which I found the other day. I am greatly afraid the said original will by and by be fit only for the last branch of the dilemma.

"Have you read Lord Orford's History of his own Time—it is acid and lively, but serves, I think, to show how little those, who live in public business, and of course in constant agitation and intrigue, know about the real and deep progress of opinions and events. The Memoirs of our Scots Sir George Mackenzie are of the same class—both immersed in little political detail, and the struggling skirmish of party, seem to have lost sight of the great progressive movements of human affairs. They put me somewhat in mind of a miller, who is so busy with the clatter of his own wheels, grindstones, and machinery, and so much employed in regulating his own artificial mill-dam, that he is incapable of noticing the gradual swell of the river from which he derives his little stream, until it comes down in such force as to carry his whole manufactory away before it. It is comical, too, that Lord Orford should have delayed trusting the public with his reminiscences, until so many years had destroyed all our

interest in the Parliamentary and Court intrigues which he talks with so much vivacity. It is like a man who should brick up a hogshead of cider, to be drunk half a century afterwards, when it could contain little but acidity and vapidity.

"I am here, thank God, for two months. I have acquired, as I trust, a good gardener,* warranted by Macdonald of Dalkeith. So the seeds, which your Lordship is so kind as to promise me, will be managed like a tansy. The greatest advance of age which I have yet found is liking a *cat*, an animal I detested; and becoming fond of a garden, an art which I despised—but I suppose the indulgent mother Nature has pets and hobby-horses suited to her children at all ages.—Ever, my dear Lord, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

Acquiescing in the propriety of what Sir Walter had thus said respecting the proposed portrait for Bowhill, Lord Montagu requested him to sit without delay for a smaller picture on his own behalf; and the result was that half-length now at Ditton, which possesses a peculiar value and interest as being the very last work of Raeburn's pencil. The poet's answer to Lord Montagu's request was as follows:—

To the Lord Montagu.

"Abbotsford, 27th March, 1822.

"My dear Lord,

"I should be very unworthy of so great a proof of your regard, did I not immediately assure you of the pleasure with which I will contribute the head you wish to the halls of Ditton. I know no place where the substance has been so happy, and, therefore, the shadow may be so far well placed. I will not suffer this important affair to languish so far as I am concerned, but will arrange with Raeburn when I return to Edinburgh in May. Allan is not in the ordinary habit of doing portraits, and as he is really a rising historical painter, I should be sorry to see him seduced into the lucrative branch which carries off most artists of that description. If he goes on as he has begun, the young Duke may one day patronise the Scottish Arts, so far as to order a picture of the "Releasing" of Kinmont Willie† from him. I agree entirely with your Lordship's idea of leaving the young chief to have the grace of forming his own ideas on many points, contenting yourself with giving him such principles as may enable him to judge rightly. I believe more youths of high expectation have bolted from the course, merely because well-meaning friends had taken too much care to *rein it in*, than from any other reason whatever. There is in youth a feeling of independence, a desire, in short, of being their own master, and enjoying their own free agency, which is not always attended to by guardians and parents, and hence the best laid schemes fail in execution from being a little too prominently brought forward. I trust that Walter, with the good sense which he seems to possess, will never lose that most amiable characteristic of his father's family, the love and affection which all the members of it have, for two generations, borne to each other, and which has made them patterns as well as blessings to the country they lived in. I have few happier days to look forward to, and yet, like all happiness which comes to gray-headed men, it will have a touch of sorrow in it, than that in which he shall assume his high situation, with the resolution which I am sure he will have to be a good friend to the country in which he has so large a stake, and to the multitudes which must depend upon him for protection, countenance, and bread. Selfish feelings are so much the fashion amongst fashionable men—it is accounted so completely absurd to do any thing which is not to contribute more or less directly to the immediate personal eclat or personal enjoyment of the party—that young men lose sight of real power and real importance, the foundation of which must be laid, even selfishly considered, in contributing to the general welfare,—like those who have thrown their bread on the waters, expecting, and surely receiving, after many days, its return in gratitude, attachment, and support of every kind. The memory of the most splendid entertainment passes away with the season, but the money and pains bestowed upon a large estate not only contribute to its improvement, but root the bestower in the hearts of hundreds over hundreds; should these become needful, he is sure to exercise a correspondent influence. I cannot look forward to these as settled times. In the retrenchments proposed, Government agree to diminish their own influence, and while they contribute a comparative trifle to the relief of the public burdens, by making new discontents among those who, for interest's sake at least, were their natural adherents. In this they are acting weakly, and trying to soothe the insatiable appetite of innovation, by throwing down their outworks, as if that which renders attack more secure and easy would diminish the courage of the assailants. Last year the manufacturing classes were rising—this year the agricultural interest is discontented; and whatever temporary relief either class receives will indeed render them quiet for the moment, but not erase from their minds the rooted belief that the government and constitution of this country are in fault for their embarrassments. Well, I cannot help it, and therefore will not think about it, for that at least I *can* help.

'Time and the hour run through the roughest day.'

"We have had dreadful tempests here of wind and rain, and for a variety a little snow. I assure you it is as uncommon to see a hill with snow on its top these two last seasons, as to see a beau on the better side of thirty with powder in his hair. I built an ice-house last year, and could get no ice to fill it—this year I took the opportunity of every poor twenty-four hours, and packed it full of hard-rammed snow—but lo, ye—the snow is now *in meditationes fugæ*, and I wish I may have enough to cool a decanter when you come to Abbotsford, as I trust your Lordship will be likely to be here next autumn. It is worth while to come, were it but to see what a romance of a house I am making, which is neither to be castle nor abbey, (God forbid!) but an old Scottish manor-house. I believe Atkinson is in despair with my whims, for he cries out *yes—yes—yes*—in a tone which exactly signifies *no—no—no—by no manner of means*.—Believe me always, my dear Lord, most gratefully yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

At the commencement of this spring, then, Scott found his new edifice in rapid progress; and letters on that subject to and from Terry, occupy, during many subsequent months, a very large share in his correspondence. Before the end of the vacation, however, he had finished the MS. of his Nigel. Nor had he lost sight of his promise to Joanna Baillie. He produced, and that, as I well remember, in the course of two rainy mornings, the dramatic sketch of Halidon Hill; but on concluding it, he found that he had given it an extent quite incompatible with his friend's arrangements for her charitable pic-nic. He therefore cast about for another subject likely to be embraced in smaller compass; and the Blair-Adam meeting of the next June supplied him with one in Macduff's Cross. Meantime, on hearing a whisper about Halidon Hill, Messrs. Constable, without seeing the MS., forthwith tendered £1000 for the copyright—the same sum that had appeared almost irrationally munificent when offered in 1807 for the embryo Marmion. It was accepted, and a letter from Constable himself, about to be introduced, will show how well the head of the firm was pleased with this wild bargain. At the moment when his head was giddy with the popular applauses of the new-launched Nigel—and although he had been informed that *Peveril of the Peak* was already on the stocks—he suggested that a little pinnace, of the Halidon class, might easily be rigged out once a-quarter, by way of diversion, and thus add another £4000 per annum to the £10 or £15,000, on which all parties counted as the sure yearly profit of three-deckers *in fore*.

Before I quote Constable's effusion, however, I must recall to the reader's recollection some very gratifying, but I am sure perfectly sincere, laudation of him in his professional capacity, which the Author of the Fortunes of Nigel had put into the mouth of his Captain Clutterbuck in the humorous Epistle Introductory to that Novel. After alluding, in affectionate terms, to the recent death of John Ballantyne, the Captain adds,—"To this great deprivation has been added, I trust for a time only, the loss of another bibliopolical friend, whose vigorous intellect, and liberal ideas, have not only rendered his native country the mart of her own literature, but established there a court of letters, which must command respect, even from those most inclined to dissent from many of its canons. The effect of these changes operated in a great measure by the

* Mr. Bogie. This respectable person is now *seneschal* of Scott's deserted castle.

† See, in the Border Minstrelsy, (vol. ii. p. 32,) the capital old ballad on this dashing exploit of "the Bold Buccleuch" of Queen Elizabeth's time.

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strong sense and sagacious calculations of an individual, who knew how to avail himself, to an unhoped for extent, of the various kinds of talent which his country produced, will probably appear more clearly to the generation which shall follow the present. I entered the shop at the Cross to inquire after the health of my worthy friend, and learned with satisfaction that his residence in the south had abated the rigour of the symptoms of his disorder."

It appears that Nigel was published on the 30th of May, 1822; and next day Constable writes as follows from his temporary residence near London:—

To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., Castle Street, Edinburgh.

"Castlebeare Park, 31st May, 1822.

"Dear Sir Walter,

"I have received the highest gratification from the perusal of a certain new work. I may indeed say new work, for it is entirely so, and will, if that be possible, eclipse in popularity all that has gone before it.

"The author will be blamed for one thing, however unreasonably, and that is, for concluding the story without giving his readers a little more of it. We are a set of ungrateful mortals. For one thing at least I trust I am never to be found so, for I must ever most duly appreciate the kind things intended to be applied to me in the Introductory Epistle to this work. I learn with astonishment, but not less delight, that the press is at work again; the title which has been handed to me, is quite excellent.

"I am now so well as to find it compatible to pay my respects to some of my old haunts in the metropolis, where I go occasionally. I was in town yesterday, and so keenly were the people devouring my friend *Jingling Geordie*, that I actually saw them reading it in the streets as they passed along. I assure you there is no exaggeration in this. A new novel from the author of Waverley puts aside, in other words puts down for the time, every other literary performance. The Smack Ocean, by which the new work was shipped, arrived at the wharf on Sunday; the bales were got out by *one* on Monday morning, and before half-past ten o'clock 7000 copies had been dispersed from 90, Cheapside.* I sent my secretary on purpose to witness the activity with which such things are conducted, and to bring me the account, gratifying certainly, which I now give you.

"I went yesterday to the shop of a curious person—Mr. Swaby, in Warden-street—to look at an old portrait which my son, when lately here, mentioned to me. It is, I think, a portrait of *James the Fourth*, and if not an original, is doubtless a picture as early as his reign. Our friend Mr. Thomson has seen it, and is of the same opinion; but I purpose that you should be called upon to decide this nice point, and I have ordered it to be forwarded to you, trusting that ere long I may see it in the Armoury at Abbotsford.

"I found at the same place two large elbow chairs, elaborately carved, in boxwood—with figures, foliage, &c. perfectly entire. Mr. Swaby, from whom I purchased them, assured me they came from the Borghese Palace at Rome; he possessed originally ten such chairs, and had sold six of them to the Duke of Rutland, for Belvoir Castle, where they will be appropriate furniture; the two which I have obtained would, I think, not be less so in the Library of Abbotsford.

"I have been so fortunate as to secure a still more curious article—a slab of mosaic pavement, quite entire, and large enough to make an outer hearth-stone, which I also destine for Abbotsford. It occurred to me that these three articles might prove suitable to your taste, and under that impression I am now induced to take the liberty of requesting you to accept them as a small but sincere pledge of grateful feeling. Our literary connexion is too important to make it necessary for your publishers to trouble you about the pounds, shillings, and pence of such things; and I therefore trust you will receive them on the footing I have thus taken the liberty to name. I have been on the outlook for antique carvings, and if I knew the purposes for which you would want such, I might probably be able to send you some.

"I was truly happy to hear of 'Halidon Hill,' and of the satisfactory arrangements made for its publication. I wish I had the power of prevailing with you to give us a similar production every three months; and that our ancient enemies on this side the Border might not have too much their own way, perhaps your next dramatic sketch might be Bannockburn.† It would be presumptuous in me to point out subjects, but you know my craving to be great, and I cannot resist mentioning here that I should like to see a Battle of Hastings—a Cressy—a Bosworth Field—and many more.

"Sir Thomas Lawrence was so kind as invite me to see his pictures,—what an admirable portrait he has commenced of you!—he has altogether hit a happy and interesting expression. I do not know whether you have heard that there is an exhibition at Leeds this year. I had an application for the use of Raeburn's picture, which is now there; and it stands No. 1 in the catalogue, of which I inclose you a copy

"You will receive with this a copy of the 'Poetry, original and selected.' I have, I fear, overshot the mark by including the poetry of the Pirate, a liberty for which I must hope to be forgiven. The publication of the volume will be delayed ten days, in case you should do me the favour to suggest any alteration in the advertisement, or other change.—I have the honour to be, dear Sir Walter, you faithful humble servant,

ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE."

The last paragraph of this letter alludes to a little volume, into which Constable had collected the songs, mottoes, and other scraps of verse, scattered over Scott's Novels, from Waverley to the Pirate. It had a considerable run; and had it appeared sooner, might have saved Mr. Adolphus the trouble of writing an essay to prove that the Author of Waverley, whoever he might be, was a Poet.

Constable, during his residence in England at this time, was in the habit of writing every week or two to Sir Walter, and his letters now before me are all of the same complexion as the preceding specimen. The ardent bookseller's brain seems to have been well-nigh unsettled at this period; and I have often thought that the foxglove which he then swallowed (his complaint being a threatening of water in the chest) might have had a share in the extravagant excitement of his mind. Occasionally, however, he enters on details, as to which, or at least as to Sir Walter's share in them, there could not have been any mistake; and these were, it must be owned, of a nature well calculated to nourish and sustain in the author's fancy a degree of almost mad exhilaration, near akin to his publisher's own predominant mood. In a letter of the ensuing month, for example, after returning to the progress of Peveril of the Peak, under 10,000 copies of which (or nearly that number) Ballantyne's presses were now groaning, and glancing gayly to the prospect of their being kept regularly employed to the same extent until three other novels, as yet unchristened, had followed Peveril, he adds a summary of what was then, had just been, or was about to be, the amount of occupation furnished to the same office by reprints of older works of the same pen;—"a summary," he exclaims, "to which I venture to say there will be no rival in our day!" And well might Constable say so; for the result is, that James Ballantyne and Co. had just executed, or were on the eve of executing, by his order—

"A new edition of Sir W. Scott's Poetical Works, in 10 vols. (miniature,)	5000	copies.
"Novels and Tales, 12 vols. ditto,	5000	—
"Historical Romances, 6 vols. ditto.	5000	—
"Poetry from Waverley, &c. 1 vol. 12mo,	5000	—
"Paper required,	7772	reams

"Volumes produced from Ballantyne's press, 145,000!"

To which we may safely add from 30,000 to 40,000 volumes more as the immediate produce of the author's daily industry within the space of twelve months. The scale of these operations was, without question, enough to turn any bookseller's wits;—Constable's, in its soberest hours, was as inflammable a head-piece as ever sat on the shoulders of a poet; and his ambition, in truth, had been moving *pari passu*, during several of these last stirring and turmoiling years, with that of *his* poet. He, too, as I ought to have mentioned ere now, had, like a true Scotchman, concentred his dreams on the hope of bequeathing to his heir the name and dignity of a lord of acres. He, too, had considerably before this time purchased a landed estate in his native county of Fife; he, too, I doubt not, had, while Abbotsford was rising, his own rural castle *in petto*; and alas! for "Archibald Constable of Balniel" also, and his overweening intoxication of

* Constable's London agents, Messrs. Hurst, Robinson, and Co., had then their premises in Cheapside.

† Had Mr. Constable quite forgotten the Lord of the Isles?

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worldly success, Fortune had already begun to prepare a stern rebuke.

Nigel was, I need not say, considered as ranking in the first class of Scott's romances. Indeed, as a historical portraiture, his of James I. stands forth pre-eminent, and almost alone; nor, perhaps, in reperusing these novels deliberately as a series, does any one of them leave so complete an impression as the picture of an age. It is, in fact, the best commentary on the old English drama—hardly a single picturesque point of manners touched by Ben Jonson and his contemporaries but has been dovetailed into this story, and all so easily and naturally, as to form the most striking contrast to the historical romances of authors who *cram*, as the schoolboys phrase it, and then set to work oppressed and bewildered with their crude and undigested burden.

The novel was followed in June by the dramatic sketch of Halidon Hill; but that had far inferior success. I shall say a word on it presently, in connexion with another piece of the same order.

A few weeks before this time Cornet Scott had sailed for Germany, and, it seems, in the midst of rough weather—his immediate destination being Berlin, where his father's valued friend Sir George Rose was then Ambassador from the Court of St. James:—

For Walter Scott, Esq., care of His Excellency Sir George Rose, &c. &c., Berlin.

"My dear Walter,

"Your letters came both together this morning, and relieved me from a disagreeable state of anxiety about you, for the winds have been tremendous since you sailed; and no news arriving from the Continent, owing to their sticking in the west, I was really very uneasy. Luckily mamma did not take any alarm. I have no news to send you save what are agreeable. We are well here, and going on in the old fashion. Last night Mathews the comedian was with us, and made himself very entertaining. About a week ago the Comptesse Nial, a lady in the service of Princess Louisa of Prussia, came to dine here with the Lord Chief Commissioner and family, and seemed to take a great interest in what she heard and saw of our Scottish fashions. She was so good as to offer me letters for you to the Princess Louisa; General Gneisenau, who was Adjutant-General of Blucher's army, and formed the plan of almost all the veteran's campaigns; and to the Baroness de la Motte Fouqué, who is distinguished in the world of letters, at well as her husband the Baron, the author of many very pleasing works of fiction, particularly the beautiful tale of Undine, and the travels of Theodulph. If you find an opportunity to say to the Baroness how much I have been interested by her writings and Mons. de la Motte Fouqué's, you will say no more than the truth, and it will be civil, for folks like to know that they are known and respected beyond the limits of their own country.

"Having the advantage of good introductions to foreigners of distinction, I hope you will not follow the established English fashion of herding with your countrymen, and neglecting the opportunity of extending your acquaintance with the language and society. There is, I own, a great temptation to this in a strange country; but it is destruction of all the purposes for which the expense and trouble of foreign travel are incurred. Labour particularly at the German, as the French can be acquired elsewhere; but I should rather say, work hard at both. It is not, I think, likely, though it is possible, that you may fall into company with some of the *Têtes échauffées*, who are new so common in Germany—men that would pull down the whole political system in order to rebuild it on a better model: a proposal about as wild as that of a man who should propose to change the bridle of a furious horse, and commence his labours by slipping the headstall in the midst of a heath. Prudence, as well as principle and my earnest desire, will induce you to avoid this class of politicians, who, I know, are always on the alert to kindnap young men.

"I account Sir George Rose's being at Berlin the most fortunate circumstance which could have befallen you, as you will always have a friend whom you can consult in case of need. Do not omit immediately arranging your time so as to secure as much as possible for your studies and exercises. For the last I recommend fencing and riding in the academy; for though a good horseman, it is right you should keep up the habit, and many of the German schools are excellent. I think, however, Sir George Rose says that of Berlin is but indifferent; and he is a good judge of the art. I pray you not to lose time in dawdling; for betwixt Edinburgh, London, and the passage, much of the time which our plan destined for your studies has been consumed, and your return into the active service of your profession is proportionally delayed; so lose no time. I cannot say but what I am very happy that you are not engaged in the inglorious, yet dangerous and harassing, warfare of Ireland at present. Your old friend Paddy is now stark mad, and doing much mischief. Sixteen of the Peelers have, I see by this morning's papers, been besieged in their quarters by the mob, four killed, and the rest obliged to surrender after they had fired the house in which they were quartered. The officers write that the service is more harassing than on the Peninsula, and it would appear a considerable part of the country is literally in possession of the insurgents. You are just as well learning *Teütsche sprechen*. I am glad to see you are writing a firm and good hand. Your last from Hamburgh was distinctly written, and well composed. Pray write all your remarks, and pay some little attention to the style, which, without being stiff or pedantic, should always be accurate.

"The Lockharts are well; but baby has a cough, which keeps Sophia anxious: they cannot say whether it be the hooping-cough or no. Mamma, Anne, and little Walter,* send kind love. The little fellow studies hard, and will, I hope, be a credit to the name he bears. If you do not take care, he may be a General before you. Always, my dear Walter, most affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—The Germans are a people of form. You will take care to learn the proper etiquette about delivering the enclosed letters."

CHAPTER LVI.

REPAIRS OF MELROSE ABBEY—LETTERS TO LORD MONTAGU AND MISS EDGEWORTH—KING GEORGE IV. VISITS SCOTLAND—CELTIC MANIA—MR. CRABBE IN CASTLE STREET—DEATH OF LORD KINNEDDER—DEPARTURE OF THE KING—LETTERS FROM MR. PEEL AND MR. CROKER.—1822.

DURING April, May, and June, of this year, Scott's thoughts were much occupied with a plan for securing Melrose Abbey against the progress of decay, which had been making itself manifest to an alarming extent, and to which he had often before directed the attention of the Buccleuch family. Even in writing to persons who had never seen Melrose, he could not help touching on this business—for he wrote, as he spoke, out of the fulness of the heart. The young Duke readily concurred with his guardians in allowing the poet to direct such repairs as might seem to him adequate; and the result was extremely satisfactory to all the habitual worshippers of these classical ruins.

I return to the copious and candid correspondence from which it has been throughout my object to extract and combine the scattered fragments of an *autobiography*.

To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown.

"Abbotsford, 24th April, 1822.

"My dear Miss Edgeworth,

"I am extremely sorry indeed that you cannot fulfil your kind intentions to be at Abbotsford this year. It is a great disappointment, and I am grieved to think it should have arisen from the loss of a valued relation. That is the worst part of life when its earlier path is trod. If my limbs get stiff, my walks are made shorter, and my rides slower.—If my eyes fail me, I can use glasses and a large print.—If I get a little deaf, I comfort myself that, except in a few instances, I shall be no great loser by missing one full half of what is spoken; but I feel the loneliness of age when my companions and friends are taken from me. The sudden death of both the Boswells, and the bloody end of the last, have given me great pain.†

* Walter, the son of Mr. Thomas Scott, was at this time domiciled with his uncle's family.

† James Boswell of the Temple, editor of the last Variorum Shakspeare, &c., a man of considerable learning and admirable social qualities, died suddenly, in the prime of life, about a fortnight before his brother Sir Alexander. Scott was warmly attached to them both, and the fall of the Baronet might well give him a severe shock, for he had dined in Castle Street only two or three days before it occurred, and the merriest tones of his voice were still ringing in his friend's ears when he received the fatal intelligence. That evening was, I think, the gayest I ever spent in Castle Street; and though Charles Mathews was present, and in his best force, poor Boswell's songs, jokes, and anecdotes, had

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You have never got half the praise *Vivian* ought to have procured you. The reason is, that the class from which the excellent portrait was drawn, feel the resemblance too painfully to thank the author for it; and I do not believe the common readers understand it in the least. I who, thank God, am neither great man nor politician, have lived enough among them to recognise the truth and nature of the painting, and am no way implicated in the satire. I begin to think that of the three kingdoms the English alone are qualified to mix in politics safely and without fatal results; the fierce and hasty resentments of the Irish, and the sullen, long-enduring, revengeful temper of my countrymen, make such agitations have a much wider and more dreadful effect amongst them. Well, we will forget what we cannot help, and pray that we may lose no more friends till we find, as I hope and am sure we shall do, friends in each other. I have arranged to stay at least a month after the 12th of May, in hopes of detaining you at Abbotsford, and I will not let you off under a month or two the next year. I shall have my house completed, my library replaced, my armoury new furbished, my piper new clothed, and the time shall be July. I trust I may have the same family about me, and perhaps my two sons. Walter is at Berlin studying the great art of war—and entertaining a most military conviction that all the disturbances of Ireland are exclusively owing to his last regiment, the 18th hussars, having been imprudently reduced. Little Charles is striving to become a good scholar and fit for Oxford. Both have a chance of being at home in autumn, 1823. I know nothing I should wish you to see which has any particular chance of becoming invisible in the course of fourteen months, excepting my old bloodhound, poor fellow, on whom age now sits so heavily, that he cannot follow me far from the house. I wished you to see him very much—he is of that noble breed which Ireland, as well as Scotland, once possessed, and which is now almost extinct in both countries. I have sometimes thought of the final cause of dogs having such short lives, and I am quite satisfied it is in compassion to the human race; for if we suffer so much in losing a dog after an acquaintance of ten or twelve years, what would it be if they were to live double that time?

"I don't propose being in London this year—I do not like it—there is such a riding and driving—so much to see—so much to say—not to mention plover's eggs and champagne—that I always feel too much excited in London, though it is good to rub off the rust too, sometimes, and brings you up abreast with the world as it goes——But I must break off, being summoned to a conclave to examine how the progress of decay, which at present threatens to destroy the ruins of Melrose, can yet be arrested. The Duke of Buccleuch, though but a boy, is very desirous to have something done, and his guardians have acquiesced in a wish so reasonable and creditable to the little chief. I only hope they will be liberal, for a trifle will do no good, or rather, I think, any partial tampering is likely to do harm. But the Duke has an immense estate, and I hope they will remember, that though a moderate sum may keep up this national monument, yet his whole income could not replace it should it fall.—Yours, dear Miss Edgeworth, with true respect and regard,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Lord Montagu, &c.

"Abbotsford, 29th April, 1822.

"My dear Lord,

"The state of the east window is peculiarly precarious, and it may soon give way if not assisted. There would not only be dishonour in that, as Trinculo says when he lost his bottle in the pool, but an infinite loss. Messrs. Smallwood and Smith concur, there will be no difficulty in erecting a scaffolding strong enough to support the weight of an interior arch or *beam*, as we call it, of wood, so as to admit the exterior two rows of the stone-arch to be lifted and replaced, stone by stone, and made as sure as ever they were. The other ribs should then be pointed both above and beneath, every fissure closed, every tree and shrub eradicated, and the whole arch covered with Roman cement, or, what would be greatly better, with lead. This operation relates to the vault over the window. Smallwood thinks that the window itself, that is, the shafted columns, should be secured by renewing the cross-irons which formerly combined them together laterally, and the holes of which still remain; and, indeed, considering how it has kept its ground in its present defenceless state, I thing it amounts to a certainty that the restoration of so many *points d'appui* will secure it against any tempest whatsoever, especially when the vaulted roof is preserved from the present risk of falling down on it.

"There is one way in which the expense would be greatly lessened, and the appearance of the building in the highest degree improved, but it depends on a *proviso*. Provided then that the whole eastern window, with the vault above it, were repaired and made, as Law says, *sartum atque tectum*, there could be no objection to taking down the modern roof with the clumsy buttresses on the northern side.* Indeed I do not see how the roof is continuing could in any respect protect the window, though it may be very doubtful whether the west gable should be pulled down, which would expose the east window to a thorough draft of air, a circumstance which the original builder did not contemplate, and against which, therefore, he made no provision. The taking down this roof and the beastly buttresses would expose a noble range of columns on each side.—Ever, my dear Lord, yours ever truly,

W. S."

To the Same.

"Abbotsford, 15th May, 1822.

"My dear Lord,

"I am quite delighted with the commencement of the Melrose repairs, and hope to report progress before I leave the country, though that must be on Monday next. Please God, I will be on the roof of the old Abbey myself when the scaffolding is up. When I was a boy I could climb like a wild-cat; and entire affection to the work on hand must on this occasion counterbalance the disadvantages of increased weight and stiffened limbs. The east and south windows certainly claim the preference in any repairs suggested; the side aisles are also in a very bad way, but cannot in this summer weather be the worse of delay. It is the rain that finds its way betwixt the arch-stones in winter, and is there arrested by the frost, which ruins ancient buildings when exposed to wet. Ice occupies more space than water unfrozen, and thus, when formed, operates as so many wedges inserted between the stones of the arch, which, of course, are dislocated by this interposition, and in process of time the equilibrium of the arch is destroyed—Q. E. D. There spoke the President of the R. S. E. The removal of the old roof would not be attended with a penny of expense, nay, might be a saving were it thought proper to replace the flags which now cover it upon the side aisles, where they certainly originally lay. The ruble stones would do much more than pay the labourers. But though this be the case, and though the beauty of the ruin would be greatly increased, still I should first like to be well assured that the east window was not thereby deprived of shelter. It is to be seriously weighed that the architect who has shown so much skill, would not fail to modify the strength of the different parts of his building to the violence which they were to sustain; and as it never entered into his pious pate, that the east window was to be exposed to a thorough blast from west to east, it is possible he may not have constructed it of strength sufficient to withstand its fury, and therefore I say caution, caution.

"We are not like to suffer on this occasion the mortification incurred by my old friend and kinsman Mr. Keith of Ravelstone, a most excellent man, but the most irresolute in the would, more especially when the question was unloosing his purse strings. Conceiving himself to represent the great Earls-Marischal, and being certainly possessed of their castle and domains, he bethought him of the family vault, a curious Gothic building in the churchyard of Dunnotar: £10 it was reported would do the job—my good friend proffered £5—it would not do. Two years after he offered the full sum. A report was sent that the breaches were now so much increased that £20 would scarce serve. Mr. Keith humm'd and ha'd for three years more; then offered £20. The wind and rain had not waited his decision—less than £50 would not now serve. A year afterward he sent a cheque for the £50, which was returned by post, with the pleasing intelligence that the Earl-Marischal's aisle had fallen the preceding week. Your Lordship's prompt decision has probably saved Melrose Abbey from the same fate. I protest I often thought I was looking on it for the last time.

"I do not know how I could write in such a slovenly way as to lead your Lordship to think that I could recommend planting even the fertile soil of Bowden-moor in the month of April or May. Except evergreens, I would never transplant a tree betwixt March and Martinmas. Indeed I hold by the old proverb—plant a tree before Candlemas, and *command* it to grow—plant it after Candlemas, and you must *entreat* it. I only spoke of this as a thing which you might look at when your Lordship came here; and so your ideas exactly meet mine.

"I think I can read Lady Montagu's dream, or your

exhibited no symptom of eclipse. It turned out that he had joined the party whom he thus delighted, immediately after completing the last arrangements for his duel. It may be worth while to add, that several circumstances of his death are *exactly* reproduced in the duel scene of St. Ronan's Well.

* Some time after the disciples of John Knox had done their savage pleasure upon Melrose Abbey, the western part of the chancel was repaired in a most clumsy style to serve as a parish kirk.

lordship's, or my own, as our common vision, without a Daniel coming to judgment, for I methink me my promise related to some Botany Bay seeds, &c., sent me in gratitude by an honest gentleman who had once run some risk of being himself pendulous on a tree in this country. If they come to any thing pretty, we shall be too proud to have some of the produce at Ditton.

"Your hailstones have visited us—mingled, in Scripture phrase, with coals of fire. My uncle, now ninety-three years complete, lives in the house of Monklaw, where the offices were set on fire by the lightning. The old gentleman was on foot, and as active with his orders and directions as if he had been but forty-five. They wished to get him off, but he answered, 'Na, na, lads, I have faced mony a fire in my time, and I winna turn my back on this ane.' Was not this a good cut of an old Borderer?—Ever your Lordship's faithful,

W. Scott."

In the next of these letters Sir Walter refers to the sudden death of the exellent Primate of Ireland, the Honourable William Stuart, brother to his and Lord Montagu's dear friend Lady Louisa. His Grace appears to have been cut off in consequence of an over-dose of laudanum being accidentally administered to him.

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, 24th May, 1822.

"I do devoutly grieve for poor Lady Louisa. With a mind and indeed a bodily frame which suffers so peculiarly as hers under domestic affliction, I think she has had a larger share of it than any person almost in my acquaintance. Perhaps, in her case, celibacy, by extending the affections of so kind a heart through the remoter range of relationship, has rendered her more liable to such inroads upon her happiness. I remember several accidents similar to that of the Archbishop of Armagh. Henderson's (the player) was one. His wife, who administered the fatal draught, was the only person who remained ignorant of the cause of his death. One of the Duke's farmers, some years since, showed extraordinary resolution in the same situation. His father had given him a quantity of laudanum instead of some other medicine. The mistake was instantly discovered; but the young man had sufficient energy and force of mind to combat the operation of the drug. While all around him were stupid with fear, he rose, saddled his horse, and rode to Selkirk (six or seven miles;) thus saving the time that the doctor must have taken in coming to him. It is very curious that his agony of mind was able to suspend the operation of the drug until he had alighted, when it instantly began to operate. He recovered perfectly.

"Much obliged by the communication of the symbols adopted by the lady patronesses at the ball for the Scottish Corporation. Some seem very apocryphal. I have somewhere two lists of the badges of the Highland clans, which do not quite correspond with each other. I suppose they sometimes shifted their symbols. In general it was a rule to have an evergreen; and I have heard that the downfall of the Stuarts was supposed to be omened by their having chosen the oak for their badge of distinction. I have always heard that of the Scotts was the heath-flower, and that they were sometimes called *Heather-tops* from that circumstance. There is a rhyme in Satchells or elsewhere, which runs thus:—

'If heather-bills were corn of the best,
Buccleuch-mill would have a noble grist.'

In the Highlands I used sometimes to put heath in my hat, and was always welcomed as a kinsman by the Macdonalds, whose badge is *freugh*, or heather. By the way, Glengarry has had an affair with a cow, in which, rumour says, he has not come off quite so triumphantly as Guy of Warwick in an incident of the same nature. Lord pity them that should mention Tom Thumb.—Yours ever,

W. S."

"In the following he touches, among other things, on a strange book, called, "Cranbourne Chase," the performance of a clergyman mad upon sport, which had been sent to him by his friend William Rose;—the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, as celebrated by him and his rural allies at Melrose;—a fire which had devastated the New Forest, in the neighbourhood of Lord Montagu's seat of Beaulieu Abbey;—and the annual visit to Blair-Adam, which suggested the subject of another dramatic sketch, that of "Macduff's Cross."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, June 23, 1822.

"I am glad you Lordship likes Cranbourne Chase: if you had not, I should have been mortified in my self-conceit, for I thought you were *amadis* the person to relish it. If you bind it, pray insert at the beginning or end two or three leaves of blank paper, that I may insert some excellent anecdotes of the learned author, which I got from good authority. His *debût* in the sporting line was shooting an old cat, for which crime his father made him do penance upon bread and water for three months in a garret, where he amused himself with hunting rats upon a new principle. Is not this being game to the backbone?

"I expect to be at Abbotsford for two days about the 19th, that I may hold a little jollification with the inhabitants of Melrose and neighbourhood, who always have a gaudeamus, like honest men, on the anniversary of Waterloo. I shall then see what is doing at the Abbey. I am very tenaciously disposed to think, that when the expense of scaffolding, &c. is incurred, it would be very desirable to complete the thing by covering the arch with lead, which will secure it for 500 years. I doubt compositions standing our evil climate; and then the old story of vegetation taking place among the stones comes round again, and twenty years put it in as much danger as before. To be sure the lead will not look so picturesque as cement, but then the preservation will be complete and effectual.

"The fire in Bewly forest reminds me of a pine wood in Strathspey taking fire, which threatened the most destructive consequences to the extensive forests of the Laird of Grant. He sent the *fiery cross* (there peculiarly appropriate, and the last time, it is said, that it was used) through Glen-Urquhart and all its dependencies, and assembled 500 Highlanders with axes, who could only stop the conflagration by cutting a gap of 500 yards in width betwixt the burning wood and the rest of the forest. This occurred about 1770, and must have been a most tremendous scene.

"Adam Ferguson and I spent Saturday, Sunday, and Monday last in scouring the country with the Chief Baron and Chief Commissioner in search of old castles, crosses, and so forth; and the pleasant weather rendered the excursion delightful. The beasts of Reformers have left only the bottom-stone or socket of Macduff's Cross, on which is supposed to have been recorded the bounty of King Malcom Canmore to the unborn Thane of Fife. It was a comfort, however, to have seen any thing of it at all. As to your being in Bond Street, I can only say I pity you with all my heart. Castle Street is bad enough, even with the privilege of a hop-step-and-jump to Abbotsford, by way of shoemakers' holiday.

"I shall be delighted to hear that Lady Charlotte's bridal has taken place;* and as doubtless she destines a pair of gloves to one of her oldest friends and well-wishers, I hope her Ladyship will not allow the awful prospect before her to put out of her recollection that I have the largest pair of hands almost in Scotland, (now that Hugh Warrender is gone,) and that if there be seven-leagued gloves, as once there were seven-leagued boots, they will be most 'germain to the matter.' My respectful compliments to the bride-elect and her sisters, to Lady Montagu, and your own young ladies. I have scarce-room to add that I always am your Lordship's very faithful,

Walter Scott."

On the 12th of July, Sir Walter, as usual, left Edinburgh, but he was recalled within a week, by the business to which the following note refers:—

To D. Terry, Esq., London.

"Edinburgh, 31st July, 1822.

"My dear Terry,

"I have not a moment to think my own thoughts, or mind my own matters: would you were here, for we are in a famous perplexity: the motto on the St. Andrew's Cross to be presented to the King, is '*Righ Albainn, gu brath*,' that is, 'Long Life to the King of Scotland.' *Righ gu brath*, would make a good motto for a button—'the King for ever.' I wish to have Montrose's sword down with the speed of light, as I have promised to let my cousin, the Knight-Marshal, have it on this occasion. Pray send it down by the mail-coach. I can add no more, for the whole of this work has devolved on my shoulders. If Montrose's sword is not quite finished, send it nevertheless.†—Yours entirely,

W. Scott."

We have him here in the hot bustle of preparation for King George the Fourth's reception in Scotland,

* Lady Charlotte Scott, sister to the present Duke of Buccleuch, was married about this time to her cousin Lord Stopford, now Earl of Courtown.

† There is in the armoury at Abbotsford a sword presented by Charles I. to the great Marquis of Montrose—with Prince Henry's arms and cipher on one side of the blade, and his own on the other. Sir Walter had sent it to Terry for a new sheath, &c.

where his Majesty spent a fortnight in the ensuing August, as he had a similar period in Ireland the year before, immediately after his coronation. Before this time no Prince of the House of Hanover was known to have touched the soil of Scotland, except one, whose name had ever been held there in universal detestation—the cruel conqueror of Culloden—"the butcher Cumberland." Now that the very last dream of Jacobitism had expired with the Cardinal of York, there could be little doubt that all the northern Tories, of whatever shade of sentiment, would concur to give their lawful Sovereign a greeting of warm and devoted respect; but the feelings of the Liberals towards George IV. personally had been unfavourably tinctured, in consequence of several incidents in his history—above all—(speaking of the mass of population addicted to that political creed)—the unhappy dissensions and scandals which had terminated, as it were but yesterday, in the trial of his Queen. The recent asperities of the political press on both sides, and some even fatal results to which these had led, must also be taken into account. On the whole it was, in the opinion of cool observers, a very doubtful experiment, which the new, but not young, King, had resolved on trying. That he had been moved to do so in a very great measure, both directly and indirectly, by Scott, there can be no question; and I believe it will now be granted by all who can recall the particulars as they occurred, that his Majesty mainly owed to Scott's personal influence, authority, and zeal, the more than full realization of the highest hopes he could have indulged on the occasion of this northern progress.

Whether all the arrangements which Sir Walter dictated or enforced, were conceived in the most accurate taste, is a different question. It appeared to be very generally thought, when the first programmes were issued, that the Highlanders, their kilts, and their bagpipes, were to occupy a great deal too much space in every scene of public ceremony connected with the King's reception. With all respect and admiration for the noble and generous qualities which our countrymen of the Highland clans have so often exhibited, it was difficult to forget that they had always constituted a small, and almost always an unimportant part of the Scottish population; and when one reflected how miserably their numbers had of late years been reduced in consequence of the selfish and hard-hearted policy of their landlords, it almost seemed as if there was a cruel mockery in giving so much prominence to their pretensions. But there could be no question that they were picturesque—and their enthusiasm was too sincere not to be catching; so that by and by even the coolest-headed Sassenach felt his heart, like John of Argyle's, "warm to the tartan;" and high and low were in the humour, not only to applaud, but each, according to his station, to take a share in what might really be described as a sort of grand *terrification* of the Holyrood chapters in Waverley; George IV., *anno ætatis* 60, being well contented to enact "Prince Charlie," with the Great Unknown himself for his Baron Bradwardine, "*ad exuendas vel detrahendas caligas domini regis post battaliam.*"

But Sir Walter had as many parts to play as ever tasked the Protean genius of his friend Mathews; and he played them all with as much cordial energy as animated the exertions of any Henchman or Piper in the company. His severest duties, however, were those of stage-manager, and under these I sincerely believe any other human being's temper and patience would very soon have given way. The local magistrates, bewildered and perplexed with the rush of novelty, threw themselves on him for advice and direction about the merest trifles; and he had to arrange every thing, from the ordering of a procession to the cut of a button and the embroidering of a cross. Ere the green-room in Castle-street had dismissed provosts, and bailies, and deacon-conveners of the trades of Edinburgh, it was sure to be besieged by swelling chieftains, who could not agree on the relative positions their clans had occupied at Bannockburn, which they considered as constituting the authentic precedent for determining their own places, each at the head of his little theatrical *tail*, in the line of the King's escort between the Pier of Leith and the Canongate. It required all Scott's unwearied good-humour, and imperturbable power of face, to hear in becoming gravity the sputtering controversies of such fiery rivals, each regarding himself as a true potentate, the representative of Princes as ancient as Bourbon; and no man could have coaxed them into decent co-operation, except him whom all the Highlanders, from the haughtiest MacIvor to the slyest Callum-Beg, agreed in looking up to as the great restorer and blazoner of their traditionary glories. He had, however, in all this most delicate part of his administration, an admirable assistant in one who had also, by the direction of his literary talents, acquired no mean share of authority among the Celts—namely, the late General David Stewart of Garth, author of the "History of the Highland Regiments." On Garth (seamed all over with the scars of Egypt and Spain) devolved the Toy-Captainship of the *Celtic Club*, already alluded to as an association of young civilians enthusiastic for the promotion of the philabeg—and he drilled and conducted that motley array in such style, that they formed, perhaps, the most splendid feature in the whole of this plaided panorama. But he, too, had a potential voice in the conclave of rival chieftains—and, with the able backing of this honoured veteran, Scott succeeded finally in assuaging all their heats, and reducing their conflicting pretensions to terms of truce, at least, and compromise. A ballad (now included in his works) wherein these magnates were most adroitly flattered, was widely circulated among them and their followers, and was understood to have had a considerable share of the merit in this peace-making; but the constant hospitality of his table was a not less efficient organ of influence. A friend coming in upon him as a detachment of Duniewassails were enjoying, for the first time, his "Cogie now the King's Come," in his breakfast parlour, could not help whispering in his ear—"Your are just your own Lindesay in Marmion—*still thy verse hath charms*;"—and, indeed, almost the whole description thus referred to might have been applied to him when arranging the etiquettes of this ceremonial; for, among other persons in place and dignity who leaned to him for support on every question, was his friend and kinsman, the late worthy Sir Alexander Keith, Knight-Marischal of Scotland; and—

> "Heralds and pursuivants by name
> Bute, Islay, Marchmont, Rothesay came,
> Attendants on a king-at-arms,
> Whose hand the armorial truncheon held,
> That feudal strife had often quelled,
> When wildest its alarms.
> He was a man of middle age,
> In aspect manly, grave, and sage,
> As on King's errand come;
> But in the glances of his eye
> A penetrating, keen, and sly
> Expression found its home . . . . . .
> *Still is thy name in high account,*
> *And still thy verse hath charms;*
> Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,
> Lord Lyon King-at-arms."

About noon of the 14th of August, the royal yacht and the attendant vessels of war cast anchor in the Roads of Leith; but although Scott's ballad-prologue had entreated the clergy to "warstle for a sunny day," the weather was so unpropitious that it was found necessary to defer the landing until the 15th. In the midst of the rain, however, Sir Walter rowed off to the Royal George; and, says the newspaper of the day,—

"When his arrival alongside the yacht was announced to the King,—'What,' exclaimed his Majesty, 'Sir Walter Scott! The man in Scotland I most wish to see! Let him come up.' This distinguished Baronet then ascended the ship, and was presented to the King on the quarter-deck, where, after an appropriate speech in name of the ladies of Edinburgh, he presented his Majesty with a St. Andrew's Cross, in silver, which he (or subjects had provi-

ded for him.* The King, with evident marks of satisfaction, made a gracious reply to Sir Walter, received the gift in the most kind and condescending manner, and promised to wear it in public, in token of acknowledgment to the fair donors."

To this record let me add, that, on receiving the poet on the quarter-deck, his Majesty called for a bottle of Highland whisky, and having drunk his health in this national liquor, desired a glass to be filled for him. Sir Walter, after draining his own bumper, made a request that the King would condescend to bestow on him the glass out of which his Majesty had just drunk his health; and this being granted, the precious vessel was immediately wrapped up and carefully deposited in what he conceived to be the safest part of his dress. So he returned with it to Castle Street; but—to say nothing at this moment of graver distractions—on reaching his house he found a guest established there of a sort rather different from the usual visiters of the time. The poet Crabbe, to whom he had been introduced when last in London by Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street, after repeatedly promising to follow up the acquaintance by an excursion to the north, had at last arrived in the midst of these tumultuous preparations for the royal advent. Notwithstanding all such impediments, he found his quarters ready for him, and Scott entering, wet and hurried, embraced the venerable man with brotherly affection. The royal gift was forgotten—the ample skirt of the coat within which it had been packed, and which he had hitherto held cautiously in front of his person, slipped back to its more usual position—he sat down beside Crabbe, and the glass was crushed to atoms. His scream and gesture made his wife conclude that he had sat down on a pair of scissors, or the like; but very little harm had been done except the breaking of the glass, of which alone he had been thinking. This was a damage not to be repaired: as for the scratch that accompanied it, its scar was of no great consequence, as even when mounting the "*cat-dath*, or battle-garment" of the Celtic Club, he adhered, like his hero Waverley, to *the trews*.

By six o'clock next morning, Sir Walter, arrayed in the "Garb of old Gaul," (which he had of the Campbell tartan, in memory of one of his great grandmothers,) was attending a muster of these gallant Celts in the Queen Street Gardens, where he had the honour of presenting them with a set of colours, and delivered a suitable exhortation, crowned with their rapturous applause. Some members of the Club, all of course in their full costume, were invited to breakfast with him. He had previously retired for a little to his library, and when he entered the parlour, Mr. Crabbe, dressed in the highest style of professional neatness and decorum, with buckles in his shoes, and whatever was then considered as befitting an English clergyman of his years and station, was standing in the midst of half-a-dozen stalwart Highlanders, exchanging elaborate civilities with them, in what was at least meant to be French. He had come into the room shortly before, without having been warned about such company, and hearing the party conversing together in an unknown tongue, the polite old man had adopted, in his first salutation, what he considered as the universal language. Some of the Celts, on their part, took him for some foreign abbé or bishop, and were doing their best to explain to him that they were not the wild savages for which, from the startled glance he had thrown on their hirsute proportions, there seemed but too much reason to suspect he had taken them; others, more perspicacious, gave into the thing for the joke's sake; and there was high fun when Scott dissolved the charm of their stammering, by grasping Crabbe with one hand, and the nearest of these figures with the other, and greeted the whole group with the same hearty *good-morning*.

Perhaps no Englishman of these recent days ever arrived in Scotland with a scantier stock of information about the country and the people than (judging from all that he said, and more expressively looked) this illustrious poet had brought with him in August, 1822. It seemed as if he had never for one moment conceived that the same island, in which his peaceful parsonage stood, contained actually a race of men, and gentlemen too, owing no affinity with Englishmen, either in blood or in speech, and still proud in wearing, whenever opportunity served, a national dress of their own, bearing considerably more resemblance to an American Indian's than to that of an old-fashioned rector from the Vale of Belvoir. His eyes were opened wide—but they were never opened in vain; and he soon began, if not to comprehend the machinery which his host had called into motion on this occasion, to sympathize at least very warmly and amiably with all the enthusiasm that animated the novel spectacle before him.

I regret that, having been on duty with a troop of yeomanry cavalry on the 15th of August, I lost the opportunity of witnessing Mr. Crabbe's demeanour when this magnificent scene was first fully revealed upon him. The whole aspect of the city and its vicinity was, in truth, as new to the inhabitants as it could have been even to the Rector of Muston:—every height and precipice occupied by military of the regular army, or by detachments of these more picturesque irregulars from beyond the Grampians—lines of tents, flags, and artillery circling Arthur's Seat, Sailsbury Crags, and the Calton Hill—and the old black Castle, and its rock, wreathed in the smoke of repeated salvoes, while a huge banner-royal, such as had not waved there since 1745, floated and flapped over all;—every street, square, garden, or open space below paved with solid masses of silent expectants, except only where glittering lines of helmets marked the avenue guarded for the approaching procession. All captiousness of criticism sunk into nothing before the grandeur of this vision; and it was the same, or nearly so, on every subsequent day when the King chose to take part in the devised ceremonial. I forget where Sir Walter's place was on the 15th; but on one or other of these occasions I remember him seated in an open carriage, in the Highland dress, armed and accoutred as heroically as Garth himself, (who accompanied him,) and evidently in a most bardish state of excitement, while honest Peter Mathieson managed as best he might four steeds of a fierier sort than he had usually in his keeping—though perhaps, after all, he might be less puzzled with them than with the cocked-hat and regular London Jehu's flaxen wig which he, for the first and last time, displayed during "the royal fortnight."

The first procession from Leith to Holyrood was marshalled in strict adherence, it must be admitted, to the poetical programme—

> "Lord! how the pibrochs groan and yell!
> Macdonnell's ta'en the field himsel',
> Macleod comes branking o'er the fell—
> Carle, now the King's come!"

But I must transcribe the newspaper record in its details, because no one could well believe, unless he had a specimen of these before him, the extent to which the Waverley and Rob Roy *animus* was allowed to pervade the whole of this affair.

"Three Trumpeters Mid-Lothian Yeomanry Cavalry.
Squadron Mid-Lothian Yeomanry.
Two Highland Pipers.
Captain Campbell, and Tail of Breadalbane.
Squadron Scots Greys.
Two Highland Pipers.
Colonel Stewart of Garth and Celtic Club.
Sir Evan M'Gregor mounted on horseback, and Tail of M'Gregor.
Herald mounted.
Marischal trumpets mounted.
A Marischal groom on foot.
Three Marischal grooms abreast.
Two Grooms. { Six Marischal Esquires mounted, three abreast. } Two Grooms.

* This was the cross inscribed "Righ Albainn gu brath," about which Scott wrote to Terry on the 31st July.

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Henchman. { Groom. } **Knight Marischal mounted, with his baton of office.** { *Henchman.* Groom. }

Marischal rear-guard of Highlanders.
Sheriff mounted.
Sheriff officers.
Deputy Lieutenants in green coats, mounted.
Two Pipers.
General Graham Stirling, and Taal.
Barons of Exchequer.
Lord Clerk Register.
Lords of Justiciary and Session, in carriages.
Marquis of Lothian, Lord Lieutenant, mounted.
Two Heralds, mounted.
Glengarry mounted, and grooms.
Young Glengarry and two supporters—Tail.
Four Herald Trumpeters.
White Rod, mounted, and equerries.
Lord Lyon Depute, mounted, and grooms.
Earl of Errol, Lord High Constable, mounted.
Two Heralds, mounted.
Squadron Scots Greys.
Royal Carriage and Six, in which were, the Marquis of Graham, Vice-Chamberlain; Lord G. Beresford, Comptroller of the Household; Lord C. Bentinck, Treasurer of the Household; Sir R. H. Vivian, Equerry to the King; and two others of his Majesty's suite.
Ten Royal Footmen, two and two.
Sixteen Yeomen, two and two.
Archers. "THE KING, Archers.
attended by the Duke of Dorset, Master of the Horse, and the Marquis of Winchester, Groom of the Stole.
Sir Thomas Bradford and Staff.
Squadron Scots Greys.
Three Clans of Highlanders and banners.
Two Squadrons of Mid-Lothian Yeomanry.
Grenadiers of 77th regiment.
Two Squadrons Third dragoon Guards.
Band, and Scots Greys."

It is, I believe, of the dinner of the 15th August in Castle Street, that Crabbe penned the following brief record in his Journal:—"Whilst it is fresh in my memory, I should describe the day which I have just passed, but I do not believe an accurate description to be possible. What avails it to say, for instance, that there met at the sumptuous dinner, in all the costume of the Highlanders, the great chief himself, and officers of his company. This expresses not the singularity of appearance and manners—the peculiarities of men all gentlemen, but remote from our society—leaders of clans—joyous company. Then we had Sir Walter Scott's national songs and ballads, exhibiting all the feelings of clanship. I thought it an honour that Glengarry even took notice of me, for there were those, and gentlemen too, who considered themselves honoured by following in his train. There were also Lord Errol, and the Macleod, and the Fraser, and the Gordon, and the Ferguson;* and I conversed at dinner with Lady Glengarry, and did almost believe myself a harper, or bard, rather—for harp I cannot strike; and Sir Walter was the life and soul of the whole. It was a splendid festivity, and I felt I know not how much younger."—*Life of* CRABBE, p. 273.

The King took up his residence, during his stay in his northern dominions, at Dalkeith Palace, a noble estate of the Buccleuch family, within six miles of Edinburgh: and here his dinner-party almost daily included Sir Walter Scott, who, however, appeared to have derived more deep-felt gratification from his Majesty's kind and paternal attention to his juvenile host, (the Duke of Buccleuch was at that time only in his sixteenth year,) than from all the flattering condescension he lavished on himself. From Dalkeith the King repaired to Holyroodhouse two or three times, for the purpose of a levee or drawing-room. One Sunday he attended divine service in the Cathedral of St. Giles', when the decorum and silence preserved by the multitudes in the streets, struck him as a most remarkable contrast to the rapturous excitement of his reception on week days; and the scene was not less noticeable in the eyes of Crabbe, who says, in his Journal,—"The silence of Edinburgh on the Sunday is in itself devout." Another very splendid day was that of a procession from Holyrood to the Castle, whereof the whole ceremonial had obviously been arranged under Scott's auspices, for the purpose of calling up, as exactly as might be, the time-hallowed observance of "the Riding of the Parliament." Mr. Peel (then Secretary of State for the Home Department) was desirous of witnessing this procession privately, instead of taking a place in it, and he walked up the High Street accordingly, in company with Scott, some time before the royal cavalcade was to get into motion. The Poet was as little desirous of attracting notice as the Secretary, but he was soon recognised—and his companion, recently revisiting Scotland, expressed his lively remembrance of the enthusiastic veneration with which Scott's person was then greeted by all classes of his countrymen. When proposing Sir Walter's memory at a public dinner given to him in Glasgow, in December, 1836, Sir Robert Peel said—"I had the honour of accompanying his late Majesty as his Secretary of State, when he paid a visit to Edinburgh. I suppose there are many of you here who were present on that occasion, at that memorable scene, when the days of ancient chivalry were recalled—when every man's friendship seemed to be confirmed—when men met for the first time, who had always looked to each other with distrust, and resolved in the presence of their Sovereign to forget their hereditary feuds and animosities. In the beautiful language of Dryden,

> 'Men met each other with erected look—
> The steps were higher that they took;
> Friends to congratulate their friends would haste,
> And long inveterate foes saluted as they pass'd.'

"Sir Walter Scott took an active lead in these ceremonies. On the day on which his Majesty was to pass from Holyrood-house, he proposed to me to accompany him up the High Street, to see whether the arrangements were completed. I said to him, 'You are trying a dangerous experiment—you will never get through in privacy.' He said, 'They are entirely absorbed in loyalty.' But I was the better prophet; he was recognised from the one extremity of the street to the other, and never did I see such an instance of national devotion expressed."

The King at his first levee diverted many, and delighted Scott, by appearing in the full Highland garb,—the same brilliant *Stewart Tartans*, so called, in which certainly no Steuart, except Prince Charles, had ever before presented himself in the saloons of Holyrood. His majesty's Celtic toilette had been carefully watched and assisted by the gallant Laird of Garth, who was not a little proud of the result of his dexterous manipulations of the royal plaid, and pronounced the King "a vera pretty man." And he did look a most stately and imposing person in that beautiful dress—but his satisfaction therein was cruelly disturbed, when he discovered, towering and blazing among and above the genuine Glengarries and Macleods and Mac Gregors, a figure even more portly than his own, equipped, from a sudden impulse of loyal ardour

* Sir Walter's friend, the Captain of Huntleyburn, did not, as far as I remember, sport the Highland dress on this occasion, but no doubt his singing of certain Jacobite songs, &c., contributed to make Crabbe set him down for the chief of a clan. Sir Adam, however, is a Highlander by descent, though the name, *Mac-Eirries*, has been for two or three generations, translated into *Ferguson*; and even his reverend and philosophical father had, on at least one remarkable occasion, exhibited the warmth of his Celtic blood in perfection. In his essay on the Life of John Home, Scott says:—"Dr. Adam Ferguson went as chaplain to the Black Watch, or 42d Highland regiment, when that corps was first sent to the Continent. As the regiment advanced to the battle of Fontenoy, the commanding officer, Sir Robert Monro, was astonished to see the chaplain at the head of the column, with a broadsword drawn in his hand. He desired him to go to the rear with the surgeons, a proposal which Adam Ferguson spurned. Sir Robert at length told him that his commission did not entitle him to be present in the post which he had assumed—'D—n my commission,' said the warlike chaplain, throwing it towards his colonel. It may easily be supposed that the matter was only remembered as a good jest; but the future historian of Rome shared the honours and dangers of that dreadful day, where, according to the account of the French themselves, 'the Highland furies rushed in upon them with more violence than ever did a sea driven by a tempest.'"—*Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. XIX. p. 381.*

in an equally complete set of the self-same conspicuous Steuart tartans:—

"He caught Sir William Curtis in a kilt—
While throng'd the chiefs of every Highland clan
To hail their brother, Vich Ian Alderman."*

In truth, this portentous apparition cast an air of ridicule and caricature over the whole of Sir Walter's Celtified pageantry. A sharp little bailie from Aberdeen, who had previously made acquaintance with the worthy Guildhall Baronet, and tasted the turtle-soup of his voluptuous yacht, tortured him, as he sailed down the long gallery of Holyrood, by suggesting that, after all, his costume was not quite perfect. Sir William, who had been rigged out, as the auctioneers' advertisement say, "regardless of expense," exclaimed that he must be mistaken—begged he would explain his criticism—and as he spoke threw a glance of admiration on a *skene dhu*, (black knife,) which, like a true "warrior and hunter of deer," he wore stuck into one of his garters. "Oo ay—oo ay," quoth the Aberdonian; "the knife's a' right, mon,—but faar's your speen?"—(where's your spoon?) Such was Scott's story, but whether he "gave it a cocked-hat and walking-cane," in the hope of restoring the King's good-humour, so grievously shaken by this heroical *doppel-ganger*, it is not very necessary to inquire.

As in Hamlet, there was to be a play within the play; and, by his Majesty's desire, Mr. Murray's company performed, in his presence, the drama of *Rob Roy*. Mr. James Ballantyne's newspaper chronicle says:—

"In the pit and galleries the audience were so closely wedged together, that it would have been found difficult to introduce between any two, even the point of a sabre. It was astonishing to observe the patience, and even the good-nature with which the audience bore the extreme pressure. No one, indeed, could hope to better his situation by any effort; but the joy which was felt seemed completely to have absorbed every feeling of uneasiness. The boxes were filled with the rank, wealth, and beauty of Scotland. In this dazzling galaxy were observed the gallant Sir David Baird, Colonel Stewart, of Garth, Glengarry, the Lord Provost, and Sir Walter Scott; each of whom, as he entered, was greeted with loud acclamations.

"At ten minutes past eight, the shouts of the multitude announced the approach of the King, which was confirmed by an outrider, who galloped up with the intelligence. The universal feeling of breathless suspense which at this moment pervaded the audience, cannot be described, and will never be forgotten. Our gracious King now stood before his assembled subjects. The momentary pause of death-like stillness which preceded the King's appearance, gave a deep tone of enthusiasm to the shout—the prolonged and heartfelt shout, which for more than a minute rent the house. The waving of handkerchiefs, of the plumed bonnet, and the tartan scarf, added much to the impressive gladness of the scene which, at this instant, met the eye of the Chief of Chiefs. His Majesty, with his wonted affability, repeatedly bowed to the audience, while the kindly smile which beamed from his manly countenance expressed to this favoured portion of his loving subjects the regard with which he viewed them.

"The play was *Rob Roy*, which his Majesty, in the best taste, had been pleased to command, out of compliment, doubtless, to the country. During the whole performance, the King paid the greatest attention to the business of the stage, and laughed very heartily at some of the more odd incidents,—such as the precipitate retreat of Mr. Owen beneath the bed-clothes—the contest in which the Bailie displays his prowess with the *het* poker—and the Bailie's loss of an essential part of his wardrobe. His Majesty seemed fully to comprehend and to relish very much the good-natured wit and innocent sarcasms of the Glasgow magistrate. He laughed outright when this most humourous of functionaries said to Frank Osbaldistone, who was toying with Matty,—'Nane o' your Lon'on tricks;' when he mentioned the distinguished appellatives of Old and Young Nick, which the citizens had bestowed upon his father and himself; when he testified his distrust of Major Galbraith, who 'has mair brandy than brains,' and of the Highlanders, of whom he says, 'they may quarrel amang themselves now and then, and gie ane anither a stab wi' a dirk or a slash wi' a claymore; but, tak my word on't, they're ay sure to join in the lang run against a' wha hae purses in their pockets and breeks on their hinder-ends;' and when he said to the boy who returned him his hat and wig, 'that's a braw callant? ye'll be a man before your mither yet.'"

On the 24th of August, the Magistrates of Edinburgh entertained their Soversign with a sumptuous banquet in the Parliament-House; and upon that occasion also Sir Walter Scott filled a prominent station, having been invited to preside over one of the tables. But the most striking homage (though apparently an unconscious one) that his genius received during this festive period, was, when his Majesty, after proposing the health of his hosts, the Magistrates and Corporation of the northern capital, rose and said there was one toast more, and but one, in which he must request the assembly to join him,—"I shall simply give you," said he, "*The Chieftains and Clans of Scotland*—and prosperity to the Land of Cakes." So completely had this hallucination taken possession, that nobody seems to have been startled at the time by language which thus distinctly conveyed his Majesty's impression, that the marking and crowning glory of Scotland consisted in the Highland clans and their chieftains.

Scott's early associations, and the prime labours and honours of his life had been so deeply connected with the Highlands, that it was no wonder he should have taught himself to look on their clans and chiefs with almost as much affection and respect as if he had more than a scantling of their blood in his veins. But it was necessary to be an eye-witness of this royal visit, in order to comprehend the extent to which he had allowed his imagination to get the mastery over him as to all these matters; and perhaps it was necessary to understand him thoroughly on such points, in his personal relations, feelings, and demeanour, before one could follow his genius to advantage in some of its most favoured and delightful walks of exertion. The strongest impression, however, which the whole affair left on my mind was, that I had never till then formed any just notion of his capacity for practical dealing and rule among men. I do not think he had much in common with the statesmen and diplomatists of his own age and country; but I am mistaken if Scott could not have played in other days either the Cecil or the Gondomar; and I believe no man, after long and intimate knowledge of any other great poet, has ever ventured to say, that he could have conceived the possibility of any such parts being adequately filled on the active stage of the world, by a person in whom the powers of fancy and imagination had such predominant sway, as to make him in fact live three or four lives habitually in place of one. I have known other literary men of energy perhaps as restless as his; but all such have been entitled to the designation of *busy-bodies*—busy almost exclusively about trifles, and above all, supremely and constantly conscious of their own remarkable activity, and rejoicing and glorying in it. Whereas Scott, neither in literary labour nor in continual contact with the affairs of the world, ever did seem aware that he was making any very extraordinary exertion. The machine, thus gigantic in its impetus, moved so easily that the master had no perception of the obstructions it overcame—in fact, no measure for its power. Compared to him, all the rest of the *poet* species that I have chanced to observe nearly—with but one glorious exception—have seemed to me to do little more than sleep through their lives—and at best to fill the sum with dreams; and I am persuaded that, taking all ages and countries together, the rare examples of indefatigable energy, in union with serene self-possession of mind and character, such as Scott's, must be sought for in the roll of great sovereigns, or great captains, rather than in that of literary genius.

In the case of such renowned practical masters, it has been usual to account for their apparent calmness amidst the stirring troubles of the world, by imputing to them callousness of the affections. Perhaps injustice has been done by the supposition; but at all events, hardly could any one extend it to the case of the placid man of the imaginative order;

* Byron's Age of Bronze.

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—a great depicter of man and nature, especially, would seem to be, *ex vi termini*, a profound sympathizer with the passions of his brethren, with the weakness as well as with the strength of humanity. Such assuredly was Scott. His heart was as "ramm'd with life" (to use a phrase of Ben Johnson's) as his brain; and I never saw him tried in a tenderer point than he was during the full whirl of splendour and gayety that seemed to make every brain but his dizzy in the Edinburgh of August, 1822.

Few things had ever given him so much pleasure as William Erskine's promotion to the Bench. It seemed to have restored his dearest friend to content and cheerfulness, and thus to have doubled his own sources of enjoyment. But Erskine's constitution had been shaken before he attained this dignity; and the anxious delicacy of his conscience rendered its duties oppressive and overwhelming. In a feeble state of body, and with a sensitive mind stretched and strained, a silly calumny, set a-foot by some envious gossip, was sufficient literally to chase him out of life. On his return to Edinburgh about the 20th of July, Scott found him in visible danger; he did whatever friendship could do to comfort and stimulate him; but all was in vain. Lord Kinnedder survived his elevation hardly half a year—and who that observed Scott's public doings during the three or four weeks I have been describing, could have suspected that he was daily and nightly the watcher of a deathbed, or the consoler of orphans; striving all the while against

> "True earnest sorrow, rooted miseries,
> Anguish in grain, vexations ripe and blown?"

I am not aware that I ever saw him in such a state of dejection as he was when I accompanied him and his friend Mr. Thomas Thomson from Edinburgh to Queensferry, in attendance upon Lord Kinnedder's funeral. Yet that was one of the noisiest days of the royal festival, and he had to plunge into some scene of high gayety the moment after he returned. As we halted in Castle Street, Mr. Crabbe's mild, thoughtful face, appeared at the window, and Scott said, on leaving me,—"Now for what our old friend there puts down as the crowning curse of his poor player in the Borough—

> 'To hide in rant the heart-ache of the night.'"

The very few letters that Sir Walter addressed to friends at a distance during the King's stay in Scotland, are chiefly occupied with the calumny which proved fatal to Erskine,—the pains which his friends took, at his request, to sift it to the bottom,—their conviction that he had been charged with an improper *liaison*, without even a shadow of justice,—and their ineffectual efforts to soothe his morbid sensibility. In one of these letters Scott says,—

"The legend would have done honour to the invention of the devil himself, especially the object (at least the effect) being to torture to death one of the most soft-hearted and sensitive of God's creatures. I think it was in his nature to like female society in general better than that of men; he had also what might have given some slight shadow to these foul suspicions, an air of being particular in his attentions to women, a sort of Philandering which I used to laugh at him about. The result of a close investigation having been completely satisfactory, one would have thought the business at an end—but the shaft had hit the mark. At first, while these matters were going on, I got him to hold up his head pretty well; he dined with me, went to the play with my wife—got court dresses for his daughters, whom Lady Scott was to present, and behaved, in my presence at least, like a man, feeling indeed painfully, but bearing up as an innocent man ought to do. Unhappily I could only see him by snatches—the whole business of the reception was suddenly thrown on my hands, and with such a general abandonment, I may say, on all sides, that to work from morning to night was too little time to make the necessary arrangements. In the meantime, poor Erskine's nerves became weaker and weaker; he was by nature extremely sensitive, easily moved to smiles or tears, and deeply affected by all those circumstances in society to which men of the world become hardened; as, for example, formal introductions to people of rank, and so forth; he was unhappily haunted by the idea that his character, assailed as it had been, was degraded in the eyes of the public, and no argument could remove this delusion. At length fever and delirium came on; he was bled repeatedly and very copiously, a necessary treatment perhaps, but which completely exhausted his weak frame. On the morning of Tuesday, the day of the King's arrival, he waked from his sleep, ordered his window to be opened that he might see the sun once more, and was a dead man immediately after. And so died a man whose head and heart were alike honourable to his kind, and died merely because he could not endure the slightest stain on his reputation.—The present is a scene of great bustle and interest, but though I *must* act my part, I am not, thank God, obliged at this moment to write about it."

In another letter, of nearly the same date, Scott says—

"It would be rather difficult for any one who has never lived much among my good country-people, to comprehend that an idle story of a love-intrigue, a story alike base and baseless, should be the death of an innocent man of high character, high station, and well advanced in years. It struck into poor Erskine's heart and soul, however, quite as cruelly as any similar calumny ever affected a modest woman—he withered and sunk. There is no need that I should say peace be with him! If ever a pure spirit quitted this vale of tears, it was William Erskine's. I must turn to and see what can be done about getting some pension for his daughters."

The following letter to his son Walter, now a lieutenant in the 15th Hussars, but not yet returned from his German travels, was written a few days later:—

"My dearest Walter,

"This town has been a scene of such giddy tumult since the King's coming, and for a fortnight before, that I have scarce had an instant to myself. For a long time every thing was thrown on my hand, and even now, looking back, and thinking how many difficulties I had to reconcile, objections to answer, prejudices to smooth away, and purses to open, I am astonished that I did not fever in the midst of it. All, however, has gone off most happily; and the Edinburgh populace have behaved themselves like so many princes. In the day when he went in state from the Abbey to the Castle with the Regalia borne before him, the street was lined with the various trades and professions, all arranged under their own deacons and office-bearers, with white wands in their hands, and with their banners, and so forth; as they were all in their Sunday's clothes, you positively saw nothing like mob, and their behaviour, which was most steady and respectful towards the King, without either jostling or crowding, had a most singular effect. They shouted with great emphasis, but without any running or roaring, each standing as still in his place as if the honour of Scotland had depended on the propriety of his behaviour. This made the scene quite new to all who had witnessed the Irish reception. The Celtic Society, "all plaided and plumed in their tartan array," mounted guard over the regalia while in the Abbey with great military order and steadiness. They were exceedingly nobly dressed and armed. There were two or three hundred Highlanders besides, brought down by their own Chiefs, and armed *cap-à-pie*. They were all put under my immediate command by their various chiefs, as they would not have liked to have received orders from each other—so I acted as Adjutant-General, and had scores of them parading in Castle Street every day, with *piob agus brattach*, namely, pipe and banner. The whole went off excellently well. Nobody was so gallant as the Knight-Marischal, who came out with a full retinue of Esquires and Yeomen,—Walter and Charles were his pages. The Archers acted as gentlemen-pensioners, and kept guard in the interior of the palace. Mamma, Sophia, and Anne, were presented, and went through the scene with suitable resignation and decorum. In short, I leave the girls to tell you all about balls, plays, sermons, and other varieties of this gay period. To-morrow or next day the King sets off; and also take my departure, being willing to see Canning before he goes off for India, if, indeed, they are insane enough to part with a man of his power in the House of Commons at this eventful crisis.

"You have heard of poor Lord Londonderry (Castlereagh's) death by his own hand, in a fit of insanity. This explains a story he once told me of having seen a ghost and which I thought was a very extraordinary narrative from the lips of a man of so much sense and steadiness of nerve. But no doubt he had been subject to aberrations of mind, which often create such phantoms.

"I have had a most severe personal loss in my excellent friend Lord Kinnedder, whose promotion lately rejoiced

me so much. I leave you to judge what pain this must have given me, happening as it did in the midst of a confusion from which it was impossible for me to withdraw myself. . . . . .

"All our usual occupations have been broken in upon by this most royal row. Whether Abbotsford is in progress or not I scarcely know; in short, I cannot say that I have thought my own thoughts, or wrought my own work, for at least a month past. The same hurry must make me conclude abruptly.—Ever yours, most affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

The ghost story to which the foregoing letter alludes, was this:—Lord Castlereagh, when commanding, in early life, a militia regiment in Ireland, was stationed one night in a large desolate country-house, and his bed was at one end of a long dilapidated room, while at the other extremity a great fire of wood and turf had been prepared within a huge gaping old-fashioned chimney. Waking in the middle of the night, he lay watching from his pillow the gradual darkening of the embers on the hearth, when suddenly they blazed up, and a naked child stepped from among them upon the floor. The figure advanced slowly towards Lord Castlereagh, rising in stature at every step, until on coming within two or three paces of his bed, it had assumed the appearance of a ghastly giant, pale as death, with a bleeding wound on the brow, and eyes glaring with rage and despair. Lord Castlereagh leaped from his bed, and confronted the figure in an attitude of defiance. It retreated before him, diminishing as it withdrew, in the same manner that it had previously shot up and expanded; he followed it pace by pace, until the original childlike form disappeared among the embers. He then went back to his bed, and was disturbed no more. This story Lord Castlereagh told with perfect gravity at one of his wife's supper parties in Paris in 1815, when Scott was among the hearers. I had often heard him repeat it—before the fatal catastrophe of August, 1822, afforded the solution in the text—when he merely mentioned it as a singularly vivid dream, the product probably of a feverish night following upon a military debauch,—but affording a striking indication of the courageous temper, which proved true to itself even amidst the terrors of fancy.

Circumstances did not permit Sir Walter to fulfil his intention of being present at the public dinner given in Liverpool, on the 30th August, to Mr. Canning, who on that occasion delivered one of the most noble of all his orations, and soon afterwards, instead of proceeding, as had been arranged, to take on him the supreme government of British India, was called to fill the place in the Cabinet which Lord Londonderry's calamitous death had left vacant. The King's stay in Scotland was protracted until the 29th of August. He then embarked from the Earl of Hopetoun's magnificent seat on the Firth of Forth, and Sir Walter had the gratification of seeing his Majesty, in the moment of departure, confer the honour of knighthood on two of his friends—both of whom, I believe, owed some obligation in this matter to his good offices—namely, Captain Adam Ferguson, deputy-keeper of the Regalia, and Henry Raeburn, R. A., properly selected as the representative of the fine arts in Scotland. This amiable man and excellent artist, however, did not long survive the receipt of his title. Sir Henry died on the 8th of July, 1823—the last work of his pencil having been, as already mentioned, a portrait of Scott.

On the eve of the King's departure he received the following communication:—

To Walter Scott, Bart., &c. &c., Castle Street.

"Edinburgh, August 28, 1822.

"My dear Sir,

"The King has commanded me to acquaint you, that he cannot bid adieu to Scotland without conveying to you individually his warm personal acknowledgments for the deep interest you have taken in every ceremony and arrangement connected with his Majesty's visit, and for your ample contributions to their complete success.

"His Majesty well knows how many difficulties have been smoothed, and how much has been effected by your unremitting activity, by your knowledge of your countrymen, and by the just estimation in which they hold you.

"The King wishes to make you the channel of conveying to the Highland chiefs and their followers, who have given to the varied scene which we have witnessed so peculiar and romantic a character, his particular thanks for their attendance, and his warm approbation of their uniform deportment. He does justice to the ardent spirit of loyalty by which they are animated, and is convinced that he could offer no recompense for their services so gratifying to them as the assurance, which I now convey, of the esteem and approbation of their Sovereign.

"I have the honour to be, my dear Sir, with great truth, most truly and faithfully yours,

ROBERT PEEL."

Sir Walter forwarded copies of Mr. Peel's paragraph touching the Highlanders to such heads of clans as had been of late in his counsels, and he received very grateful letters in return from Macleod, Glengarry, Sir Evan MacGregor, and several others of the order, on their return to the hills—as also from the Countess (now Duchess-Countess) of Sutherland, whose son, Lord Francis, had, as she playfully expressed it, "been out" as her representative at the head of the most numerous and best appointed of all the kilted detachments. Glengarry was so delighted with what the Secretary of State had said, that the paragraph in question soon found its way to the newspapers; and then there appeared, in some Whig journal, a sarcastic commentary upon it, insinuating that, however highly the King might now choose to eulogize the poet and his Celtic allies, his Majesty had been considerably annoyed with much of their arrangements and proceedings, and that a visible coolness had, in fact, been manifested towards Sir Walter during the King's stay in the north. As this idle piece of malice has been revived in some formal biographies of recent date, I may as well dispose of it for ever, by extracting the following notes, which passed in the course of the next month between Scott and the Secretary of the Admiralty, whose official duty, I presume, it was to be in waiting at Ramsgate when the King disembarked from his yacht.—The "Dean Cannon" to whom these notes allude, was a clerical humorist, Dean of a fictitious order, who sat to Mr. Theodore Hooke for the jolly "Rector of Fudle-cum-Pipes" in his novel of "Maxwell."

To J. W. Croker, Esq., M. P., Admiralty, London.

"Abbotsford, Thursday.

"My dear Croker,

"What have you been doing this fifty years? We had a jolly day or two with your Dean Cannon at Edinburgh. He promised me a call if he returned through the Borders; but, I suppose, passed in the midst of the royal turmoil, or, perhaps, got tired of sheep's-head and haggis in the pass of Killiekrankie. He was wrong if he did: for even Win Jenkins herself discovered that where there were heads there must be bodies; and my forest haunch of mutton is noway to be sneezed at.

"Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Walter Scott, Bart., Abbotsford.

"Admiralty, Sept. 29, 1822.

"My dear Scott,

"I wish it *were* 'fifty years since' you had heard of me, as, perhaps, I should find myself by and by celebrated, like the Baron of Bradwardine and some other friends of 'sixty years since.'

"I have not seen our Dean since his Scotch tour. I am sorry he was with you in such a period of bustle, as I should have liked to hear his sober observations on the usual style of Edinburgh society.

"I had the honour of receiving his Majesty on his return, when he, after the first three words, began most graciously to tell me 'all about our friend Scott.' Some silly or malicious person, his Majesty said, had reported that there had been some coolness between you, but, he added, that it was utterly false, and that he was, in every respect, highly pleased and gratified, and. he said, *grateful* for the devoted attention you had paid him; and he celebrated very warmly the success that had attended all your arrangements.

"Peel has sung your praises to the same tune; and I have been flattered to find that both the King and Peel thought me so much your friend that they, as it were,

reported to me the merit of 'my friend Scott.'—Yours ever,

J. W. CROKER."

If Sir Walter lost something in not seeing more of Dean Cannon—who, among other social merits, sang the Ballads of Robin Hood with delightful skill and effect—there was a great deal better cause for regret in the unpropitious time selected for Mr. Crabbe's visit to Scotland. In the glittering and tumultuous assemblages of that season, the elder bard was (to use one of his friends favourite similitudes) very like *a cow in a fremd loaning*; and though Scott could never have been seen in colours more likely to excite admiration, Crabbe had hardly any opportunity of observing him in the everyday loveableness of his converse. Sir Walter's enthusiastic excitement about the kilts and the processions, seemed at first utterly incomprehensible to him; but by degrees he caught not a little of the spirit of the time, and even indited a set of stanzas, which have perhaps no other merit than that of reflecting it. He also perceived and appreciated Scott's dexterous management of prejudices and pretensions. He exclaims, in his Journal,—"What a keen discriminating man is my friend!" But I shall ever regret that Crabbe did not see him at Abbotsford among his books, his trees, and his own good simple peasants. They had, I believe, but one quiet walk together, and it was to the ruins of St. Anthony's Chapel and Muschat's Cairn, which the deep impression made on Crabbe by the Heart of Mid-Lothian had given him an earnest wish to see. I accompanied them, and the hour so spent, in the course of which the fine old man gave us some most touching anecdotes of his early struggles, was a truly delightful contrast to the bustle and worry of miscellaneous society which consumed so many of his few hours in Scotland. Scott's family were more fortunate than himself in this respect. They had from infancy been taught to reverence Crabbe's genius, and they now saw enough of him to make them think of him ever afterwards with tender affection.

CHAPTER LVII.

MONS MEG—JACOBITE PEERAGES—INVITATION FROM THE GALASHIELS POET—PROGRESS OF ABBOTSFORD HOUSE—LETTERS TO JOANNA BAILLIE—TERRY—LORD MONTAGU, ETC.—COMPLETION AND PUBLICATION OF PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.—1822—1823.

THOUGH Mr. Crabbe found it necessary to leave Scotland without seeing Abbotsford, this was not the case with many less celebrated friends from the south, who had flocked to Edinburgh at the time of the Royal Festival. Sir Walter's house was, in his own phrase, "like a cried fair," during several weeks after the King's departure; and as his masons were then in the highest activity upon the addition to the building, the bustle and tumult within doors and without was really perplexing. We shall find him confessing that the excitement of the Edinburgh scenes had thrown him into a fever, and that he never needed repose more. He certainly never had less of it.

Nor was an unusual influx of English pilgrims the only legacy of "the glorious days" of August. A considerable number of persons who had borne a part in the ceremonies of the King's reception, fancied that their exertions had entitled them to some substantial mark of royal approbation; and post after post brought longwinded despatches from these clamorous enthusiasts to him who, of all Scotchmen, was supposed to enjoy, as to matters of this description, the readiest access to the fountain of honour. To how many of these applications he accorded more than a civil answer I cannot tell; but I find that the Duke of York was too good a *Jacobite* not to grant favourable consideration to his request, that one or two poor half-pay officers who had distinguished themselves in the van of *the Celts*, might be, as opportunity offered, replaced in Highland regiments, and so reinvested with the untheatrical "Garb of Old Gaul."

Sir Walter had also a petition of his own. This related to a certain gigantic piece of ordnance, celebrated in the history of the Scottish Jameses under the title of *Mons Meg*, and not forgotten in Drummond's Macaronics—

——— Sicuti Mons Megga crackasset,———

which had been removed from Edinburgh Castle to the Tower of London, after the campaign of 1745. When Scott next saw the King, after he had displayed his person on the chief bastion of the old fortress, he lamented the absence of Mons Meg on that occasion in language which his Majesty could not resist. There ensued a correspondence with the official guardians of Meg—among others, with the Duke of Wellington, then Master-General of the Ordnance, and though circumstances deferred her restoration, it was never lost sight of, and took place finally when the Duke was Prime Minister, which I presume smoothed petty obstacles, in 1828.

But the serious petition was one in which Sir Walter expressed feelings in which I believe every class of his fellow-countrymen were disposed to concur with him very cordially—and certainly none more so than the generous King himself. The object which the poet had at heart was the restoration of the Scottish peerages forfeited in consequence of the insurrections of 1715 and 1745; and the honourable families, in whose favour this liberal measure was soon afterwards adopted, appear to have vied with each other in the expression of their gratefulness for his exertions on their behalf. The following paper seems to be his sketch of the grounds on which the representatives of the forfeited Peers ought to approach the Ministry; and the view of their case thus suggested, was, it will be allowed, dexterously selected, and persuasively enforced.

"*Hints respecting an Application for a Reversal of the Attainders in* 1715 *and* 1745.

"Sept. 1822.

"A good many years ago Mr. Erskine of Mar, and other representatives of those noble persons who were attainted for their accession to the Rebellions of 1715 and 1745, drew up a humble petition to the King, praying that his Majesty, taking into his royal consideration the long time which had since elapsed, and the services and loyalty of the posterity of the attainted Peers, would be graciously pleased to recommend to Parliament an Act for reversing all attainders passed against those who were engaged in 1715 and 1745, so as to place their descendants in the same situation, as to rank, which they would have held, had such attainders never taken place. This petition, it is believed, was proposed about the time that an Act was passed for restoring the forfeited estates, still in possession of the Crown; and it was imagined that this gracious act afforded a better opportunity for requesting a reversal of the attainders than had hitherto occurred, especially as it was supposed that the late Lord Melville, the great adviser of the one measure, was equally friendly to the other. The petition in question, however, it is believed, never was presented to the King—it having been understood that the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, was hostile to it, and that, therefore, it would be more prudent not to press it then. It is thought by some, that looking to his Majesty's late paternal and most gracious visit to his ancient kingdom of Scotland, in which he seemed anxious to revive and encourage all the proud recollections of its former renown, and to cherish all associations connected with the events of the olden times, as by the display of the Regalia, by the most distinguished attention to the Royal Archers, and by other similar observances, a fit time has now arrived for most humbly soliciting the royal attention to the state of those individuals, who but for the conscientious, though mistaken loyalty of their ancestors, would now have been in the enjoyment of ancient and illustrious honours.

"Two objections might, perhaps occur; but it is hoped that a short statement may be sufficient to remove them. It may be thought, that if the attainders of 1715 and 1745 were reversed, it would be unjust *not* to reverse all attainders which had ever passed in any period of the English history—a measure which might give birth to such a multiplicity of claims for ancient English Peerages, forfeited at different times, as might affect seriously the House of Lords, so as both to render that assembly improperly numerous, and to lower the precedency of many Peers

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who now sit there. To this it is submitted, as a sufficient answer, that there is no occasion for reversing any attainders previous to the accession of the present royal family, and that the proposed Act might be founded on a gracious declaration of the King, expressive simply of his wish to have all attainders reversed, for offences against his *own* royal house of Hanover. This limitation would at once give ample room for the display of the greatest magnanimity on the part of the King, and avoid the bad consequences indicated in the objection; for, with the exception of Lords Derwentwater and Widdrington, who joined in the Rebellion of 1715, the only Peers who joined in any insurrection against the Hanover family were Peers of Scotland, who, by their restoration, in so far as the families are not extinct, could not add to the number of the House of Lords, but would only occasion a small addition to the number of those already entitled to vote at the election of the Sixteen Representative Peers. And it seems plain, that in such a limitation, there would be no more injustice than might have been alleged against the Act by which the forfeited estates, still in the hands of Government, were restored; while no compensation was given for such estates as had been already sold by Government. The same argument might have been stated, with equal force, against the late reversal of the attainder of Lord Edward Fitzgerald; it might have been asked, with what sort of justice can you reverse this attainder, and refuse to reverse all attainders that ever took place either in England or Ireland? But no such objection was made, and the recommendation of the King to Parliament was received almost with acclamation. And now that the family of Lord E. Fitzgerald have been restored to the rights which he had forfeited, the petition in the present case will, it is hoped, naturally strike his Majesty with greater force, when he is pleased to recollect that his lordship's attainder took place on account of accession to a rebellion, of which the object was to introduce a foreign force into Ireland, to overturn the Constitution, and to produce universal misery; while the elder attainders now in question were the results of rebellion, undertaken from views of conscientious, though mistaken loyalty, in many individuals, who were much attached to their country, and to those principles of hereditary succession to the Throne in which they had been educated, and which, in almost every instance, ought to be held sacred.

"A second objection, perhaps, might be raised, on the ground that the reversal of the attainders in question would imply a censure against the conduct of that Government by which they were passed, and consequently an approval, in some measure, of those persons who were so attainted. But it might as well be said that the reversal of Lord E. Fitzgerald's attainder implied a censure on the Parliament of Ireland, and on the King, by whom that act had been passed; or that the restoration of an officer to the rank from which he had been dismissed by the sentence of a court-martial, approved of by the King, would imply a censure on that court, or on that King. Such implication might, at all events, be completely guarded against by the preamble of the proposed Act—which might condemn the Rebellion in strong terms—but reverse the attainders, from the magnanimous wish of the King to obliterate the memory of all former discord, so far as his own house had been the object of attack, and from a just sense of the meritorious conduct and undoubted loyalty of the descendants of those unfortunate, though criminal individuals. And it is humbly submitted, that as there is no longer any Pretender to his Majesty's Crown, and as all classes of his subjects now regard him as both *de jure* and *de facto* the only true representative of our ancient race of Princes—now is the time for such an act of royal magnanimity, and of Parliamentary munificence, by which the honour of so many noble houses would be fully restored; while, at the same time, the *station* of the representatives of certain other noble houses, who have assumed titles, their right to which is, under the present law, much more than doubtful, would be fully confirmed, and placed beyond the reach of objection.

In Scott's collection of miscellaneous MSS., the article that stands next to this draft of "Hints," is one that I must indulge myself with placing in similar juxtaposition here. I have already said something of his friendly relations with the people of the only manufacturing village in his neighbourhood. Among other circumstances highly grateful to them was his regular attendance on the day when their Deacon and Convener for the year entered on his office—which solemnity occurred early in October. On the approach of these occasions, he usually received an invitation in verse, penned by a worthy weaver named Thomson, but known and honoured all over Teviotdale as "the Galashiels Poet." At the first of these celebrations that ensued the forthcoming of Rob Roy, this bard delighted his compeers, and not less their guest, by chanting a clever parody on the excellent song of "Donald *Caird*," i. e. *Tinker*, the chorus being—in place of Scott's

> "Dinna let the Sherra ken
> Donald Cairdʼs come again;"—
> "*Think ye does the Sherra ken*
> *Rob Mac Gregorʼs come again:*"

and that was thenceforth a standing ditty on the day of the Deacon. The Sheriff's presence at the installation of 1822 was requested by the following epistle:—

To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., Abbotsford.
"*Murray's Inn, Galashiels, 1st Oct.* 1822.

"This year we rather 'gin to falter
If an epistle we should send ye.
Say some, 'Ye only plague Sir Walter,
He canna ilka year attend ye:
Last year, nae doubt, he condescended,
Just to be quit o' your palaver;
But he could ne'er ha'e apprehended
That ilka year ye'd ask the favour.
He's dined but lately wi' the King,
And round him there is sic a splendour,
He winna stoop to such a thing,
For a' the reasons ye can render:
Content yourselves wi' John o' Skye;
Your impudence deserves a wiper:
Ye'll never rest till he grows shy,
And e'en refuse to send his piper.'

"These reasons a' may be withstood,
Wi' nae pretensions for a talker:
Ye mauna lightly Deacon Wood,
But dine wi' him like Deacon Walker.
Your fav'rite dish is not forgot:
Imprimis for your bill of fare,
We'll put a sheep's-head i' the pot,—
Ye'se get the cantle for your share:
And we've the best o' "Mountain dew,"
Was gather'd whare ye mauna list,
In spite o' a' the gauger crew,
By Scotland's [*] children o' the mist.
Last year your presence made us canty,
For which we hae ye yet to thank;
This year, in faith, we canna want ye,
Ye're absence wad mak sic a blank.—
As a' our neibors are our friends,
The company is not selected;
But for to mak ye some amends,
There's not a social soul neglected.

"We wish you luck o' your new biggin';
There's no the like o't on the Tweed;
Ye'll no mistak it by its riggin','—
It is an oddity indeed.
To Lady Scott our kind respect—
To her and to Miss Ann our thanks;
We hope this year they'll no neglect
Again to smile upon our ranks.
Upon our other kind regards
At present we will no be treating,
For some discourse we maun hae spared
To raise the friendly crack at meeting.
So ye maun come, if ye can win—
Gie's nae excuse, like common gentry;—
If we suspect, as sure's a gun,
On ABBOTSFORD we'll place a sentry."

It was a pleasant thing to see the annual procession of these weavers of Galashiels—or (for they were proud enough to adopt the name) of *Ganders-cleuch*—as they advanced from their village with John of Skye at their head, and the banners of their craft all displayed, to meet Sir Walter and his family at the ford, and escort them in splendour to the scene of the great festivity. And well pleased was he to "share the triumph and partake the gale" of Deacon Wood or Deacon Walker—and a proud man was Laureate Thomson when his health was proposed by the "brother bard" of Abbotsford. At this Galashiels festival the Ettrick Shepherd also was a

[*] The old song says,—
"This is no mine ain house,
I ken by the riggin o't, &c."—*See Collection.*

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regular attendant. He used to come down the night before, and accompany Sir Walter in the only carriage that graced the march; and many of Hogg's best ballads were produced for the first time amidst the cheers of the men of Ganders-cleuch. Meeting Poet Thomson not long since in a different part of the country, he ran up to me, with the tears in his eyes, and exclaimed, "Eh, sir, it does me good to see you—for it puts me in mind of the grand days in our town, when Scott and Hogg were in their glory—and we were a' leal Tories!" Galashiels is now a nest of Radicalism—but I doubt if it be a happier place than in the times of Deacon Wood and Deacon Walker.

In the following letters we have, as many readers may think, rather too much of the "new biggin" and "the riggin o't"—but I cannot consent to curtail such curiously characteristic records of the days when Scott was finishing Peveril of the Peak, and projecting his inimitable portraitures of Louis XI. and Charles of Burgundy.

To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.

"Abbotsford, October 5, 1822.

"My dear Terry,

"I have been 'a *vixen* and a *griffin*,' as Mrs. Jenkins says, for many days—in plain truth, very much out of heart. I know you will sympathize particularly with me on the loss of our excellent friend W. Erskine, who fell a victim to a hellishly false story which was widely circulated concerning him, or rather I should say to the sensibility of his own nature, which could not endure even the shadow of reproach—like the ermine, which is said to pine to death if its fur is soiled. And now Hay Donaldson* has followed him, an excellent man, who long managed my family affairs with the greatest accuracy and kindness. The last three or four years have swept away more than half the friends with whom I lived in habits of great intimacy—the poor Duke, Jocund Johnnie, Lord Somerville, the Boswells, and now this new deprivation. So it must be with us

"When ance life's day draws near the gloamin,"†—

and yet we proceed with our plantations and plans as if any tree but the sad cypress would accompany us to the grave, where our friends have gone before us. It is the way of the world, however, and must be so, otherwise life would be spent in unavailing mourning for those whom we have lost. It is better to enjoy the society of those who remain to us. I am heartily glad, my dear Terry, that you have carried through your engagement so triumphantly, and that your professional talents are at length so far appreciated as to place you in the first rank in point of emolument as in point of reputation. Your talents, too, are of a kind that will *wear well*, and health permitting, bold out to you a long course of honourable exertion; you should begin to make a little nest-egg as soon as you can; the first little hoard which a man can make of his earnings is the foundation-stone of comfort and independence—so says one who has found it difficult to practise the lesson he offers you. We are getting on here in the old style. The new castle is now roofing, and looks superb; in fact a little too good for the estate, but we must work the harder to make the land suitable. The library is a superb room, but after all I fear the shelves ought not to be less than ten or twelve feet high; I had quite decided for nine feet, but on an exacter measurement this will not accommodate fully the books I have now in hand, and leaves no room for future purchases. Pray is there not a tolerable book on upholstery—I mean plans for tables, chairs, commodes, and such like? If so, I would be much obliged to you to get me a copy, and send it under Freeling's cover. When you can pick up a few odd books for me, especially dramatic, you will do me a great kindness, and I will remit the blunt immediately. I wish to know what the Montrose sword cost, that I may send the *gratility*. I must look about for a mirror for the drawing-room, large enough to look well between the windows. Beneath, I mean to place the antique mosaic slab which Constable has given me, about four feet and a half in length. I am puzzled about framing it. Another anxious subject with me is fitting up the little oratory—I have three thick planks of West Indian cedar, which, exchanged with black oak, would, I think, make a fine thing. I wish you had seen the King's visit here; it was very grand; in fact, in moral grandeur it was beyond any thing I ever witnessed, for the hearts of the poorest as well as the greatest were completely merged in the business. William Murray behaved excellently, and was most useful. I worked like a horse, and had almost paid dear for it, for it was only a sudden and violent eruption that saved me from a dangerous illness. I believe it was distress of mind, suppressed as much as I could, and mingling with the fatigue: certainly I was miserably ill, and am now only got quite better. I wish to know how Mrs. Terry, and you, and my little Walter are; also little Miss. I hope, if I live so long, I may be of use to the former; little misses are not so easily accommodated.—Pray remember me to Mrs. Terry. Write to me soon, and believe me, always most truly yours.

WALTER SCOTT."

To Lieutenant Walter Scott, 15th Hussars, Berlin.

"Abbotsford, 7th October, 1822.

"My dearest Walter,

"I wrote you a full account of the King's visit, which went off à *merveille*. I suffered a good deal in consequence of excessive fatigue and constant anxiety, but was much relieved by a very inconvenient and nasty eruption which physicians call the *prickly heat*. Ross says if it had not broke out I would have had a bad fever—in the mean-time, though the complaint has gone off, my arms and legs are spotted like a leopard's. The King has expressed himself most graciously to me, both at leaving Edinburgh and since he returned. I know from sure authority he has scarce ever ceased to speak about the Scotch, and the fine taste and spirit of their reception.

"Some small accompts of yours have come in. This is wrong—you ought never to leave a country without clearing every penny of debt; and you have no apology for doing so, as you are never refused what I can afford. When you can get a troop I shall expect you to maintain yourself without further recourse on me, except in the case of extraordinary accident, so that, without pinching yourself, you must learn to keep all your expenses within your income; it is a lesson which if not learned in youth lays up much bitter regret for age.

"I am pleased with your account of Dresden, and could have wished you had gone on to Töplitz, Leipsic, &c. At Töplitz Buonaparte had his fatal check, losing Vandamme, and about 10,000 men, who had pressed too unwarily on the allies after raising the siege of Dresden. These are marked events in your profession, and when you are on the ground you ought to compare the scene of action with such accounts as you can get of the motives and motions of the contending powers.

"We are all quite well here; my new house is quite finished as to masonry, and we are now getting on the roof just in time to face the bad weather. Charles is well at last writing—the Lockharts speak for themselves. Game is very plenty, and two or three pair of pheasants are among the young wood at Abbotslee. I have given strict orders there shall be no shooting of any kind on that side of the hill. Our house has been a little disturbed by a false report that puss had eat up the favourite robin-redbreast who comes every morning to sing for crumbs after breakfast, but the reappearance of Robin exculpates old Hinzie. On your birthday this week you become *major!*—God send you the wit and reflection necessary to conduct yourself as a man; from henceforward, my province will be to advise rather than to command.—Well, we shall have a little jollification, and drink your health on becoming legally major, which, I suppose, *you* think a much less matter than were you to become so in the military term.

"Mamma is quite well, and with Ann and Cousin Walter join in compliments and love.—Always affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

In the next letter to Terry, Scott refers to the death of an amiable friend of his, Mr. James Wedderburne, Solicitor-General for Scotland, which occurred on the 7th November; and we have an indication that Peveril of the Peak had reached the fourth volume, in his announcement of the subject for Quentin Durward.

To D. Terry, Esq. London.

"Abbotsford, Nov. 10th, 1822.

"My dear Terry,

"I got all the plans safe, and they are delightful. The library ceiling will be superb, and we have plenty of ornaments for it without repeating one of those in the eating-room. The plan of shelves is also excellent, and will I think, for a long time, suffice my collection. The brasses for the shelves I like—but not the price: the notches

* Mr. Hay Donaldson drew up an affecting sketch of his friend Lord Kinnedder's Life and Character, to which Scott made some additions, and which was printed, but not, I think, for public circulation. He died shortly afterwards, on the 30th of September, 1822.

† Burns.

ones, after all, do very well. I have had three grand hawls since I last wrote to you. The pulpit, repentance-stool, King's seat, and God knows how much of carved wainscot, from the kirk of Dunfermline,* enough to coat the hall to the height of seven feet.—supposing it boarded above, for hanging guns, old portraits, intermixed with armour, &c.—it will be a superb entrance-gallery: this is hawl the first. Hawl second is twenty-four pieces of the most splendid Chinese paper, twelve feet high by four wide, a present from my cousin Hugh Scott,† enough to finish the drawing-room and two bed-rooms. Hawl third is a quantity of what is called Jamaica cedar-wood, enough for fitting up both the drawing-room and the library, including the presses, shelves, &c.: the wood is finely pencilled and most beautiful, something like the colour of gingerbread; it costs very little more than oak, works much easier, and is never touched by vermin of any kind. I sent Mr. Atkinson a specimen, but it was from the plain end of the plank; the interior is finely waved and variegated. Your kind and unremitting exertions in our favour will soon plenish the drawing-room. Thus we at present stand. We have a fine old English cabinet, with china, &c.—and two superb elbow-chairs, the gift of Constable, carved most magnificently, with groups of children, fruit, and flowers, in the Italian taste: they came from Rome, and are much admired. It seems to me that the mirror you mention, being framed in carved box, would answer admirably well with the chairs, which are of the same material. The mirror should, I presume, be placed over the drawing-room chimney-piece; and opposite to it I mean to put an antique table of mosaic marbles, to support Chantrey's bust. A good sofa would be desirable, and so would the tapestry-screen, if really fresh and beautiful; but as much of our furniture will be a little antiquated, one would not run too much into that taste in so small an apartment. For the library I have the old oak chairs now in the little armoury, eight in number, and we might add one or two pair of the ebony chairs you mention. I should think this enough, for many seats in such a room must impede access to the books; and I don't mean the library to be on ordinary occasions a public room. Perhaps the tapestry-screen would suit better here than in the drawing-room. I have one library table here, and shall have another made for atlases and prints. For the hall I have four chairs of black oak. In other matters we can make it out well enough. In fact, it is my object rather to keep under my new accommodations at first, both to avoid immediate outlay, and that I may leave room for pretty things which may occur hereafter. I would to Heaven I could take a cruize with you through the brokers, which would be the pleasantest affair possible, only I am afraid I should make a losing voyage of it. Mr. Atkinson has missed a little my idea of the oratory, fitting it up entirely as a bookcase, whereas I should like to have had recesses for curiosities—for the Bruce's skull‡—for a crucifix, &c. &c.—in short, a little cabinet instead of a book-closet. Four sides of books would be perfectly sufficient; the other four so far as not occupied by door or window, should be arranged tastefully for antiquities, &c., like the inside of an antique cabinet, with drawers, and shottles, and funny little arches. The oak screen dropped as from the clouds: it is most acceptable; I might have guessed there was only one kind friend so ready to supply hay to my hobby-horse. You have my views in these matters and your own taste; and I will send the *needful* when you apprise me of the amount total. Where things are not quite satisfactory, it is better to wait a while on every account, for the amusement is over when one has room for nothing more. The house is completely roofed, &c., and looks worthy of Mrs. Terry's painting. I never saw any thing handsomer than the grouping of towers, chimneys, &c., upon the roof, when seen at a proper distance.

"Once more, let me wish you joy of your professional success. I can judge, by a thousand minute items, of the advance you make with the public, just as I can of the gradual progress of my trees, because I am interested in both events. You may say, like Burke, you were not 'coaxed and dandled into eminence;' but have fought your way gallantly, shown your passport at every barrier, and been always a step in advance, without a single retrograde movement. Every one wishes to advance rapidly, but when the desired position is gained, it is far more easily maintained by him whose ascent has been gradual, and whose favour is founded not on the unreasonable expectations entertained from one or two seasons, but from an habitual experience of the power of pleasing during several years. You say not a word of poor Wattles. I hope little Miss has not put his nose out of joint entirely.

"I have not been very well—a whoreson thickness of blood, and a depression of spirits arising from the loss of friends, (to whom I am now to add poor Wedderburne,) have annoyed me much; and Peveril will, I fear, smell of the apoplexy. I propose a good rally, however, and hope it will be a powerful effect. My idea is, *entre nous*, a Scotch archer in the French King's guard, *tempore* Louis XI., the most picturesque of all times.—Always yours very faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT."

This letter contains the first allusion to the species of malady that ultimately proved fatal to Sir Walter Scott. He, as far as I know, never mentioned to any one of his family the symptoms which he here speaks of; but long before any serious apoplectic seizure occurred, it had been suspected by myself, and by others of his friends, that he had sustained slight attacks of that nature, and concealed them.

The depression of spirits of which he complains, could not, however, have hung over him long; at least it by no means interrupted any of his usual occupations. A grievous interruption had indeed been occasioned by the royal visit, its preparations, and its legacy of visitants and correspondence; but he now laboured to make up his lee-way, and Peveril of the Peak was completed, and some progress had also been achieved with the first volume of Quentin Durward, before the year reached its close. Nor had he ceased to contemplate future labour, and continued popularity, with the same firmness and hopefulness as ever. He had, in the course of October, completed his contract, and received Constable's bills, for another unnamed "work of fiction;" and this was the last such work in which the great bookseller of Edinburgh was destined to have any concern. The engagement was in fact that redeemed three years afterwards by *Woodstock*.

Sir Walter was, as may be supposed, stimulated in all these matters by the music of the hammer and saw at Abbotsford. Witness this letter, written during the Christmas recess—

To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.

"Abbotsford, January 9th, 1823.

"Dear Terry,

"It is close firing to answer letters the day they come to hand, but I am afraid of losing opportunities, as in the case of the mirror, not to be retrieved. I am first to report progress, for your consideration and Mr. Atkinson's, of what I have been doing here. Every thing about the house has gone à *rien mieux*, and the shell is completely finished; all the upper story and garrets, as well as the basement, have had their first coat of plaster, being first properly fenced from the exterior air. The only things which we now greatly need are the designs for the ceilings of the hall and drawing-room, as the smiths and plasterers are impatient for their working plans, the want of which rather stops them. I have taken actual, real, and corporal possession of my sitting-room, which has been fitted with a temporary floor, door, and window—the oratory, and the door into the library, being bricked up *ad interim*. This was a step of necessity, as my books began to suffer in Peter's garret, so they were brought up to the said room, and are all ranged in their old shelves and presses, so as to be completely comeatable. They have been now there a fortnight without the least appearance of damp, so dry do the brick facings make the wall; and as we keep good fires in the place (which, by the by, vents like all Mr. Atkinson's chimneys, in a superior style,) I intend they shall remain there till they are transferred to *the* Library, so that this room will be fitted up last of all. I shall be then able to judge of a point on which I have at present some doubt—namely, the capacity of my library to accommodate my books. Should it appear limited (I mean making allowance for future additions) I can perhaps, by Mr. Atkinson's assistance, fit up this private room with a gallery, which might enter by carrying the stair up the oratory, and renouncing the idea of fitting it up. The cedar, I assure you, is quite beautiful. I have had it sawn out into planks, and every one who looks at it agrees it will be more beautiful than oak. Indeed, what I have seen of it put to that use, bears no comparison, unless with such heart of oak as Bullock employed, and that you know is veneered. I do not go-

* For this *hawl* Sir Walter was indebted to the Magistrates of Dunfermline.

† Captain Hugh Scott, of the East India Company's Naval Service, (now of Draycote House, near Derby,) second son to the late Laird of Raeburn.

‡ A cast of the skull of King Robert the Bruce, made when his tomb was discovered during some repairs of Dunfermline Abbey, in 1819.

on the cry in this, but practical knowledge, for Mr. Waugh, my neighbour, a West Indian planter, (but himself bred a joiner,) has finished the prettiest apartment with it that I ever saw. I should be apt to prefer the brass notches, were the difference only what you mention, namely, £20; but I cannot make out how that should be, unless by supposing the joiners' wages much higher than with us. But indeed, in such a library as mine, when the books are once catalogued, I could perhaps in many instances make fixed shelves answer the turn, by adopting a proper arrangement from the beginning. I give up the Roslin drop in the oratory—indeed I have long seen it would not do. I think the termination of it may be employed as the central part of Mr. Atkinson's beautiful plan for the recess in the library; by the by, the whole of that ceiling, with the heads we have got, will be the prettiest thing ever seen in these parts.

"The plan preferred for the door between the entrance-hall and ante-room, was that which was marked B. To make this plain, I reinclose A and C—which mode of explaining myself puts me in mind of the evidence of an Irish officer.—'We met three rebels, one we shot, hanged another, the third we flogged and made a guide of.'—'Which of the three did you flog and make a guide of?—'Him whom we neither shot nor hanged.' Understand, therefore, that the plan not returned is that fixed upon. I think there is nothing left to say about the house excepting the chimney-pieces. I have selected for the hall chimney-piece one of the cloister arches of Melrose, of which I enclose an accurate drawing. I can get it finished here very beautifully, at day's wages, in our dark red freestone. The chimneys of drawing-room, library, and my own room, with grates conforming, will be got much better in London than any where else; by the by, for the hall I have got an old massive chimney-grate which belonged to the old persecutor Bishop Sharp, who was murdered on Magus Muir. All our grates must be contrived to use wood as well as coal, with what are called half-dogs.

"I am completely Lady Wishfort as to the escritoire. In fact, my determination would very much depend on the possibility of showing it to advantage; for if it be such as is set up against a wall, like what is called, *par excellence*, a writing-desk, you know we have no space in the library that is not occupied by book-presses. If, on the contrary, it stands quite free, why, I do not know—I must e'en leave it to you to decide between taste and prudence. The silk damask, I fancy, we must have for the drawing-room curtains; those in the library we shall have of superfine crimson cloth from Galashiels, made of mine own wool. I should like the silk to be sent down in the bales, as I wish these curtains to be made up on a simple useful pattern, without that paltry trash of drapery, &c. &c. I would take the armoury curtains for my pattern, and set my own tailor, Robin Good-fellow, to make them up; and I think I may save on the charge of such an upholsterer as my friend Mr. Trotter much of the difference in the value of materials. The chairs will be most welcome. Packing is a most important article, and I must be indebted to your continued goodness for putting that into proper hands. The mirror, for instance—O Lord, sir!

"Another and most important service would be to procure me, from any person whom Mr. Atkinson may recommend, the execution of the enclosed commission for fruit-trees. We dare not trust Edinburgh; for though the trade never makes a pause in furnishing you with the most rare plants, insomuch that an old friend of mine, the original Jonathan Oldbuck, having asked one of them to supply him with a dozen of *anchovies*, he answered, 'he had plenty of them, but, being a delicate plant, they were still in the hothouse'—yet, when the said plants come to bear fruit, the owner may adopt the classical line—

'Miratur novas frondes et non sua poma.'

My new gardener is a particularly clever fellow in his way, and thinks the enclosed kinds like to answer best. Our new garden-wall will be up in spring, time enough to have the plants set. By the way, has Mr. Atkinson seen the way of heating hot-houses, &c., adapted by Mr. Somebody at Glasgow, who has got a patent? It is by a new application of steam, which is poured into a vaulted roof, made completely air-tight, except where it communicates with an iron box, so to speak, a receptacle of the heated air. This vaulted recess is filled with bricks, stones, or such like substances, capable of receiving and retaining an extreme degree of heat from the steam with which they are surrounded. The steam itself is condensed and carried off; but the air, which for many hours continues to arise from these heated bricks, ascends into the iron receptacle, and is let off by ventilators into the space to be heated in such quantities as many be desired. The excellence of this plan is not only the saving of fuel, but also and particularly the certainty that the air cannot be overheated, for the temperature at hottest does not exceed 95 degrees—nor overchilled, for it continues to retain, and of course to transmit, the same degree of heated air, or but with little variation, for ten or twelve hours, so as to render the process of forcing much more certain and simple than it has been from any means hitherto devised. I dare say that this is a very lame explanation, but I will get a perfect one for Mr. Atkinson if he wishes it. The Botanical Garden at Glasgow has adopted the plan, and they are now changing that of Edinburgh for the same purpose. I have not heard whether it has been applied to houses; but, from the principle, I should conceive it practicable.

"Peveril has been stopped ten days, having been driven back to Leith Roads by stress of weather. I have not a copy here, but will write to Ballantyne to send you one forthwith. I am sick of thinking of it myself. We hear of you often, and always of your advancing favour with the public. It is one of many cases in which the dearly beloved public has come round to my decided opinion, after seeming to waver for a time. Washington Irving's success is another instance of the same. Little Walter will, I hope, turn out all we can wish him; and Mrs. Terry's health, I would fain hope, will be completely re-established. The steam-boats make a jaunt to Scotland comparatively so speedy and easy, that I hope you will sometimes cast both of yourselves this way. Abbotsford, I am sure, will please you, when you see all your dreams realized, so far as concerns elevation, &c.

"John Thomson, Duddingstone, has given me his most splendid picture, painted, he says, on purpose for me—a true Scottish scene. It seems to me that many of our painters shun the sublime of our country, by labouring to introduce trees where doubtless by search they might be found, but where most certainly they make no conspicuous part of the landscape, being like some little folks who fill up a company, and put you to the proof before you own to have seen them. Now this is Fast Castle, famous both in history and legend, situated near St. Abb's Head, which you most certainly must have seen, as you have cruized along the coast of Berwickshire. The view looks from the land down on the ragged ruins, a black sky and a foaming ocean beyond them. There is more imagination in the picture than in any I have seen of a long time—a sort of Salvator Rosa's doings.—*Revenons à nos moutons.* I find that the plans for the window-shutters of the entrance-hall are much wanted. My wainscot will not be altogether seven feet—about six. Higher it cannot be, because of the pattern of the Dunfermline part; and lower I would not have it, because the armour, &c. much be suspended beyond the reach of busy and rude fingers, to which a hall is exposed. You understand I mean to keep lighter, smaller, and more ornate objects of curiosity in the present little room, and have only the massive and large specimens, with my fine collection of horns, &c., in the hall. Above the wainscot, I propose the wall to be planked and covered with cartridge paper, and then properly painted in wainscot, to match the arrangement beneath.

"I have now, as your own Dogberry says, bestowed all my tediousness upon you;—yet I have still a question of yours to answer on a certain bookseller's part. Unquestionably I know many interesting works of the kind he mentions which might be translated from the German;—almost all those of Musæus, of which Beddoes made two volumes, and which are admirably written; many of La Motte Fouqué; several from the collection bearing the assumed name of Beit Weber. But there is a point more essential to their success with the British public than even the selection. There is in the German mode of narration, an affectation of deep metaphysical reflection and protracted description and discussion, which the English do not easily tolerate; and whoever translates their narratives with effect should be master of the taste and spirit of both nations. For instance, I lately saw a translation of 'Sintram und seine Gefährten,' or Sintram and his Comrades, the story in the world which, if the plot were insinuated into the *boxes*, as Bayes says, would be most striking, translated into such English as was far more difficult to me than the original German. I do not know where an interpreter such as I point to could be found; but a literal *jog-trotter*, such as translated the passages from Goëthe annexed to the beautiful engravings, which you sent me,* would never make a profitable job. The bibliopole must lay his account to seek out a man of fancy, and pay him well. I suppose my friend Cohen† is above superintending such a work, otherwise he is the man to make something of it. Perhaps he might be induced to take it in hand for the love of the task. All who are here—namely, my lovely lady and

* I presume this alludes to the English edition of Retsch's Outlines from Faust.

† Mr. Cohen is now Sir Francis Palgrave, K. H.

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the Lady Anne—salute you and Mrs. Terry with the most sincere good wishes.—Faithfully yours,

W. Scott.

"P. S. Direct to Edinburgh, where I shall be on the 14th. Perhaps the slightest sketch of the escritoire might enable me to decide. If I could swop my own, which cost me £30, it might diminish my prudential scruples. Poor little Johnnie would have offered the prime cost at once. Your letter shall go to James Ballantyne. I think I have something new likely to be actually dramatical. I will send it you presently; but, on your life, show it no one, for certain reasons. The very name is kept secret, and, strange to tell, it will be printed without one."

The precaution mentioned in this P. S. was really adopted in the printing of Quentin Durward. It had been suggested by a recent alarm about one of Ballantyne's workmen playing foul, and transmitting proof-sheets of Peveril, while at press, to some American pirate.

Peveril of the Peak appeared, then, in January, 1823. Its reception was somewhat colder than that of its three immediate predecessors. The post-haste rapidity of the Novelist's executions was put to a severe trial, from his adoption of so wide a canvass as was presented by a period of twenty busy years, and filled by so very large and multifarious an assemblage of persons, not a few of them, as it were, struggling for prominence. Fenella was an unfortunate conception; what is good in it is not original, and the rest extravagantly absurd and incredible. Even worse was that condescension to the practice of vulgar romancers, in his treatment of the trial scenes—scenes usually the very citadels of his strength—which outraged every feeling of probability, with those who had studied the terrible tragedies of the Popish Plot, in the authentic records of, perhaps, the most disgraceful epoch in our history. The story is clumsy and perplexed; the catastrophe (another signal exception to his rules) foreseen from the beginning, and yet most inartificially brought about. All this is true; and yet might not criticisms of the same sort be applied to half the masterpieces of Shakspeare? And did any dramatist—to say nothing of any other novelist—ever produce, in spite of all the surrounding bewilderment of the fable, characters more powerfully conceived, or, on the whole, more happily portrayed, than those (I name but a few) of Christian, Bridgenorth, Buckingham, and Chiffinch—sketches more vivid than those of Young Derby, Colonel Blood, and the keeper of Newgate? The severest censor of this novel was Mr. Senior; yet he was just as well as severe. He could not dismiss the work without admitting that Peveril, "though entitled to no precedency," was, on the whole, "not inferior to his brethren, taken as a class;" and upon that class he introduced a general eulogy, which I shall gratify my readers by extracting:*

"It had become a trite remark, long before there was the reason for it which now exists, that the Waverley novels are, even from their mere popularity, the most striking literary phenomena of the age. And that popularity, unequalled as it is in its extent, is perhaps more extraordinary in its permanence. It has resisted the tendency of the public, and perhaps of ourselves, much as we struggle against it, to think every subsequent work of the same author inferior to its predecessors, if it be not manifestly superior. It has resisted the satiety which might have been predicted as the necessary consequence of the frequent repetition of similar characters and situations. Above all, it has withstood *pessimum genus inimicorum laudantes*. And, in spite of acute enemies, and clumsy friends, and bungling imitators, each successive novel succeeds in obtaining a fortnight of attention as deep and as exclusive as was bestowed upon the 'Bride of Lammermoor,' or the 'Heart of Mid-Lothian.' We have heard this popularity accounted for in many various ways. It has been attributed to the picturesque reality of Sir Walter Scott's descriptions, to the truth and individuality of his characters, to the depth of his pathos and the gayety of his humour, to the purity and candour of his morality, and to the clear, flexible, and lively, yet unaffected style, which is so delightful a vehicle of his more substantial merits.

"But we do not think that these qualities, even taken together, sufficiently account for such an effect as has been produced. In almost all of them, he has had equals—in some, perhaps, superiors—and though we know of no writer of any age or any nation who has united all these excellences in so high a degree, their deficiencies have been balanced by strength, in what are our author's weakest points, interest and probability in the fable, and clearness of narration.

"We are inclined to suggest as the additional cause of his success, the manner in which his works unite the most irreconcilable forms, and the most opposite materials. He exhibits, sometimes in succession, and sometimes intermingled, tragedy and the romance, comedy and the novel. Great events, exalted personages, and awful superstitions, have, in general, been the exclusive province of the two former. But the dignity which has been supposed to belong to those styles of writing, has in general excluded the representation of the every-day occurrences and familiar emotions, which, though part of great events, and incident to great people, are not characteristic of either. And as human nature is principally conversant in such occurrences and emotions, it has in general been inadequately or falsely represented in tragedy and romance; inadequately by good writers, and falsely by bad—the former omitting whatever could not be made splendid and majestic, the latter exaggerating what they found really great, and attempting to give importance to what is base and trivial, and sacrificing reason and probability to render freebooters dignified, and make familiar friends converse in heroics. Homer and Euripides are the only exceptions among the ancients; and no modern tragedian, except Shakspeare, has ventured to make a king's son 'remember that poor creature, small-beer.' Human nature, therefore, fell into the hands of comedians and novelists; but they seem either to have thought that there was something in the feelings and sufferings of ordinary mortality inconsistent with those who are made of the porcelain clay of the earth; or not to have formed sufficiently general conceptions, to venture beyond the limits of their own experience. Their characters, therefore, are copied from the originals with whom the writer, and therefore the reader, is familiar; they are placed in situations which derive no interest from their novelty; and the usual catastrophe is an event which every reader has experienced or expected.

"We may compare tragedy to a martyrdom by one of the old masters; which, whatever be its merit, represents persons, emotions, and events so remote from the experience of the spectator, that he feels the grounds of his approbation and blame to be in a great measure conjectural. The romance, such as we generally have seen it, resembles a Gothic window-piece, where monarchs and bishops exhibit the symbols of their dignity, and saints hold out their palm branches, and grotesque monsters in blue and gold pursue one another through the intricacies of a never-ending scroll, splendid in colouring, but childish in composition, and imitating nothing in nature but a mass of drapery and jewels thrown over the commonest outlines of the human figure. The works of the comedian and novelist, in their least interesting forms, are Dutch paintings and caricatures: in their best, they are like Wilkie's earlier pictures, accurate imitations of pleasing, but familiar objects—admirable as works of art, but addressed rather to the judgment than to the imagination.

"Our author's principal agents are the mighty of the earth, often mixed, in his earlier works, with beings of more than earthly attributes. He paints the passions which arm sect against sect, party against party, and nation against nation. He relates, either episodically or as the main object of his narrative, the success or failure of those attempts which permanently affect the happiness of states; conspiracies and rebellions, civil war and religious persecution, the overthrow of dynasties and changes of belief—

'There saw I how the secret felon wrought,
And treason labouring in the traitor's thought;
On the other side there stood destruction bare,
Unpunish'd rapine, and a waste of war;
Contest, with sharpen'd knives in cloisters drawn,
And all with blood bespread the holy lawn.'

"So far he has nothing in common with the novelist or the comedian. But he writes for times when the veil of high life is rent or torn away—when all men are disposed to scrutinize, and competent to judge—when they look through and through kings and statesmen, and see that they are and act as mere men. He has, therefore, treated those lofty subjects with a minuteness of detail, and an unsparing imitation of human nature, in its foibles as well as its energies, which few writers, excepting

* I the rather quote this criticism, as it was published in the *London Review*—a journal which stopped at the second or third Number, and must therefore have had a very narrow circulation.

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the three whom we have mentioned, have had the boldness and the philosophy to employ in the representation of exalted characters and national events. 'His story requires preachers and kings, but he thinks only on men;' and well aware that independence and flattery must heighten every peculiarity, he has drawn in a royal personage the most laughable picture that perhaps ever was exhibited of human folly and inconsistency. By his intermixture of public and private events, he has shown how they act and re-act on one another; how results which appear, to him who views them from the distance of history, to depend on causes of slow and irresistible operation, are produced, or prevented, or modified, by the passions, the prejudices, the interests, and often the caprice of individuals; and on the other hand, how essential national tranquillity is to individual happiness—what family discord and treachery, what cruelty, what meanness, what insolence, what rapacity, what insecurity—in short, what vice and misery of every kind must be witnessed and felt by those who have drawn the unhappy lot of existence in times of civil war and revolution.

"We have no doubt that his constant introduction of legal proceedings (a subject as carefully avoided by his predecessors) materially assists the plausibility of his narratives. In peaceful times, the law is the lever which sets in motion a great part of our actions, and regulates and controls them all. And if, in times of civil disturbance, its regular and beneficial operation be interrupted (and indeed such an interruption is the criterion, and the great mischief of civil disturbance,) yet the forms of law are never in more constant use. Men who would not rob or murder, will sequestrate and condemn. The advantage, the gratification of avarice or hatred, is enjoyed by all—the responsibility is divided; since those who framed the iniquitous law have not to execute it, and those who give effect to it did not create it. The recurrence, therefore, in our author's works, of this mainspring of human affairs, has a double effect. If the story were true, we should expect to meet with it; supposing it fictitious, we should expect it to be absent.

"An example will illustrate much of what we have tediously, and we fear obscurely, attempted to explain. We will take one from Waverley. The principal scenes are laid in a royal palace, on a field of battle, where the kingdom is the stake, and at the head quarters of a victorious army. The actors are, an exiled prince, reclaiming the sceptre of his ancestors, and the armed nobility and gentry of his kingdom. So far we are in the lofty regions of romance. And in any other hands than those of Sir Walter Scott, the language and conduct of these great people would have been as dignified as their situations. We should have heard nothing of the hero in his new costume 'majoring afore the muckle pier-glass'—of his arrest by the host of the Candlestick—of his examination by the well-powdered Major Melville—or his fears of being informed against by Mrs. Nosebag. The Baron would not have claimed to draw off the princely *caliga*. Fergus would not have been influenced, in bringing his sister to the camp, by the credit to be obtained through her beauty and accomplishments. We should not have been told of the staff-appointment refused by Waverley, or of the motives which caused him first to march with the M'Ivors, and afterwards with the Baron. In short, we should have had a uniform and imposing representation of a splendid scene, but calculated to leave false recollections with the uninstructed, and none at all with the judicious reader. But when we study the history of the rebellion in Waverley, we feel convinced that, though the details presented to us never existed, yet they must resemble what really happened; and that while the leading persons and events are as remote from those of ordinary life as the inventions of Scuderi, the picture of human nature is as faithful as could have been given by Fielding or Le Sage."

I fear the reader will hardly pardon me for bringing him down abruptly from this fine criticism to a little joke of the Parliament-House. Among its lounging young barristers of those days, Sir Walter Scott, in the intervals of his duty as clerk, often came forth and mingled much in the style of his own coeval *Mountain*. Indeed the pleasure he seemed to take in the society of his professional juniors, was one of the most remarkable, and certainly not the least agreeable features of his character at this period of his consummate honour and celebrity; but I should rather have said, perhaps, of young people generally, male or female, law or lay, gentle or simple. I used to think it was near of kin to another feature in him, his love of a bright light. It was always, I suspect, against the grain with him, when he did not even work at his desk with the sun full upon him. However, one morning soon after Peveril came out, one of our most jocose wags, (now famous for better things,) namely, Mr. Patrick Robertson, commonly called by the endearing Scottish *diminutive* "Peter," observed that tall conical white head advancing above the crowd towards the fire place, where the usual roar of fun was going on among the briefless, and said, "Hush boys, here comes old Peveril. I see *the Peak*." A laugh ensued, and the Great Unknown, as he withdrew from the circle after a few minutes' gossip, insisted that I should tell him what our joke upon his advent had been. When enlightened, being by that time half way across "the babbling hall," towards his own *Division*, he looked round with a sly grin, and said, between his teeth, "Ay, ay, my man, as weel Peveril o' the Peak ony day as Peter o' the Painch" (paunch)—which being transmitted to the brethren of *the stove school*, of course delighted all of them except their portly Coryphæus. But *Peter's* application stuck: to his dying day, Scott was in the Outer House *Peveril of the Peak* or *Old Peveril*—and, by and by, like a good Cavalier, he took to the designation kindly. He was well aware that his own family and younger friends constantly talked of him under this *sobriquet*. Many a little note have I had from him (and so probably has *Peter* also,) reproving, or perhaps encouraging, Tory mischief, and signed, "Thine, PEVERIL."—Specimens enough will occur by and by—but I may as well transcribe one here, doggrel though it be. Calling at my house one forenoon, he had detected me in writing some nonsense for Blackwood's Noctes Ambrosianæ; and after he went home, finding an apology from some friend who had been expected to dine with a Whiggish party that day in Castle Street, he despatched this billet:—

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq. Northumberland Street

"Irrecoverable sinner,
Work what Whigs you please till dinner,
But be here exact at six,
Smooth as oil with mine to mix.
(Sophy may step up to tea,
Our table has no room for *she*.)
Come (your *gum* within your cheek)
And help sweet

PEVERIL OF THE PEAK."

CHAPTER LVIII.

QUENTIN DURWARD IN PROGRESS—LETTERS TO CONSTABLE—AND DR. DIBDIN—THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY AND THE ROXBURGHE CLUB—THE BANNATYNE CLUB FOUNDED—SCOTT CHAIRMAN OF THE EDINBURGH OIL GAS COMPANY, ETC.—MECHANICAL DEVICES AT ABBOTSFORD—GASOMETER—AIR-BELL, ETC., ETC.—THE BELLENDEN WINDOWS.—1823.

It was, perhaps, some inward misgivings towards the completion of Peveril, that determined Scott to break new ground in his next novel; and as he had before awakened a fresh interest by venturing on English scenery and history, try the still bolder experiment of a continental excursion. However this may have been, he was encouraged and strengthened by the return of his friend, Mr. Skene, about this time, from a tour in France: in the course of which he had kept an accurate and lively journal, and executed a vast variety of clever drawings, representing landscapes and ancient buildings, such as would have been most sure to interest Scott had he been the companion of his wanderings. Mr. Skene's MS. collections were placed at his disposal, and he took from one of their chapters the substance of the *original* Introduction to Quentin Durward. Yet still his difficulties in this new undertaking were frequent, and of a sort to which he had hitherto been a stranger. I remember observing him many times in the Advocates' Library poring over maps and gazetteers with care and anxiety; and the following is one of many similiar notes which his bookseller and printer received during the progress of the novel:—

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To Archibald Constable, Esq.

"Castle Street, 23d Jan. 1823.

"My dear Constable,

"It is a vile place this village of Plessis les Tours that can baffle both you and me. It is a place famous in history; and, moreover, is, as your Gazetteer assures us, a village of 1000 inhabitants, yet I have not found it in any map, provincial or general, which I have consulted. I think something must be found in Malte Brun's Geographical Works. I have also suggested to Mr. Cadell that Wraxhall's History of France, or his Travels, may probably help us. In the mean time I am getting on; and instead of description holding the place of sense, I must try to make such sense as I can find hold the place of description.

"I know Hawkwood's story;" he was originally, I believe, a tailor in London, and became a noted leader of Condottieri in Italy.

"I shall be obliged to Mr. David† to get from the Advocates' Library, and send me, the large copy of Philip de Commines, in 4to. I returned it, intending to bring mine from Abbotsford, but left it in my hurry: and the author is the very key to my period.—Yours ever,

WALTER SCOTT."

He was much amused with a mark of French admiration which reached him (opportunely enough) about the same time—one of the few such that his novels seem to have brought him prior to the publication of Quentin Durward. I regret that I cannot produce the letter to which he alludes in the next of these notes; but I have by no means forgotten the excellent flavour of the Champagne which soon afterwards arrived at Abbotsford, in a quantity greatly more liberal than had been stipulated for.

To A. Constable, Esq.

"Castle Street, 16th February, 1823.

"My dear Constable,

"I send you a letter which will amuse you. It is a funny Frenchman who wants me to accept some Champagne for a set of my works. I have written, in answer, that as my works cost me nothing, I could not think of putting a value on them, but that I should apply to you. Send him by the mediation of Hurst and Robinson a set of my children and god-children, (poems and novels,) and if he found, on seeing them, that they were worth a dozen flasks of Champagne, he might address the case to Hurst and Robinson, and they would clear it at the custom-house and send it down.

"Pray return the enclosed as a sort of curiosity.—Yours, &c.

WALTER SCOTT."

A compliment not less flattering than this Frenchman's tender of Champagne, was paid to Scott within a few weeks of the appearance of Peveril. In the epistle introductory of that novel, Captain Clutterbuck amuses Dr. Jonas Dryasdust with an account of a recent visit from their common parent, "the Author of Waverley," whose outward man, as it was in those days, is humourously caricatured, with a suggestion that he had probably sat to Geoffrey Crayon for his "Stout Gentleman of No. II.;" and who is made to apologize for the heartiness with which he pays his duty to the viands set before him, by alleging that he was in training for the approaching anniversary of the Roxburghe Club, whose gastronomical zeal had always been on a scale worthy of their bibliomaniacal renown. "He was preparing himself," said the gracious and portly *Eidolon*, "to hob-nob with the lords of the literary treasures of Althorpe and Hodnet in Madeira negus, brewed by the classical Dibdin"—[why *negus?*]—"to share those profound debates which stamp accurately on each 'small volume, dark with tarnished gold,' its collar, not of S.S., but of R.R.—to toast the immortal memory of Caxton, Valdarfer, Pynson, and the other fathers of that great art which has made all and each of us what we are." This drollery in fact alluded not to the Roxburghe Club, but to an institution of the same class which was just at this time springing into life, under Sir Walter's own auspices, in Edinburgh—the *Bannatyne Club*, of which he was the founder and first president. The heroes of the Roxburghe, however, were not to penetrate the mystification of Captain Clutterbuck's report, and from their jovial and erudite board, when they next congregated around its "generous flasks of Burgundy, each flanked by an uncut fifteener"—(so I think their reverend chronicler has somewhere depicted the apparatus) the following despatch was forwarded—

To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., Edinburgh.

"Feb., 22, 1823.

"My dear Sir,

"The death of Sir M. M. Sykes, Bart., having occasioned a vacancy in our ROXBURGHE CLUB, I am desired to request that you will have the goodness to make that fact known to the AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY, who, from the Prologue to PEVERIL OF THE PEAK, seems disposed to become one of the members thereof; and I am further desired to express the wishes of the said CLUB that the said AUTHOR may succeed to the said Baronet.—I am ever most sincerely yours,

T. F. DIBDIN, V. P."

Sir Walter's answer to this, and to a subsequent letter of the Vice-President, announcing his formal election, were as follows:

To the Rev. Thomas Frognall Dibdin, &c. &c. Kensington.

"Edin. Feb. 25, 1823.

"My dear Sir,

"I was duly favoured with your letter, which proves one point against the unknown Author of Waverley; namely, that he is certainly a Scotsman, since no other nation pretends to the advantage of second sight. Be he who or where he may, he must certainly feel the very high honour which has selected him, *nominis umbra*, to a situation so worth of envy.

"As his personal appearance in the fraternity is not like to be a speedy event, one may presume he may be desirous of offering some token of his gratitude in the shape of a reprint, or such-like kickshaw, and for this purpose you had better send me the statutes of your learned body, which I will engage to send him in safety.

"It will follow as a characteristic circumstance, that the table of the Roxburghe, like that of King Arthur, will have a vacant chair, like that of Banquo at Macbeth's banquet. But if this author, who 'hath fernseed and walketh invisible,' should not appear to claim it before I come to London, (should I ever be there again,) with permission of the Club, I, who have something of adventure in me, although a knight like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, 'dubbed with unhacked rapier, and on carpet consideration,' would, rather than lose the chance of a dinner with the Roxburghe Club, take upon me the adventure of the *siege perilous*, and reap some amends for perils and scandals into which the invisible champion has drawn me, by being his *locum tenens* on so distinguished an occasion.

"It will be not uninteresting to you to know, that a fraternity is about to be established here something on the plan of the Roxburghe Club; but, having Scottish antiquities chiefly in view, it is to be called the Bannatyne Club, from the celebrated antiquary, George Bannatyne, who compiled by far the greatest record of old Scottish poetry. The first meeting is to be held on Thursday, when the health of the Roxburghe Club will be drunk.—I am always, my dear sir, your most faithful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Abbotsford, May 1, 1823.

"My dear Sir,

"I am duly honoured with your very interesting and flattering communication. Our Highlanders have a proverbial saying, founded on the traditional renown of Fingal's dog; 'If it is not Bran,' they say, 'it is Bran's brother.' Now, this is always taken as a compliment of the first class, whether applied to an actual cur, or parabolically to a biped; and, upon the same principle, it is with no small pride and gratification that I hear the Roxburghe Club have been so very flatteringly disposed to accept me as a *locum tenens* for the unknown author whom they have made the child of their adoption. As sponsor, I will play my part until the real Simon Pure make his appearance.

* Hawkwood—from whose adventures Constable had thought the author of Quentin Durward might take some hints—began life as apprentice to a London tailor. But, as Fuller says, "he soon turned his needle into a sword, and his thimble into a shield," and raised himself to knighthood in the service of Edward III. After accumulating great wealth and fame in the predatory wars of Italy, he died in 1393, at Florence, where his funeral was celebrated with magnificence amidst the general lamentations of the people.—See "*The Honourable Prentice, or the Life and Death of Sir John Hawkwood,*" &c. London: 4to. 1615.

† Mr. David Constable, eldest son of the great booksellers, had been called to the bar at Edinburgh.

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"Besides, I hope the devil does not owe me such a shame. Mad Tom tells us, that 'the Prince of Darkness is a gentleman;' and this mysterious personage will, I hope, partake as much of his honourable feelings as of his invisibility, and, retaining his incognito, permit me to enjoy, in his stead, an honour which I value more than I do that which has been bestowed on me by the credit of having written any of his novels.

"I regret deeply I cannot soon avail myself of my new privileges; but courts, which I am under the necessity of attending officially, sit down in a few days, and *hei mihi!* do not arise for vacation until July. But I hope to be in town next spring; and certainly I have one strong additional reason for a London journey, furnished by the pleasure of meeting the Roxburghe Club. Make my most respectful compliments to the members at their next merry-meeting; and express, in the warmest manner, my sense of obligation.—I am always, my dear sir, very much your most obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

In his way of taking both the Frenchman's civilities and those of the Roxburghers, we see evident symptoms that the mask had begun to be worn rather carelessly. He would not have written this last letter, I fancy, previous to the publication of Mr. Adolphus's Essays on the Authorship of Waverley.

Sir Walter, it may be worth mentioning, was also about this time elected a member of "THE CLUB"—that famous one established by Johnson, Burke, and Reynolds, at the Turk's Head, but which has now for a long series of years held its meeting at the Thatched House, in St. James's Street. Moreover, he had been chosen, on the death of the antiquary Lysons, Professor of Ancient History to the Royal Academy—a chair originally founded at Dr. Johnson's suggestion, "in order that *Goldy* might have a right to be at their dinners," and in which Goldsmith has had several illustrious successors besides Sir Walter. I believe he was present at more than one of the festivals of each of these fraternities. A particular dinner of the Royal Academy, at all events, is recorded with some picturesque details in his essay on the life of his friend John Kemble, who sat next to him upon that occasion.

The Bannatyne Club was a child of his own, and from first to last he took a most fatherly concern in all its proceedings. His practical sense dictated a direction of their funds widely different from what had been adopted by the Roxburghe. Their *Club Books* already constitute a very curious and valuable library of Scottish history and antiquities: their example has been followed with not inferior success by the Maitland Club of Glasgow—which was soon afterwards instituted on a similar model, and of which also Sir Walter was a zealous associate: and since his death a third Club of this class, founded at Edinburgh in his honour, and styled *The Abbotsford Club*, has taken a still wider range—not confining their printing to works connected with Scotland, but admitting all materials that can throw light on the ancient history or literature of any country, any where described or discussed by the Author of Waverley.

At the meetings of the Bannatyne he regularly presided from 1823 to 1831; and in the chair on their anniversary dinners, surrounded by some of his oldest and dearest friends—Thomas Thomson (the Vice-President,) John Clerk (Lord Eldin,) the Chief Commissioner Adam, the Chief Baron Shepherd, Lord Jeffrey, Mr. Constable—and let me not forget his kind, intelligent, and industrious ally, Mr. David Laing, bookseller, the Secretary of the Club—he from this time forward was the unfailing source and centre of all sorts of merriment "within the limits of becoming mirth." Of the origin and early progress of their institution, the reader has a full account in his reviewal of Pitcairn's Ancient Criminal Trials of Scotland, the most important work as yet edited for the Bannatyne press;* and the last edition of his Poems includes his excellent song composed for their first dinner—that of March 9, 1823—and then sung by James Ballantyne, and heartily chorussed by all the aforesaid dignitaries:—

* See Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xxi. p. 199.

"Assist me, ye friends of old books and old wine,
To sing in the praises of Sage Bannatyne,
Who left such a treasure of old Scottish lore,
As enables each age to print one volume more.
One volume more, my friends—one volume more
We'll ransack old Banny for one volume more."—&c.

On the morning after that first Bannatyne Club dinner, Scott sent such of the Waverley MSS. as he had in Castle Street to Mr. Constable, with this note:—

"Edinburgh, 10th March, 1823.

"Dear Constable,

"You, who have so richly endowed my little collection, cannot refuse me the pleasure of adding to yours. I beg your acceptance of a parcel of MSS., which I know your partialities will give more value to than they deserve; and only annex the condition, that the shall be scrupulously concealed during the author's life, and only made forthcoming when it may be necessary to assert his right to be accounted the writer of these novels.

"I enclose a note to Mr. Guthrie Wright, who will deliver to you some others of those MSS. which were in poor Lord Kinnedder's possession; and a few more now at Abbotsford, which I can send in a day or two, will, I think, nearly complete the whole, though there may be some leaves missing.

"I hope you are not the worse of our very merry party yesterday.—Ever yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

Various passages in Scott's correspondence have recalled to my recollection the wonder with which the friends best acquainted with the extent of his usual engagements observed, about this period, his readiness in mixing himself up with the business of associations far different from the Bannatyne Club. I cannot doubt that his conduct as President of the Royal Society, and as manager of the preparations for the King's visit, had a main influence in this matter. In both of these capacities he had been thrown into contact with many of the most eminent of his fellow-citizens, who had previously seen little of him personally—including several, and those of especial consequence, who had been accustomed to flavour all their notions of him with something of the gall of local partisanship in politics. The inimitable mixture of sagacity, discretion, and gentleness which characterized all his intercourse with mankind, was soon appreciated by the gentlemen to whom I allude; for not a few of them had had abundant opportunities of observing and lamenting the ease with which ill humours are engendered, to the disturbance of all really useful discussion, wherever social equals assemble in conclave, without having some official preses, uniting the weight of strong and quick intellect, with the calmness and moderation of a brave spirit, and the conciliating grace of habitual courtesy. No man was ever more admirably qualified to contend with the difficulties of such a situation. Presumption, dogmatism, and arrogance, shrunk from the overawing contrast of his modest greatness: the poison of every little passion was shamed and neutralized beneath the charitable dignity of his penetration; and jealousy, fretfulness, and spleen, felt themselves transmuted in the placid atmosphere of good sense, good humour, and good manners. And whoever might be apt to plead off on the score of harassing and engrossing personal duty of any sort, Scott had always leisure as well as temper at command, when invited to take part in any business connected with any rational hope of public advantage. These things opened, like the discovery of some new and precious element of wealth, upon certain eager spirits who considered the Royal Society as the great local parent and minister of practical inventions and mechanical improvements; and they found it no hard matter to inspire their genial chief with a warm sympathy in not a few of their then predominant speculations. He was invited, for example, to place himself at the head of a new company for improving the manufacture of oil gas, and in the spring of this year began to officiate regularly in that capacity. Other associations of a like kind called for his countenance, and received it. The fame of his ready zeal and happy demeanour grew and spread;

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and from this time, until bodily infirmities disabled him, Sir Walter occupied, as the most usual, acceptable, and successful chairman of public meetings of almost every conceivable sort, apart from politics, a very prominent place among the active citizens of his native town. Any foreign student of statistics who should have happened to peruse the files of an Edinburgh newspaper for the period to which I allude, would, I think, have concluded that there must be at least two Sir Walter Scotts in the place—one the miraculously fertile author whose works occupied two thirds of its literary advertisements and critical columns—another some retired magistrate or senator of easy fortune and indefatigable philanthropy, who devoted the rather oppressive leisure of an honoured old age to the promotion of patriotic ameliorations, the watchful guardianship of charities, and the ardent patronage of educational institutions.

The reader will perceive in the correspondence to which I must return, hints about various little matters connected with Scott's own advancing edifice on Tweed-side, in which he may trace the President of the Royal Society, and the Chairman of the Gas Company.

Thus, on the 14th of February, he recurs to the plan of heating interiors by steam—and proceeds with other topics of a similar class:—

To D. Terry, Esq., London.

"Dear Terry,

"I will not fail to send Mr. Atkinson, so soon as I can get it, a full account of Mr. Holdsworth of Glasgow's improved use of steam, which is in great acceptation. Being now necessarily sometimes with men of science, I hear a great deal of these matters; and, like Don Diego Snapahorto with respect to Greek, though I do not understand them, I like the sound of them. I have got a capital stove (proved and exercised by Mr. Robison,* who is such a mechanical genius as his father, the celebrated professor,) for the lower part of the house, with a communication for ventilating in the summer. Moreover, I have got for one or two of the rooms a new sort of bell, which I think would divert you. There is neither wire nor crank of any kind; the whole consisting of a tube of tin, such as is used for gas, having at one extremity a cylinder of wider dimensions, and in the other a piece of light wood. The larger cylinder—suppose an inch and a half in diameter—terminates in the apartment, and, ornamented as you please, is the handle, as it were, of the bell. By pressing a piston down into this upper and wider cylinder, the air through the tube, to a distance of a hundred feet if necessary, is suddenly compressed, which compression throws out the light piece of wood, which strikes the bell. The power of compression is exactly like that of the Bramah patent—the acting element being air instead of water. The bell may act as a telegraph by sinking once, twice, thrice, or so forth. The great advantage, however, is that it never can go out of order—needs no cranks, or pullies, or wires—and can be contorted into any sort of twining or turning, which convenience of communication may require, being simply an air-tight tube. It might be used to communicate with the stable, and I think of something of that kind—with the porter's lodge—with the gardener's house. I have a model now in the room with me. The only thing I have not explained is, that a small spring raises the piston B. when pressed down. I wish you would show this to Mr. Atkinson: if he has not seen it, he will be delighted. I have it tried on a tube of fifty feet, and it never fails, indeed *cannot*. It may be called the *ne plus ultra* of bell-ringing—*the* pea-gun principle, as one may say. As the bell is stationary, it might be necessary (were more than one used) that a little medallion should be suspended in such a manner as to be put in vibration, so as to show the servant which bell has been struck.—I think we have spoke of wellnigh all the commodities wanted at Conundrum Castle worth mentioning. Still there are the carpets.

"I have no idea my present labours will be dramatic in situation: as to character, that of Louis XI., the sagacious, perfidious, superstitious, jocular, and politic tyrant, would [illegible], for a historal chronicle, containing *his life and death*, one of the most powerful ever brought on the stage.—Yours truly,

W. Scott."

* Mr. John Robison, son of the author of "Elements of Mechanical Philosophy," &c. is now Secretary of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

A few weeks later, he says to the same correspondent—"I must not omit to tell you that my gas establishment is in great splendour, and working, now that the expense of the apparatus is in a great measure paid, very easily and very cheaply. In point of economy, however, it is not so effective; for the facility of procuring it encourages to a great profusion of light: but then a gallon of the basest train oil, which is used for preference, makes a hundred feet of gas, and treble that quantity lights the house in the state of an illumination for the expense of about 3s. 6d. In our new mansion we should have been ruined with spermaceti oil and wax-candles, yet had not one tenth part of the light. Besides, we are entirely freed from the great plague of cleaning lamps, &c. There is no smell whatever, unless a valve is left open, and the gas escapes unconsumed, in which case the scent occasions its being instantly discovered. About twice a-week the gas is made by an ordinary labourer, under occasional inspection of the gardener. It takes about five hours to fill the reservoir gasometer. I never saw an invention more completely satisfactory in the results."

I cannot say that Sir Walter's "century of inventions" at Abbotsford turned out very happily. His new philosophical *ne plus ultra* of bells was found in the sequel a poor succedaneum for the old-fashioned mechanism of the simple wire; and his application of gas-light to the interior of a dwelling-house was in fact attended with so many inconveniences, that ere long all his family heartily wished it had never been thought of. Moreover, Sir Walter had deceived himself as to the expense of such an apparatus when maintained for the uses of a single domestic establishment. He easily made out that his gas *per se* cost him less than the wax, oil, and tallow requisite to produce an equal quantity of light would have done: but though he admitted that no such quantity of artificial light was necessary either for comfort or splendour, nor would ever have been dreamt of had its supply been to come from the chandler's store, "the state of an illumination" was almost constantly kept up. Above all, he seems to have, by some trickery of the imagination, got rid in his estimate of all memory of the very considerable sum expended on the original fabric and furnishing of his gasometer, and lining wall upon wall with so many hundreds, perhaps thousands of feet of delicate pipe work,—and, in like manner to have counted for nothing the fact that he had a workman of superior character employed during no slender portion of every year in the manufacture. He himself, as has been mentioned before, delighted at all times in a strong light, and was not liable to much annoyance from the delicacy of his olfactory nerves. To the extremes of heat and cold, too, he was nearly indifferent. But the blaze and glow, and occasional odour of gas, when spread over every part of a private house, will ever constitute a serious annoyance for the majority of men—still more so of women—and in a country place where skilful repair, in case of accident, cannot be immediately procured, the result is often a misery. The effect of the new apparatus in the dining-room at Abbotsford was at first superb. In setting down to table, in Autumn, no one observed that in each of three chandeliers (one of them being of very great dimensions) there lurked a little tiny bead of red light. Dinner passed off, and the sun went down, and suddenly, at the turning of a screw, the room was filled with a gush of splendour worthy of the palace of Aladdin: but, as in the case of Aladdin, the old lamp would have been better in the upshot. Jewelry sparkled, but cheeks and lips looked cold and wan in this fierce illumination; and the eye was wearied, and the brow ached, if the sitting was at all protracted. I confess, however, that my chief enmity to the whole affair arises from my conviction that Sir Walter's own health was damaged, in his latter years, in consequence of his habitually working at night under the intense and burning glare of a broad star of gas, which hung, as it were, in the air, immediately over his writing table.

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These philosophical novelties were combined with curiously heterogenous features of decoration—*e. g.*

To the Lord Montagu, &c. Ditton Park, Windsor.

"Edinburgh, February 20, 1823.

"My dear Lord,

"I want a little sketch of your Lordship's arms, on the following account. You are to know that I have a sort of entrance gallery, in which I intend to hang up my old armour, at least the heavier parts of it, with sundry skins, horns, and such like affairs. That the two windows may be in unison, I intend to sport a little painted glass, and as I think heraldry is always better than any other subject, I intend that the upper compartment of each window shall have the shield, supporters, &c. of one of the existing dignitaries of the clan of Scott; and, of course, the Duke's arms and your Lordship's will occupy two such posts of distinction. The corresponding two will be Harden's and Thirlestane's,* the only families now left who have a right to be regarded as chieftains; and the lower compartments of each window will contain eight shields (without accompaniments) of good gentlemen of the name, of whom I can still muster sixteen bearing separate coats of arms. There is a little conceit in all this, but I have long got beyond the terror of

'Lord, what will all the people say!
Mr. Mayor, Mr. Mayor?'

and, like an obstinate old-fashioned Scotchman, I buckle my belt my ain gate,—and so I will have my *Bellenden*† *windows*.—Ever yours faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT."

The following letter, addressed to the same nobleman at his seat in the New Forest, opens with a rather noticeable paragraph. He is anxious that the guardian of Buccleuch should not omit the opportunity of adding another farm in Dumfriesshire, to an estate which already covered the best part of three or four counties!

To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c. Beaulieu Abbey, Hants.

"June 18th, 1823.

"My dear Lord,

"Your kind letter reached me just when, with my usual meddling humour, I was about to poke your Lordship on the subject of the farm near Drumlanrig. I see officially that the upset price is reduced. Now, surely you will not let it slip you: the other lots have all gone higher than valuation, so, therefore, it is to be supposed the estimation cannot be very much out of the way, and surely, as running absolutely into sight of that fine castle, it should be the Duke's at all events. Think of a vile four-cornered house, with plantations laid out after the fashion of scollops (as the women call them) and pocket handkerchiefs, cutting and disfiguring the side of the hill, in constant view. The small property has a tendency to fall into the great one, as the small drop of water, as it runs down the pane of a carriage-window, always joins the larger. But this may not happen till we are all dead and gone; and NOW are three important letters of the alphabet, mighty slippery, and apt to escape the grasp.

"I was much interested by your Lordship's account of Beaulieu; I have seen it from the water, and admired it very much, but I remember being told an evil genius haunted it in the shape of a low fever, to which the inhabitants were said to be subject. The woods were the most noble I ever saw. The disappearance of the ancient monastic remains may be accounted for on the same principle as elsewhere—a desire of the grantees of the Crown to secularize the appearance of the property, and remove at least the external evidence that it had ever been dedicated to religious uses—pretty much on the principle on which the light-fingered gentry melt plate so soon as it comes into their possession, and give the original metal a form which renders it more difficult to reassume it—this is a most unsavoury simile. The various mutations in religion, and consequently in property of this kind, recommended such policy. Your Lordship cannot but remember the Earl of Pembroke, in Edward the Sixth's time, expelling the nuns from Wilton—then in Queen Mary's re-inducting them into their nunnery, himself meeting the abbess, barefooted and in sackcloth, in penance for his sacrilege—and finally, again turning the said abbess and her vassals adrift in the days of good Queen Bess, with the wholesome admonition—'Go spin, you jades, go spin.' Something like the system of demolition which probably went on during these uncertain times was practised by what was called in France La Bande Noire, who bought chateaux and abbeys, and pulling them down, sold the materials for what they would bring—which was sometimes sufficient to help well towards payment of the land, when the assignats were at an immense depreciation.

"I should like dearly to have your Lordship's advice about what I am now doing here, knowing you to be one of those

'Who in trim gardens take their pleasure.'

I am shutting my house in with a court-yard, the interior of which is to be laid out around the drive in flower-plots and shrubbery, besides a trellised walk. This I intend to connect with my gardens, and obtain, if possible, some thing (*parvum componere magnis*) like the comfort of Ditton, so preferable to the tame and poor waste of grass and gravel by which modern houses are surrounded. I trust to see you all here in autumn.—Ever yours, faithfully, W. SCOTT."

In answering the foregoing letter, Lord Montagu mentioned to Scott the satisfaction he had recently had in placing his nephew the Duke of Buccleuch under the care of Mr. Blakeney, an accomplished gentleman and old friend, who had been his own fellow-student at Cambridge. He also rallied the poet a little on his yearning for acres; and hinted that that craving is apt to draw inconveniently even on a ducal revenue. Scott says in reply,—

To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c.

"My dear Lord,

"I am delighted that you have got such a tutor for Walter as entirely satisfies a person so well acquainted with mankind as your Lordship; and I am not afraid that a friend of yours should be imbued with any of very dangerous qualities, which are sometimes found in the instructors placed around our noble youths. Betwixt a narrow-minded pedantry, which naturally disgusts a young man, and the far more formidable vices of flattery, assentation, and self-seeking of all kinds, there are very few of the class of men who are likely to adopt the situation of tutor, that one is not afraid to trust near the person of a boy of rank and fortune. I think it is an argument of your friend's good sense and judgment, that he thinks the knowledge of domestic history essential to his pupil. It is in fact the accomplishment which, of all others, comes most home to the business and breast of a public man—and the Duke of Buccleuch can never be regarded as a private one. Besides, it has, in a singular degree, the tendency to ripen men's judgment upon the wild political speculations now current. Any one who will read Clarendon with attention and patience, may regard *veluti in speculo* the form and pressure of our own times, if you will just place the fanaticism of atheism and irreligion instead of that of enthusiasm, and combine it with the fierce thirst after innovation proper to both ages. Men of very high rank are, I have noticed, in youth peculiarly accessible to the temptations held out to their inexperience by the ingenious arguers upon speculative politics. There is popularity to be obtained by listening to these lectures—there is also an idea of generosity, and independence, and public spirit, in affecting to hold cheap the privileges which are peculiarly their own—and there may spring in some minds the idea (a very vain one) that the turret would seem higher, and more distinguished, if some parts of the building that overtop it were pulled down. I have no doubt Mr. Blakeney is aware of all this, and will take his own time and manner in leading our young friend to draw from history, in his own way, inferences which may apply to his own times. I will consider anxiously what your Lordship mentions about a course of Scottish study. We are still but very indifferently provided with Scotch histories of a general description.* Lord Hailes' Annals are the foundation-stone, and an excellent book, though dryly written. Pinkerton, in two very unreadable quartos, which yet abound in information, takes up the thread where

* Lord Napier has his peerage, as well as the corresponding surname, from a female ancestor; in the male blood he is *Scott, Baronet of Thirlestane*—and indeed some antiquaries of no mean authority consider him as now the male representative of Buccleuch. I need not remind the reader that both Harden and Thirlestane make a great figure in the Lay of the Last Minstrel.

† *Bellenden* was the old war-cry of Buccleuch.

* See some remarks on the Scottish historians in Sir Walter's reviewal of the first and second volumes of Mr. P. F. Tytler's elaborate work—a work which he had meant to criticize throughout in similar detail, for he considered it as a very important one in itself, and had, moreover, a warm regard for the author—the son of his early friend Lord Woodhouselee. His own Tales of a Grandfather have, however unambitiously undertaken, supplied a more just and clear guide of Scottish history to the general reader, than any one could have pointed out at the time when this letter was addressed to Lord Montagu.

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Hailes drops it—and then you have Robertson, down to the Union of the crowns. But I would beware of task-work, which Pinkerton at least must always be, and I would relieve him every now and then by looking at the pages of old Pitscottie, where events are told with so much *naïveté*, and even humour, and such individuality as it were, that it places the actors and scenes before the reader. The whole history of James V. and Queen Mary may be read to great advantage in the elegant Latin of Lesly, Bishop of Ross, and, collated with the account which his opponent, Buchanan, in language still more classical, gives of the same eventful reigns. Laing is but a bad guide through the seventeenth century, yet I hardly know where a combined account of these events is to be had, so far as Scotland is concerned, and still less where we could recommend to the young Duke an account of Scottish jurisprudence that is not too technical. All this I will be happy to talk over with your Lordship, for that our young friend should possess this information in a general way is essential to his own comfort and the welfare of many.

"About the land I have no doubt your Lordship is quite right, but I have something of what is called the *yeard hunger*.* I dare say you will get the other lots *à bon marché*, when you wish to have them; and, to be sure, a ducal dignity is a monstrous beast for devouring ready cash. I do not fear, on the part of Duke Walter, those ills which might arise to many from a very great command of ready money, which sometimes makes a young man, like a horse too full of spirits, make too much play at starting, and flag afterwards. I think improvident expenditure will not be his fault, though I have no doubt he will have the generous temper of his father and grandfather, with more means to indulge an expense which has others for its object more than mere personal gratification. This I venture to foretell, and hope to see the accomplishment of my prophecy; few things could give me more pleasure.

"My court-yard rises, but masons, of all men but lovers, love the most to linger ere they depart. Two men are now tapping upon the summit of my gate as gently as if they were laying the foundation-stone of a Methodist meeting-house, and one plumber 'sits, sparrow-like, companionless,' upon the top of a turret which should have been finished a month since. I must go, and, as Judge Jefferies used to express it, give them a lick with the rough side of my tongue, which will relieve your Lordship sooner than might otherwise have been.

"Melrose is looking excellently well. I begin to think taking off the old roof would have hurt it, at least externally, by diminishing its effect on the eye. The lowering the roofs of the aisles has had a most excellent effect. Sir Adam is well, and his circle augmented by his Indian brother, Major Ferguson, who has much of the family manners—an excellent importation, of course, to Tweedside.—Ever yours truly,

W. Scott."

In April of this year, Sir Walter heard of the death of his dear brother Thomas Scott, whose son had been for two years domesticated with him at Abbotsford, and the rest of that family were soon afterwards his guests for a considerable time. Among other visitants of the same season, were Miss Edgeworth and her sisters, Harriet and Sophia. After spending a few weeks in Edinburgh, and making a tour into the Highlands, they gave a fortnight to Abbotsford; and thenceforth the correspondence between Scott and the most distinguished of contemporary novelists, was of that confiding and affectionate character which we have seen largely exemplified in his intercourse with Joanna Baillie. His first impressions of his new friend are given in this letter to Mr. Terry.

To D. Terry, Esq., London.

"Castle Street, June 18, 1823.

"My marbles! my marbles! O what must now be done?
My drawing-room is finish'd off, but marbles there are none.
My marbles! my marbles! I fancied them so fine,
The marbles of Lord Elgin were but a joke to mine.†

"In fact we are all on tip-toe now for the marbles and the chimney-grates, which being had and obtained, we will be less clamorous about other matters. I have very little news to send you: Miss Edgeworth is at present the great lioness of Edinburgh, and a very nice lioness; she is full of fun and spirit; a little slight figure, very active in her motions, very good-humoured, and full of enthusiasm. Your descriptions of the chiffoniéres made my mouth water: but Abbotsford has cost rather too much for one year, with the absolutely necessary expenses, and I like to leave something to succeeding years, when we may be better able to afford to get our matters made tasty. Besides, the painting of the house should be executed before much curious furniture be put in; next spring, perhaps, we may go prowling together through the brokers' purlieus. I enclose you a plan of my own for a gallery round my own room, which is to combine that advantage with a private staircase at the same time, leaving me possession of my oratory; this will be for next year—but I should like to take Mr. Atkinson's sentiments about it. Somebody told me, I trust inaccurately, that he had not been well. I have not heard of him for some time, and I owe him (besides much kindness which can only be paid with gratitude) the suitable compensation for his very friendly labours in my behalf. I wish you would poke him a little, with all delicacy, on this subject. We are richer than when Abbotsford first began, and have engrossed a great deal of his most valuable time. I think you will understand the plan perfectly. A private staircase comes down from my dressing-room, and opens upon a book gallery; the landing-place forms the top of the oratory, leaving that cabinet seven feet high; then there is a staircase in the closet which corresponds with the oratory, which you attain by walking round the gallery. This staircase might be made to hang on the door and pull out when it is opened, which is the way abroad with an *escalier dérobé*.* I might either put shelves under the gallery, or place some of my cabinets there, or partly both.—Kind compliments to Mrs. Terry, in which all join.

"Yours most truly,

W. Scott.

"P. S.—The quantity of horns that I have for the hall would furnish the whole world of cuckoldom: arrived this instant a new cargo of them, Lord knows from whence. I opened the box, thinking it might be the damask, and found it full of sylvan spoils. Has an old-fashioned consulting desk ever met your eye in your rambles? I mean one of those which have four faces, each forming an inclined plane, like a writing-desk, and made to turn round as well as to rise, and be depressed by a strong iron screw in the centre, something like a one-clawed table; they are old-fashioned, but choicely convenient, as you can keep three or four books, folios if you like, open for reference. If you have not seen one, I can get one made to a model in the Advocates' library. Some sort of contrivances there are too for displaying prints, all which would be convenient in so large a room, but can be got in time."

* Earth-hunger.

† Sir Walter is parodying the Spanish Ballad, "My ear-rings! my ear-rings are dropt into the well," &c.

* Sir Walter had in his mind a favourite cabinet of Napoleon's at the *Elysée Bourbon*, where there are a gallery and concealed staircase such as he here describes.

CHAPTER LIX.

QUENTIN DURWARD PUBLISHED—TRANSACTIONS WITH CONSTABLE—DIALOGUES ON SUPERSTITION PROPOSED—ARTICLE ON ROMANCE WRITTEN—ST. RONAN'S WELL BEGUN—"MELROSE IN JULY"—ABBOTSFORD VISITED BY MISS EDGEWORTH—AND BY MR. ADOLPHUS—HIS MEMORANDA—EXCURSION TO ALLANTON—ANECDOTES—LETTERS TO MISS BAILLIE, MISS EDGEWORTH, MR. TERRY, ETC.—PUBLICATION OF ST. RONAN'S WELL.—1823.

A DAY or two after the date of the preceding letter, Quentin Durward was published; and surpassing as its popularity was eventually, Constable, who was in London at the time, wrote in cold terms of its immediate reception.

Very shortly before the bookseller left Edinburgh for that trip, he had concluded another bargain (his last of the sort) for the purchase of Waverley copyrights—acquiring the author's property in the Pirate, Nigel, Peveril, and also Quentin Durward, out and out, at the price of five thousand guineas. He had thus paid for the copyright of novels (over and above the half profits of the early separate editions) the sum of £22,500; and his advances upon "works of fiction" still in embryo, amounted at this moment to £10,000 more. He began, in short, and the wonder is that he began so late, to suspect that the process of creation was moving too rapidly. The publication of different sets of the novels in a collective form may probably have had a share in open-

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ing his eyes to the fact, that the voluminousness of an author is any thing but favourable to the rapid diffusion of his works as library books—the great object with any publisher who aspires at founding a solid fortune. But he merely intimated on this occasion that he thought the pecuniary transactions between Scott and himself had gone to such an extent that, considering the usual chances of life and health, he must decline contracting for any more novels until those for which his house had already advanced monies (or at least *bills*) should have been written.

Scott himself appears to have admitted for a moment the suspicion that he had been overdoing in the field of romance; and opened to Constable the scheme of a work on popular superstitions, in the form of dialogue, for which he had long possessed ample materials in his thorough mastery of perhaps the most curious library of *diableric* that ever man collected. But before Constable had leisure to consider this proposal in all its bearings, Quentin Durward, from being, as Scott expressed it, *frost-bit*, had emerged into most fervid and flourishing life. In fact, the sensation which this novel, on its first appearance, created in Paris, was extremely similar to that which attended the original Waverley in Edinburgh, and Ivanhoe afterwards in London. For the first time Scott had ventured on foreign ground, and the French public, long wearied of the pompous tragedians and feeble romancers, who had alone striven to bring out the ancient history and manners of their country in popular forms, were seized with a fever of delight when Louis XI. and Charles the Bold started into life again at the beck of the Northern Magician. Germany had been fully awake to his merits years before, but the public there also felt their sympathies appealed to with hitherto unmatched strength and effect. The infection of admiration ran far and wide on the Continent, and soon re-acted most potently upon Britain. Discussing the various fortunes of these novels a few years after, Mr. Senior says—

"Almost all the characters in his other novels are drawn from British history or from British domestic life. That they should delight nations differing so much from ourselves and from one another in habits and in literary taste, who cannot appreciate the imitation of our existing manners, or join in our historical associations; that the head of 'Le Sieur Valtere Skote' should be pointed out by a Hungarian tradesman as the portrait of 'l'homme le plus célèbre l'Europe;' that his works should employ the translators and printers of Leipsic and Paris, and even relieve the ennui of a Rothenturn quarantine on the extreme borders of European civilization, is, as Dr. Walsh* has well observed, the strongest proof that their details are founded on deep knowledge of the human character, and of the general feelings recognised by all. But Quentin Durward has the additional advantage of scenery and characters possessing European interest. It presents to the inhabitants of the Netherlands and of France, the most advanced of the continental nations, a picture of the manners of their ancestors, incomparably more vivid and more detailed than is to be found in any other narrative, either fictitious or real: and that picture is dignified by the introduction of persons whose influence has not even yet ceased to operate.

"Perhaps at no time did the future state of Europe depend more on the conduct of two individuals than when the crown of France and the coronet of Burgundy descended on Louis XI. and Charles the Bold. The change from real to nominal sovereignty, which has since been the fate of the empire of Germany, was then impending over the kingdom of France. And if that throne had been filled, at this critical period, by a monarch with less courage, less prudence, or more scrupulous than Louis, there seems every reason to suppose that the great feudatories would have secured their independence, and the greater part of that country might now be divided into many petty principalities, some Catholic, and some Protestant, principally intent on excluding each other's commodities, and preventing the mutual ruin which would have been predicted as the necessary consequence of a free trade between Gascony and Languedoc.

"On the other hand, if the race of excellent sovereigns who governed Burgundy for a hundred and twenty years had been continued—or, indeed, if Duke Philip had been followed by almost any other person than his brutal son, the rich and extensive countries, which under his reign constituted the most powerful state in Europe, must soon have been formed into an independent monarchy—a monarchy far greater and better consolidated than the artificial kingdom lately built up out of their fragments, and kept together rather by the pressure of surrounding Europe than by any internal principles of cohesion.* From the times of Louis XI. until now, France has been the master-spring in European politics, and Flanders merely an arena for combat. The imagination is bewildered by an attempt to speculate on the course which human affairs might have taken if the commencement of the fifteenth century had found the Low Countries, Burgundy and Artois, one great kingdom, and Normandy, Brittany, Provence, and the other fiefs of the French crown, independent principalities.

"In addition to their historical interest, Sir Walter had the good fortune to find in Charles and Louis characters as well contrasted as if they had been invented for the purposes of fiction. Both were indeed utterly selfish, but there the resemblance ends. The duke's ruling principle was vanity, and vanity of the least intellectual kind. His first object was the fame of a conqueror, or rather of a soldier, for in his battles he seems to have aimed more at showing courage and personal strength than the calmness and combination of a general. His other great source of delight was the exhibition of his wealth and splendour,—in the pomp of his dress and his retinue. In these ignoble pursuits he seems to have been utterly indifferent to the sufferings he inflicted on others, and to the risks he himself encountered; and ultimately threw away his life, his army, and the prosperity of his country, in a war undertaken without any object, for he was attacking those who were anxious to be his auxiliaries, and persevered in, after success was impossible, merely to postpone the humiliation of a retreat.

"Louis's object was power; and he seems to have enjoyed the rare felicity of being unaffected by vanity. He had both intrepidity and conduct in battle—far more of the latter indeed than his ferocious rival; but no desire to display these qualities led him into war, if his objects could be otherwise obtained. He fought those only whom he could not bribe or deceive. The same indifference to mere opinion entitled him to Commines' praise as 'eminently wise in adversity.' When it was not expedient to resist, he could retreat, concede, and apologize, without more apparent humiliation than the king in chess when he moves out of check. He was rapacious, because wealth is a source of power, and because he had no sympathy with those whom he impoverished; but he did not, like his rival, waste his treasures on himself, or on his favourites—he employed them either in the support of his own real force, or in keeping in his pay the ministers and favourites of other sovereigns, and sometimes the sovereigns themselves. His only personal expense was in providing for the welfare of his soul, which he conciliated with his unscrupulous ambition, by allowing the saints his intercessors a portion of his spoils. Our author's picture of his superstition may appear at first sight overcharged, but the imaginary prayer ascribed to him is scarcely a caricature of his real address to Notre Dame de Clery, which we copy in Brantome's antiquated spelling—

"'Ah, ma bonne Dame, ma petite Maistresse, ma grande ame, en qui j'ay eu tousjours mon reconfort. Je te prie de supplier Dieu pour moy, et estre mon advocate envers luy, qu'il me pardonne la mort de mon frere—que j'ay fait empoisonner par ce meschant Abbé de S. Jean. Je m'en confesse a toi, comme à ma bonne patronne et maistresse. Mais aussi, qu'eusse-je sceu faire? Il ne me falsoit que troubler mon royaume. Fay moy doncques pardonner, ma bonne Dame; *et je sçay ce que je te donneray.*'

"Sir Walter has made good use of these excellent materials. His Louis and his Charles are perfectly faithful copies, with all the spirit and consistency which even he could have given to creations of his own. The narrative, too, is flowing and connected: each event depends on that which preceded it, without any of the episodes, recapitulations, and sudden changes of scene, which in many of his works weaken the interest, and distract the attention of the reader."

The result of Quentin Durward, as regards the contemporary literature of France, and thence of Italy and the Continent generally, would open a field for ample digression. As concerns Scott himself, the rays of foreign enthusiasm speedily thawed the frost of Constable's unwonted misgivings;

* See Walsh's Journey to Constantinople.

* This criticism was published (in the London Review) long before the Revolt of Brussels, in 1830, divided Belgium from Holland.

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the Dialogues on Superstition, if he ever began them, were very soon dropped, and the Novelist resumed his pen. He had not sunk under the short-lived frown—for he wrote to Ballantyne, on first ascertaining that a damp was thrown on his usual manufacture,

> "The mouse who only trusts to one poor hole,
> Can never be a mouse of any soul;"

and while his publisher yet remained irresolute as to the plan of Dialogues, threw off, with unabated energy, his excellent Essay on Romance, for the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica; and I cannot but consider it as another display of his high self-reliance, that, though he well knew to what influence Quentin owed its ultimate success in the British market, he, the instant he found himself encouraged to take up the trade of story-telling again, sprang back to Scotland—nay, voluntarily encountered new difficulties, by selecting the comparatively tame and unpicturesque realities of modern manners in his native province.

A conversation, which much interested me at the time, had, I fancy, some share at least in this determination. As he, Laidlaw, and myself, were lounging on our ponies, one fine calm afternoon, along the brow of the Eildon hill where it overhangs Melrose, he mentioned to us gayly the *row*, as he called it, that was going on in Paris about Quentin Durward, and said, "I can't but think that I could make better play still with something German." Laidlaw grumbled at this, and said, like a true Scotchman, "Na, na, sir—take my word for it, you are always best, like Helen MacGregor, when your foot is on your native heath; and I have often thought that if you were to write a novel, and lay the scene *here*, in the very year you were writing it, you would exceed yourself."—"Hame's hame," quoth Scott, smiling, "be it ever sae hamely. There's something in what you say, Willie. What suppose I were to take Captain Clutterbuck for a hero, and never let the story step a yard beyond the village below us yonder?"—"The very thing I want," says Laidlaw; "stick to Melrose in July, 1823."—"Well, upon my word," he answered, "the field would be quite wide enough—and *what for no?*"—(This pet phrase of Meg Dods was a *Laidlawism*.)—Some fun followed about the different real persons in the village that might be introduced with comical effect; but as Laidlaw and I talked and laughed over our worthy neighbours, his air became graver and graver; and he at length said, "Ay, ay, if one could look into the heart of that little cluster of cottages, no fear but you would find materials enow for tragedy as well as comedy. I undertake to say there is some real romance at this moment going on down there, that, if it could have justice done to it, would be well worth all the fiction that was ever spun out of human brains." He then told us a tale of dark domestic guilt which had recently come under his notice as Sheriff, and of which the scene was not Melrose, but a smaller hamlet on the other side of the Tweed, full in our view; but the details were not of a kind to be dwelt upon; —any thing more dreadful was never conceived by Crabbe, and he told it so as to produce on us who listened all the effect of another *Hall of Justice*. It could never have entered into his head to elaborate such a tale; but both Laidlaw and I used to think that this talk suggested St. Ronan's Well—though my good friend was by no means disposed to accept that as payment in full of his demand, and from time to time afterwards would give the Sheriff a little poking about "Melrose in July."

Before Sir Walter settled to the new novel, he received Joanna Baillie's long-promised Collection of Poetical Miscellanies, in which appeared his own dramatic sketch of Macduff's Cross. When Halidon Hill first came forth, there were not wanting reviewers who hailed it in a style of rapture, such as might have been expected had it been a Macbeth. But this folly soon sunk; and I only mention it as an instance of the extent to which reputation bewilders and confounds even person who have good brains enough when they find it convenient to exercise them. The second attempt of the class produced no sensation whatever at the time; and both would have been long since forgotten, but that they came from Scott's pen. They both contain some fine passages—Halidon Hill has, indeed, several grand ones. But, on the whole, they always seemed to me most egregiously unworthy of Sir Walter; and, now that we have before us his admirable letters on dramatic composition to Allan Cunningham, it appears doubly hard to account for the rashness with which he committed himself in even such slender attempts on a species of composition, of which, in his cool hour, he so fully appreciated the difficult demands. Nevertheless, I am very far from agreeing with those critics who have gravely talked of Halidon Hill, and Macduff's Cross, and the still more unfortunate Doom of Devorgoil, as proving that Sir Walter could not have succeeded in the drama, either serious or comic. It would be as fair to conclude, from the abortive fragment of the Vampyre, that Lord Byron could not have written a good novel or romance in prose. Scott threw off these things *currente calamo*; he never gave himself time to consider beforehand what could be made of their materials, nor bestowed a moment on correcting them after he had covered the allotted quantity of paper with blank verse; and neither when they were new, nor ever after, did he seem to attach the slightest importance to them.

Miss Baillie's volume contained several poems by Mrs. Hemans,—some *jeux d'esprit* by the late Miss Catherine Fanshawe, a woman of rare wit and genius, in whose society Scott greatly delighted,—and, *inter alia*, Mr. William Howison's early ballad of Polydore, which had been originally published, under Scott's auspices, in the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1810.

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Edinburgh, July 11, 1823.

"Your kind letter, my dear friend, heaps coals of fire on my head, for I should have written to you, in common gratitude, long since; but I waited till I should read through the Miscellany with some attention, which as I have not yet done, I can scarce say much to the purpose, so far as that is concerned. My own production sate in the porch like an evil thing, and scared me from proceeding farther than to hurry through your compositions, with which I was delighted, and two or three others. In my own case, I have almost a nervous reluctance to look back on any recent poetical performance of my own. I may almost say with Macbeth,—

> "I am afraid to think what I have done.
> Look on't again I dare not."

But the best of the matter is, that your purpose has been so satisfactorily answered—and great reason have you to be proud of your influence with the poem-buyers as well as the poem-makers. By the by, you know your request first set me a hammering on an old tale of the Swintons, from whom, by the mother's side, I am descended, and the tinkering work I made of it warmed the heart of a cousin* in the East Indies, a descendant of the renowned Sir Allan, who has sent his kindred post by this fleet not a butt of sack, but a pipe of most particular Madeira. You and Mrs. Agnes shall have a glass of it when you come to Abbotsford, for I always consider your last only a payment to account—you did not stay half the time you promised. I am going out there on Friday, and shall see all my family re-united around me for the first time these many years. They make a very good figure as 'honest men and bonny lasses.' I read Miss Fanshawe's pieces, which are quite beautiful. Mrs. Hemans is somewhat too poetical for my taste—too many flowers I mean, and too little fruit—but that may be the cynical criticism of an elderly gentleman; for it is certain that when I was young, I read verses of every kind with infinitely more indulgence, because with more pleasure, than I can now do—the more shame for me now to refuse the complaisance which I have had so often to solicit. I am hastening to think prose a better thing than verse, and if you have any hopes to convince me to the contrary, it must be by writing and publishing another volume of plays as fast as possible. I think they would be most favourably received; and beg, like Burns, to

* George Swinton, Esq. (now of Swinton,) was at this time Secretary to the Council in Bengal.

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——"tell you of mine and Scotland's drouth,
Your servant's humble——"

A young friend of mine, Lord Francis Gower, has made a very fair attempt to translate Goethe's untranslatable play of Faust, or Faustus. He has given also a version of Schiller's very fine poem on Casting the Bell, which I think equals Mr. Sotheby's—nay, privately, (for tell it not in Epping Forest, whisper it not in Hampstead,) rather outdoes our excellent friend. I have not compared them minutely, however. As for Mr. Howison, such is the worldly name of Polydore, I never saw such a change in my life upon a young man. It may be fourteen years, or thereabouts, since he introduced himself to me, by sending me some most excellent verses for a youth of sixteen years old. I asked him to Ashestiel, and he came—a thin hectic youth, with an eye of dark fire, a cheek that coloured on the slightest emotion, and a mind fraught with feeling of the tender and the beautiful, and eager for poetical fame—otherwise, of so little acquaintance with the world and the world's ways, that a sucking-turkey might have been his tutor. I was rather a bear-like nurse for such a lamb-like charge. We could hardly indeed associate together, for I was then eternally restless, and he as sedentary. He could neither fish, shoot, or course—he could not bear the inside of a carriage with the ladies, for it made him sick, nor the outside with my boys, for it made him giddy. He could not walk, for it fatigued him, nor ride, for he fell off. I did all I could to make him happy, and it was not ill he had caught two colds and one sprain, besides risking his life in the Tweed, that I gave up all attempts to convert him to the things of this world. Our acquaintance after this languished, and at last fell asleep, till one day last year I met at Lockhart's a thin consumptive-looking man, bent double with study, and whose eyes seemed to have been extinguished almost by poring over the midnight lamp, though protected by immense green spectacles. I then found that my poet had turned metaphysician, and that these spectacles were to assist him in gazing into the millstone of moral philosophy. He looked at least twice as old as he really is, and has since published a book, very small in size, but, from its extreme abstracted doctrines, more difficult to comprehend than any I ever opened in my life.* I will take care he has one of my copies of the Miscellany. If he gets into the right line, he will do something remarkable yet.

"We saw, you will readily suppose, a great deal of Miss Edgeworth, and two very nice girls, her younger sisters. It is scarcely possible to say more of this very remarkable person, than that she not only completely answered, but exceeded the expectation which I had formed. I am particularly pleased with the *naïveté* and good-humoured ardour of mind which she unites with such formidable powers of acute observation. In external appearance, she is quite the fairy of our nursery-tale, the Whippity Stourie, if you remember such a sprite, who came flying through the window to work all sorts of marvels. I will never believe but what she has a wand in her pocket, and pulls it out to conjure a little before she begins to those very striking pictures of manners. I am grieved to say, that, since they left Edinburgh on a tour to the Highlands, they have been detained at Forres by an erysipelas breaking out on Miss Edgeworth's face. They have been twelve days there, and are now returning southwards, as a letter from Harriet informs me. I hope soon to have them at Abbotsford, where we will take good care of them, and the invalid in particular. What would I give to have you and Mrs. Agnes to meet them, and what canty cracks we would set up about the days of lang syne! The increasing powers of steam, which, like you, I look on half-proud, half-sad, half-angry, and half-pleased, in doing so much for the commercial world, promise something also for the sociable; and, like Prince Houssein's tapestry, will, I think, one day waft friends together in the course of a few hours, and, for aught we may be able to tell, bring Hampstead and Abbotsford within the distance of,—'Will you dine with us quietly to-morrow?' I wish I could advance this happy abridgment of time and space, so as to make it serve my present wishes.

"Abbotsford, July 18.

"I have, for the first time these several years, my whole family united around me, excepting Lockhart, who is with his yeomanry, but joins us to-morrow. Walter is returned a fine steady soldier-like young man from his abode on the Continent, and little Charles, with his friend Surtees, has come from Wales, so that we draw together from distant quarters. When you add Sophia's baby, I assure you my wife and I look very patriarchal. The misfortune is, all this must be soon over, for Walter is admitted one of the higher class of students in the Military College, and must join against the 1st of August. I have some chance, I think, when he has had a year's study, of getting him upon the staff in the Ionian Islands, which I should greatly prefer to his lounging about villages in horse-quarters; he has a strong mathematical turn, which promises to be of service in his profession; little Charles is getting steadily on with his learning—but to what use he is to turn it I scarce know yet.—I am very sorry indeed that the doctor is complaining—he whose life has been one course of administering help and comfort to others, should not, one would think, suffer himself; but such are the terms on which we hold our gifts—however valuable to others, they are sometimes less available to ourselves. I sincerely hope this will find him better, and Mrs. Baillie easier in proportion. When I was subject a little to sore throats, I cured myself of that tendency by spunging my throat, breast, and shoulders, every morning, with the coldest water I could get; but this is rather a horse remedy, though I still keep up the practice. All here, that is, wives, maidens, and bachelors bluff, not forgetting little John Hugh, or, as he is popularly styled, Hugh Littlejohn, send loving remembrances to you and Mrs. Agnes.—Ever, dear Mrs. Joanna, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The next month—August, 1823—was one of the happiest in Scott's life. Never did I see a brighter day at Abbotsford than that on which Miss Edgeworth first arrived there—never can I forget her look and accent when she was received by him at his archway and exclaimed, "Every thing about you is exactly what one ought to have had wit enough to dream!" The weather was beautiful, and the edifice, and its appurtenances, were all but complete; and day after day, so long as she could remain, her host had always some new plan of gayety. One day there was fishing on the Cauldshiels Loch, and a dinner on the heathy bank. Another, the whole party feasted by Thomas the Rymer's waterfall in the glen—and the stone on which Maria that day sat was ever afterwards called *Edgeworth's stone*. A third day we had to go further a-field. He must needs show her, not Newark only, but all the upper scenery of the Yarrow, where "fair hangs the apple frae the rock,"—and the baskets were unpacked about sunset, beside the ruined Chapel overlooking St. Mary's Loch—and he had scrambled to gather bluebells and heath-flowers, with which all the young ladies must twine their hair,—and they sang and he recited until it was time to go home beneath the softest of harvest moons. Thus a fortnight was passed—and the vision closed; for Miss Edgeworth never saw Abbotsford again during his life; and I am very sure she could never bear to look upon it now that the spirit is fled.

Another honoured and welcome guest of the same month was Mr. J. L. Adolphus—the author of the Letters to Heber; and I am enabled to enrich these pages with some reminiscences of that visit—the first of several he paid to Abbotsford—which this gentleman has been so kind as to set down for my use, and I am sure for the gratification of all my readers. After modestly recounting the circumstances which led to his invitation to Abbotsford, my friendly contributor says:—

"With great pleasure and curiosity, but with something like awe, I first saw this celebrated house emerge from below the plantation which screened it from the Selkirk and Melrose road. Antique as it was in design, it had not yet had time to take any tint from the weather, and its whole complication of towers, turrets, galleries, cornices, and quaintly ornamented mouldings, looked fresh from the chisel, except where the walls were enriched with some really ancient carving or inscription. As I approached the house, there was a busy sound of masons' tools; the shrubbery before the windows was strewed with the works of the carpenter and stone-cutter, and with grotesque antiquities, for which a place was yet to be found; on one side were the beginnings of a fruit and flower garden; on another, but more distant, a slope bristling with young firs and larches; near the door murmured an unfinished fountain.

"I had seen Sir Walter Scott, but never met him in society, before this visit. He received me with all his well-known cordiality and simplicity of manner. The circum-

* "An Essay on the Sentiments of Attraction, Adaptation, and Variety. To which are added, A Key to the Mythology of the Ancients; and Europe's Likeness to the Human Spirit. By William Howison." Edinburgh: 1822.

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stances under which I presented myself were peculiar, as the only cause of my being under his roof was one which could not without awkwardness be alluded to, while a strict reserve existed on the subject of the Waverley novels. This, however, did not create any embarrassment; and he entered into conversation as if any thing that might have been said with reference to the origin of our acquaintance had been said an hour before. I have since been present at his first reception of many visitors; and upon such occasions, as indeed upon every other, I never saw a man who, in his intercourse with all persons, was so perfect a master of courtesy. His manners were so plain and natural, and his kindness took such immediate possession of the feelings, that this excellence in him might for a while pass almost unobserved. I cannot pay a higher testimony to it, than by owning that I first fully appreciated it from his behaviour to others. His air and aspect, at the moment of a first introduction, were placid, modest, and, for his time of life, venerable. Occasionally, where he stood a little on ceremony, he threw into his address a deferential tone, which had in it something of old-fashioned politeness, and became him extremely well.

"A point of hospitality in which Sir Walter Scott never failed, whatever might be the pretensions of the guest, was to do the honours of conversation. When a stranger arrived, he seemed to consider it as much a duty to offer him the resources of his mind as those of his table; taking care, however, by his choice of subjects, to give the visiter an opportunity of making his own stores, if he had them, available. I have frequently observed this—with admiration both of his powers and of his discriminating kindness. To me, at the time of my first visit, he addressed himself often as to a member of his own profession; and indeed he seemed always to have a real pleasure in citing from his own experience as an advocate and a law officer. The first book he recommended to me for an hour's occupation in his library, was an old Scotch pamphlet of the trial of Philip Stanfield, (published also in the English State Trials;) a dismal and mysterious story of murder, connected slightly with the politics of the time of James II., and having in it a taste of the marvellous.*

"It would, I think, be extremely difficult to give a just idea of his general conversation to any one who had not known him. Considering his great personal and literary popularity, and the wide circle of society in which he had lived, it is perhaps remarkable that so few of his sayings, real or imputed, are in circulation. But he did not affect sayings; the points and sententious turns, which are so easily caught up and transmitted, were not natural to him: though he occasionally expressed a thought very pithily and neatly. For example, he once described the Duke of Wellington's style of debating as 'slicing the argument into two or three parts, and helping himself to the best.' But the great charm of his 'table talk' was in the sweetness and *abandon* with which it flowed,—always, however, guided by good sense and taste; the warm and unstudied eloquence with which he expressed rather sentiments than opinions; and the liveliness and force with which he narrated and described: and all that he spoke derived so much of its effect from indefinable felicities of manner, look, and tone—and sometimes from the choice of apparently insignificant words—that a moderately faithful transcript of his sentences would be but a faint image of his conversation.

"At the time of my first and second visits to Abbotsford, in 1823 and 1824, his health was less broken, and his spirits more youthful and buoyant, than when I afterwards saw him, in the years from 1827 to 1831. Not only was he inexhaustible in anecdote, but he still loved to exert the talent of dramatizing, and in some measure representing in his own person the incidents he told of, or the situations he imagined. I recollect, for instance, his sketching in this manner (it was, I think, *apropos* to some zoological discussion with Mr. William Stewart Rose) a sailor trying to persuade a monkey to speak, and vowing, with all kinds of whimsical oaths, that he would not tell of him.† On the evening of my first arrival, he took me to see his 'wild man,' as he called him, the celebrated Tom Purdie, who was in an outhouse, unpacking some Indian idols, weapons, and carved work, just arrived from England. The better to exhibit Tom, his master played a most amusing scene of wonder, impatience, curiosity, and fear, lest any thing should be broken, or the candle fall into the loose hay of the packages, but all this with great submission to the better judgment of the factotum, who went on gravely breaking up and unpapering after his own manner, as if he had been sorting some toys for a restless child. Another specimen of his talent for representation, which struck me forcibly about the same time, was his telling the story (related in his Letters on Demonology) of a dying man who, in a state of delirium, while his nurse was absent, left his room, appeared at a club of which he was president, and was taken for his own ghost. In relating this not very likely story, he described with his deep and lingering tones, and with gestures and looks suited to each part of the action, the sick man, deadly pale and with vacant eyes, walking into the club room; the silence and consternation of the club; the supposed spectre moving to the head of the table; giving a ghastly salutation to the company; raising a glass towards his lips; stiffly turning his head from side to side, as if pledging the several members; his departure, just at midnight; and the breathless conference of the club, as they recovered themselves from this strange visit. St. Ronan's Well was published soon after the telling of this story, and I have no doubt that Sir Walter had it in his mind in writing one of the last scenes of that novel.

"He read a play admirably well, distinguishing the speeches by change of tone and manner without naming the characters. I had the pleasure of hearing him recite, shortly before it was published, his own spirited ballad of 'Bonny Dundee;' and never did I listen to more 'eloquent music.' This was in one of the last years of his life, but the lines

> 'Away, to the hills, to the caves, to the rocks!
> Ere I own a usurper, I'll couch with the fox!'

could not, in his most vigorous days, have been intoned with more fire and energy.

"In conversation he sometimes added very strikingly to the ludicrous or pathetic effect of an expression by dwelling on a syllable; *holding the note*, as it would have been called in music. Thus I recollect his telling with an extremely droll emphasis, that once, when a boy, he was '*cuffed*' by his aunt for singing

> 'There's nae repentance in my heart,
> The fiddle's in my arms!'"

"No one who has seen him can forget the surprising power of change which his countenance showed when awakened from a state of composure. In 1823, when I first knew him, the hair upon his forehead was quite gray, but his face, which was healthy and sanguine, and the hair about it, which had still a strong reddish tinge, contrasted rather than harmonized with the sleek silvery locks above; a contrast which might seem rather suited to a jovial and humorous, than to a pathetic expression. But his features were equally capable of both. The form and hue of his eyes (for the benefit of minute physiognomists it should be noted, that the pupils contained some small specks of brown) were wonderfully calculated for showing great varieties of emotion. Their mournful aspect was extremely earnest and affecting; and, when he told some dismal and mysterious story, they had a doubtful, melancholy, exploring look, which appealed irresistibly to the hearer's imagination. Occasionally, when he spoke of something very audacious or eccentric, they would dilate and light up with a tragic-comic, harebrained expression, quite peculiar to himself; one might see in it a whole chapter of *Cœur-de-lion* and the Clerk of Copmanhurst. Never, perhaps, did a man go through all the gradations of laughter with such complete enjoyment, and a countenance so radiant. The first dawn of a humorous thought would show itself sometimes, as he sat silent, by an involuntary lengthening of the upper lip, followed by a shy sidelong glance at his neighbours, indescribably whimsical, and seeming to ask from their looks whether the spark of drollery should be suppressed or allowed to blaze out. In the full tide of mirth he did indeed 'laugh the heart's laugh,' like Walpole, but it was not boisterous and overpowering, nor did it check the course of his words; he could go on telling or descanting, while his lungs did 'crow like chanticleer,' his syllables, in the struggle, growing more emphatic, his accent more strongly Scotch, and his voice plaintive with excess of merriment.

"The habits of life at Abbotsford, when I first saw it, ran in the same easy, rational, and pleasant course which I believe they always afterwards took; though the family was at this time rather straitened in its arrangements, as some of the principal rooms were not finished. After breakfast Sir Walter took his short interval of study in the light and elegant little room afterwards called Miss Scott's. That which he occupied when Abbotsford was

* See the case of Philip Stanfield's alleged parricide, and Sir Walter Scott's remarks thereupon, in his edition of "Lord Fountainhall's Chronological Notes on Scottish Affairs," pp. 233—236; and compare an extract from one of his early note-books, given *ante*, p. 60.

† Mr. Rose was at this time meditating his entertaining little *jeu d'esprit*, entitled, "Anecdotes of Monkeys."

* These lines are from the old ballad, "Macpherson's Lament,"—the ground-work of Burns's glorious "Macpherson's Farewell." See Scott's *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xvii. p. 288.

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complete, though more convenient in some material respects, seemed to me the least cheerful* and least private in the house. It had, however, a recommendation which, perhaps, he was very sensible of, that, as he sat at his writing-table, he could look out at his young trees. About one o'clock he walked or rode, generally with some of his visiters. At this period he used to be a good deal on horseback, and a pleasant sight it was to see the gallant old gentleman, in his seal-skin cap and short green jacket, lounging along a field-side on his mare, Sibyl Grey, and pausing now and then to talk, with a serio-comic look, to a labouring man or woman, and rejoice them with some quaint saying in broad Scotch. The dinner hour was early; the sitting after dinner was hospitably but not immoderately prolonged; and the whole family party (for such it always seemed, even if there were several visiters) then met again for a short evening, which was passed in conversation and music. I once heard Sir Walter say, that he believed there was a 'pair' of cards (such was his antiquated expression) somewhere in the house—but probably there is no tradition of their having ever been used. The drawing-room and library (unfurnished at the time of my first visit) opened into each other, and formed a beautiful evening apartment. "By every one who has visited at Abbotsford they must be associated with some of the most delightful recollections of his life. Sir Walter listened to the music of his daughters, which was all congenial to his own taste, with a never-failing enthusiasm. He followed the fine old songs which Mrs. Lockhart sang to her harp with his mind, eyes, and lips, almost as if joining in an act of religion. To other musical performances he was a dutiful, and often a pleased listener, but I believe he cared little for mere music; the notes failed to charm him if they were not connected with good words, or immediately associated with some history or strong sentiment, upon which his imagination could fasten. A similar observation might, I should conceive, apply to his feeling of other arts. I do not remember any picture or print at Abbotsford which was remarkable merely as a work of colour or design. All, I think, either represented historical, romantic, or poetical subjects, or related to persons, places, or circumstances, in which he took an interest. Even in architecture his taste had the same bias; almost every stone of his house bore an allusion or suggested a sentiment.

"It seemed at first a little strange, in a scene where so many things brought to mind the Waverley novels, to hear no direct mention of them, or even allusion to their existence. But as forbearance on this head was a rule on which a complete tacit understanding subsisted, there was no embarrassment or appearance of mystery on the subject. Once or twice I have heard a casual reference made, in Sir Walter's presence, to some topic in the novels; no surprise or appearance of displeasure followed, but the conversation, so far as it tended that way, died a natural death. It has, I believe, happened that he himself has been caught unawares on the forbidden ground; I have heard it told by a very acute observer, not now living, that on his coming once to Abbotsford, after the publication of the Pirate, Sir Walter asked him, 'Well, and how is our friend Kemble? glorious John!' and then recollecting, of course, that he was talking Claude Halcro, he checked himself, and could not for some moments recover from his false step. Had a man been ever so prone to indiscretion on such subjects, it would have been unpardonable to betray it towards Sir Walter Scott, who (beside all his other claims to respect and affection) was himself cautious, even to nicety, of hazarding an inquiry or remark which might appear to be an intrusion upon the affairs of those with whom he conversed. It may be observed, too, that the publications of the day were by no means the staple of conversation at Abbotsford, though they had their turn; and with respect to his own works, Sir Walter did not often talk even of those which were avowed. If he ever indulged in any thing like egotism, he loved better to speak of what he had done and seen than of what he had written.

"After all, there is perhaps hardly a secret in the world which has not its safety-valve. Though Sir Walter abstained strictly from any mention of the Waverley novels, he did not scruple to talk, and that with great zest, of the plays which had been founded upon some of them, and the characters there represented. Soon after our first meeting, he described to me, with his usual dramatic power, the deathbed scene of 'the original Dandie Dinmont;'† of course referring, ostensibly at least, to the *opera* of Guy Mannering. He dwelt with extreme delight upon Mackay's performances of the Bailie and Dominie Sampson, and appeared to taste them with all the fresh and disinterested enjoyment of a common spectator. I do not know a more interesting circumstance in the history of the Waverley novels, than the pleasure which their illustrious author thus received, as it were at the rebound, from those creations of his own mind which had so largely increased the enjoyments of all the civilized world.

"In one instance only did he, in my presence, say or do any thing which seemed to have an intentional reference to the novels themselves, while they were yet unacknowledged. On the last day of my visit in 1823, I rode out with Sir Walter and his friend Mr. Rose, who was then his guest and frequent companion in these short rambles. Sir Walter led us a little way down the left bank of the Tweed, and then into the moors by a track called the Girth Road, along which, he told us, the pilgrims from that side of the river used to come to Melrose. We traced upward, at a distance, the course of the little stream called the Elland, Sir Walter, as his habit was, pausing now and then to point any thing in the prospect that was either remarkable in itself, or associated with any interesting recollection. I remember, in particular, his showing us, on a distant eminence, a dreary lone house, called the Hawk's Nest, in which a young man, returning from a fair with money, had been murdered in the night, and buried under the floor, where his remains were found after the death or departure of the inmates; the fact was simple enough in itself, but, related in his manner, it was just such a story as should have been told by a poet on a lonely heath. When we had ridden a little time on the moors, he said to me rather pointedly, 'I am going to show you something that I think will interest you;' and presently, in a wild corner of the hills, he halted us at a place where stood three small ancient towers, or castellated houses, in ruins, at short distances from each other. It was plain, upon the slightest consideration of the topography, that one (perhaps any one) of these was the tower of Glendearg, where so many romantic and marvellous adventures happen in The Monastery. While we looked at this forlorn group, I said to Sir Walter that they were what Burns called 'ghaist-alluring edifices.' 'Yes,' he answered, carelessly, 'I dare say there are many stories about them.' As we returned, by a different route, he made me dismount and take a footpath through a part of Lord Somerville's grounds, where the Elland runs through a beautiful little valley, the stream winding between level borders of the brighest greensward, which narrow or widen as the steep sides of the glen advance or recede. The place is called the Fairy Dean, and it required no cicerone to tell that the glen was that in which Father Eustace, in the Monastery, is intercepted by the White Lady of Avenel."

Every friend of Sir Walter's must admire particularly Mr. Adolphus's truly exquisite description of his laugh; but, indeed, every word of these memoranda is precious, and I shall by and by give the rest of them under the proper date.

In September, the Highland Society of Scotland, at the request of the late Sir Henry Stewart of Allanton, sent a deputation to his seat in Lanarkshire, to examine and report upon his famous improvements in the art of transplanting trees. Sir Walter was one of the committee appointed for this business, and he took a lively interest in it; as witness the Essay on Landscape Gardening,* which, whatever may be the fate of Sir Henry Stewart's own writings, will transmit his name to posterity. Scott made several Allantonian experiments at Abbotsford; but found reason in the sequel to abate somewhat of the enthusiasm which his Essay expresses as to *the system*. The question, after all, comes to pounds, shillings, and pence—and whether Sir Henry's accounts had or had not been accurately kept, the thing turned out greatly more expensive on Tweedside than he had found it represented in Clydesdale.

I accompanied Sir Walter on this little expedition, in the course of which we paid several other visits, and explored not a few ancient castles in the upper regions of the Tweed and the Clyde. Even while the weather was most unpropitious, nothing could induce him to remain in the carriage when we approached any ruined or celebrated edifice. If he had never seen it before, his curiosity was like that of an eager stripling;—if he had examined it fifty times, he must renew his familiarity, and gratify the tenderness of youthful reminiscences. While on the road his conversation never flagged—story suggested

* It is, however, the only sitting-room in the house that looks *southwards*.

† See Note to Guy Mannering, *Waverley Novels*, vol. iv., p. 382.

* *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xxi., pp. 77—151.

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story, and ballad came upon ballad in endless succession. But what struck me most was the apparently omnivorous grasp of his memory. That he should recollect every stanza of any ancient ditty of chivalry or romance that had once excited his imagination, could no longer surprise me; but it seemed as if he remembered every thing without exception, so it were in any thing like the shape of verse, that he had ever read. For example, the morning after we left Allanton, we went across the country to breakfast with his friend Cranstoun, (Lord Corehouse,) who accompanied us in the same carriage; and his lordship happening to repeat a phrase, remarkable only for its absurdity, from a Magazine poem of the very silliest feebleness, which they had laughed at when at College together, Scott immediately began at the beginning, and gave it us to the end, with apparently no more effort than if he himself had composed it the day before. I could after this easily believe a story often told by Hogg, to the effect that, lamenting in Scott's presence his having lost his only copy of a long ballad composed by him in his early days, and of which he then could recall merely the subject, and one or two fragments, Sir Walter forthwith said, with a smile, "Take your pencil, Jemmy, and I'll dictate your ballad to you, word for word;"—which was done accordingly.

As this was among the first times that I ever travelled for a few days in company with Scott, I may as well add the surprise with which his literary diligence, when away from home and his books, could not fail to be observed. Wherever we slept, whether in a noble mansion or in the shabbiest of country inns, and whether the work was done after retiring at night or before an early start in the morning, he *very rarely* mounted the carriage again without having a packet of the well-known aspect ready sealed, and corded, and addressed to his printer in Edinburgh. I used to suspect that he had adopted in his latter years the plan of writing every thing on paper of the quarto form, in place of the folio, which he at an earlier period used, chiefly because in this way, whatever he was writing, and wherever he wrote, he might seem to casual observers to be merely engaged upon a common letter; and the rapidity of his execution, taken with the shape of his sheet, has probably deceived hundreds; but when he had finished his two or three letters, St. Ronan's Well, or whatever was in hand, had made a chapter in advance.

The following was his first letter to Miss Edgeworth after her return to Ireland. Her youngest sister Sophia—(a beautiful creature—now gone, like most of the pleasant party then assembled)—had particularly pleased him by her singing of a fragment of an Irish ditty, the heroine of which was a sad damsel in a *petticoat of red*—the chorus, I think, something like.

"*Shool, Shool, ochone—ochone!*
Thinking on the days that are long enough agone;"

and he had, as we shall see, been busying himself among his ballad collections, to see if he could recover any more of the words than the young lady had given him.

To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworth's town.

"Abbotsford, 22d Sept. 1823.

"My dear Miss Edgeworth,

"Miss Harriet had the goodness to give me an account of your safe arrival in the Green Isle, of which I was, sooth to say, extremely glad; for I had my own private apprehensions that your very disagreeable disorder might return while you were among strangers, and in our rugged climate. I now conclude you are settled quietly at home, and looking back on recollections of mountains, and valleys, and pipes, and clans, and cousins, and masons, and carpenters, and puppy-dogs, and all the confusion of Abbotsford, as one does on the recollection of a dream. We shall not easily forget the vision of having seen you and our two young friends, and your kind indulgence for all our humours, sober and fantastic, rough or smooth. Mamma writes to make her own acknowledgments for your very kind attention about the cobweb stockings, which reached us under the omnipotent frank of Croker, who, like a true Irish heart, never scruples stretching his powers a little to serve a friend.

"We are all here much as you left us, only in possession of our drawing-room, and glorious with our gas-lights, which as yet have only involved us once in total darkness—once in a temporary eclipse. In both cases the remedy was easy and the cause obvious, and if the gas has no greater objections than I have yet seen or can anticipate, it is soon like to put wax and mutton suet entirely out of fashion. I have recovered, by great accident, another verse or two of Miss Sophia's beautiful Irish air; it is only curious as hinting at the cause of the poor damsel of the red petticoat's deep dolour;—

'I went to the mill, but the miller was gone,
I sate me down and cried ochone,
To think on the days that are past and gone,
Of Dickie Macphalion that's slain.

Shool, shool, &c.

'I sold my rock, I sold my reel,
And sae hae I my spinning-wheel,
And all to buy a cap of steel,
For Dickie Macphalion that's slain.

Shool, shool,' &c. &c.

"But who was Dickie Macphalion for whom this lament was composed? Who was the Pharaoh for whom the Pyramid was raised? The questions are equally dubious and equally important, but as the one, we may reasonably suppose, was a King of Egypt, so I think we may guess the other to have been a Captain of Rapparees, since the ladies, God bless them, honour with the deepest of their lamentation gallants who live wildly, die bravely, and scorn to survive until they become old and not worth weeping for. So much for Dickie Macphalion, who, I dare say, was in his day 'a proper young man.'

"We have had Sir Humphrey Davy here for a day or two—very pleasant and instructive, and Will Rose for a month—that is, coming and going. Lockhart has been pleading at the circuit for a clansman of mine, who, having sustained an affront from two men on the road home from Earlstown fair, nobly waylaid and murdered them both single-handed. He also cut off their noses, which was carrying the matter rather too far, and so the jury thought—so my namesake must strap for it, as many of *The Rough Clan* have done before him. After this Lockhart and I went to Sir Henry Stewart's, to examine his process of transplanting trees. He exercises wonderful power certainly over the vegetable world, and has made his trees dance about as merrily as ever did Orpheus; but he has put me out of conceit with my profession of a landscape-gardener, now I see so few brains are necessary for a stock in trade. I wish Miss Harriet would dream no more ominous visions about Spicie.† The poor thing has been very ill of that fatal disorder proper to the canine race, called, *par excellence*, *the Distemper*. I have prescribed for her, as who should say thus you would doctor a dog, and I hope to bring her through, as she is a very affectionate little creature, and of a fine race. She has still an odd wheezing, however, which makes me rather doubtful of success. The Lockharts are both well, and at present out lodgers, together with John Hugh, or, as he calls himself, Donichue, which sounds like one of your old Irish kings. They all join in every thing kind and affectionate to you and the young ladies, and best compliments to your brother. —Believe me ever, dear Miss Edgeworth, yours, with the greatest truth and respect,

WALTER SCOTT."

The following letter was addressed to Joanna Baillie on the death of her brother, the celebrated physician:—

To Miss Joanna Baillie.

"Abbotsford, 3d October, 1823.

"My dearest Friend,

"Your very kind letter reached me just while I was deliberating how to address you on the painful, most painful subject, to which it refers, and considering how

* "As clever Tom Clinch, while the rabble was bawling,
Rode stately through Holborn to die in his calling,
He stopt at the George for a bottle of sack,
And promised to pay for it when he came back.
His waistcoat, and stockings, and breeches were white;
His cap had a new cherry ribbon to tie't.
The maids to the doors and the balconies ran.
And said, 'Lack-a-day! he's a proper young man!'"
SWIFT.

† *Spice*, one of the Popper and Mustard terriers. Scott varies the names, unlike his Dandie Dinmont, but still, as he phrased it, "stuck to the cruets." At one time he had a *Pepper*, a *Mustard*, a *Spice*, a *Ginger*, a *Katchup*, and a *Soy*—all descendants of the real Charlie's-hope patriarchs.

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I could best intrude my own sympathy amidst your domestic affliction. The token you have given of your friendship, by thinking of me at such a moment, I will always regard as a most precious, though melancholy proof of its sincerity. We have, indeed, to mourn such a man, as, since medicine was first esteemed an useful and honoured science, has rarely occurred to grace its annals, and who will be lamented so long as any one lives, who has experienced the advantage of his professional skill, and the affectionate kindness by which it was accompanied. My neighbour and kinsman, John Scott of Gala, who was attended by our excellent friend during a very dangerous illness," is mingling his sorrow with mine, as one who laments almost a second father; and when in this remote corner there are two who join in such a sincere tribute to his memory, what must be the sorrows within his more immediate sphere of exertion! I do, indeed, sincerely pity the family and friends who have lost such a head, and that at the very time when they might, in the course of nature, have looked to enjoy his society for many years, and even more closely and intimately than during the preceding period of his life, when his domestic intercourse was so much broken in upon by his professional duties. It is not for us, in this limited state of observation and comprehension, to inquire why the lives most useful to society, and most dear to friendship, seem to be of a shorter date than those which are useless, or perhaps worse than useless;—but the certainty that in another and succeeding state of things, these apparent difficulties will be balanced and explained, is the best, if not the only cure for unavailing sorrow, and this your well-balanced and powerful mind knows better how to apply, than I how to teach the doctrine.

"We were made in some degree aware of the extremely precarious state of our late dear friend's health, by letters which young Surtees had from his friends in Gloucestershire, during a residence of a few weeks with us, and which mentioned the melancholy subject in a very hopeless manner, and with all the interest which it was calculated to excite. Poor dear Mrs. Baillie is infinitely to be pitied, but you are a family of love; and though one breach has been made among you, will only extend your arms towards each other the more, to hide, though you cannot fill up the gap which has taken place. The same consolation remains for Mrs. Agnes and yourself, my dear friend; and I have no doubt, that in the affection of Dr. Baillie's family, and their success in life, you will find those pleasing ties which connect the passing generation with that which is rising to succeed it upon the stage.

"Sophia is in the way of enlarging her family—an event to which I look forward with a mixture of anxiety and hope. One baby, not very strong, though lively and clever, is a frail chance upon which to stake happiness; at the same time, God knows there have been too many instances of late of the original curse having descended on young mothers with fatal emphasis; but we will hope the best. In the mean-time her spirits are good, and her health equally so. I know that even at this moment these details will not be disagreeable to you, so strangely are life and death, sorrow and pleasure, blended together in the tapestry of human life.

"I answer your letter before I have seen Sophia; but I know well how deeply she is interested in your grief. My wife and Anne send their kindest and most sympathetic regards. Walter is at the Royal Military College to study the higher branches of his profession, and Charles has returned to Wales.

"My affectionate respects attend Mrs. Baillie and Mrs. Agnes, and I ever am, my dear friend, respectfully and affectionately, yours,

WALTER SCOTT"

To D. Terry, Esq., London.

"Abbotsford, October 29, 1823.

"My dear Terry,

"Our correspondence has been flagging for some time, yet I have much to thank you for, and perhaps something to apologize for. We did not open Mr. Baldock's commode, because, in honest truth, this place has cost me a great deal within these two years, and I was loth to add a superfluity, however elegant, to the heavy expense already necessarily incurred. Lady Scott, the party most interested in the drawing-room, thinks mirrors, when they cast up, better things and more necessary. We have received the drawing-room grate—very handsome indeed—from Bower, but not those for the library or my room, nor are they immediately wanted. Nothing have we heard of the best bed and its accompaniments, but there is no hurry for this neither. We are in possession of the bed-room story, garrets, and a part of the under or sunk story—basement, the learned call it; but the library advances slowly. The extreme wetness of the season has prevented the floor from being laid, nor dare we now venture it till spring, when shifting and arranging the books will be 'a pleasing pain and toil with a gain.' The front of the house is now enclosed by a court-yard wall, with flankers of 100 feet, and a handsome gateway. The interior of the court is to be occupied by a large gravel drive for carriages, the rest with flowers, shrubs, and a few trees: the inside of the court-yard wall is adorned with large carved medallions from the old Cross of Edinburgh, and Roman or colonial heads in bas relief from the ancient station of Petreia, now called Old Penrith. A walk runs along it, which I intend to cover with creepers as a trellissed arbour: the court-yard is separated from the garden by a very handsome colonnade, the arches filled up with cast-iron, and the cornice carved with flowers, after the fashion of the running cornice on the cloisters at Melrose: the masons here cut so cheap that it really tempts one. All this is in a great measure finished, and by throwing the garden into a subordinate state, as a sort of *plaisance*, it has totally removed the awkward appearance of its being so near the house. On the contrary, it seems a natural and handsome accompaniment to the old-looking mansion. Some people of very considerable taste have been here, who have given our doings much applause, particularly Dr. Russel, a beautiful draughtsman, and no granter of propositions. The interior of the hall is finished with scutcheons, sixteen of which, running along the centre, I intend to paint with my own quarterings, so far as I know them, for I am as yet uncertain of two on my mother's side; but fourteen are no bad quartering to be quite real, and the others may be covered with a cloud, since I have no ambition to be a canon of Strasburg, for which sixteen are necessary; I may light on these, however. The scutcheons on the cornice I propose to charge with the blazonry of all the Border clans, eighteen in number, and so many of the great families, not clans, as will occupy the others. The windows are to be painted with the different bearings of different families of the clan of Scott, which, with their quarterings and impalings, will make a pretty display. The arranging all these arms, &c., have filled up what Robinson Crusoe calls the rainy season, for such this last may on the whole be called. I shall be greatly obliged to you to let me know what debts I owe in London, that I may remit accordingly: best to pay for one's piping in time, and before we are familiar with our purchases. You mentioned having some theatrical works for me; do not fail to let me know the amount. Have you seen Dr. Meyrick's account of the Ancient Armour?—it is a book beautifully got up, and of much antiquarian information.

"Having said so much for my house, I add for my family, that those who are here are quite well, but Lady Scott a little troubled with asthma. Ballantyne will send you my last affair now in progress: it is within, or may be easily compressed into, dramatic time; whether it is otherwise qualified for the stage, I cannot guess.—I am, my dear Terry, truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The novel to which Sir Walter thus alludes was published about the middle of December, and in its English reception there was another falling off, which of course somewhat dispirited the bookseller for the moment. Scotch readers in general dissented stoutly from this judgment, alleging, (as they might well do,) that Meg Dods deserved a place by the side of Monkbarns, Bailie Jarvie, and Captain Dalgetty; that no one, who had lived in the author's own country, could hesitate to recognize vivid and happy portraitures in Touchwood, MacTurk, and the recluse minister of St. Ronan's; that the descriptions of natural scenery might rank with any he had given;—and, finally, that the whole character of Clara Mowbray, but especially its development in the third volume, formed an original creation, destined to be classed by posterity with the highest efforts of tragic romance. Some Edinburgh critics, however—(both talkers and writers)—received with considerable grudging certain sarcastic sketches of the would-be-fine life of the watering-place—sketches which their Southron brethren had kindly suggested *might* be drawn from *Northern* observation, but could never appear better than fantastic caricatures to any person who had visited even a third-rate English resort of the same nominal class. There is no doubt that the author dashed off these minor personages with, in the painter's phrase, *a rich brush*; but I must confess my belief that they have far more truth about them than his

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countrymen seemed at the time willing to allow; and if any of my readers, whether Scotch or English, has ever happened to spend a few months, not in either an English or a Scotch watering-place of the present day, but among such miscellaneous assemblages of British nondescripts and outcasts, —including often persons of higher birth than any of the *beau monde* of St. Ronan's Well,—as now infest many towns of France and Switzerland, he will, I am satisfied, be inclined to admit that, while the Continent was shut, as it was in the days of Sir Walter's youthful wanderings, a trip to such a sequestered place as Gilsland, or Moffat, or Innerleithen—(almost as inaccessible to London duns and bailiffs as the Isle of Man was then, or as Boulogne and Dieppe are now)—may have supplied the future novelist's note-book with authentic materials even for such worthies as Sir Bingo and Lady Binks, Dr. Quackleben, and Mr. Winterblossom. It should, moreover, be borne in mind that, during our insular blockade, northern watering-places were not alone favoured by the resort of questionable characters from the south. The comparative cheapness of living, and especially of education, procured for Sir Walter's "own romantic town" a constant succession of such visitants, so long as they could have no access to the *tables d'hôte* and dancing-masters of the Continent. When I first mingled in the society of Edinburgh, it abounded with English, broken in character and in fortune, who found a mere title (even a baronet's one) of consequence enough to obtain for them, from the proverbially cautious Scotch, a degree of attention to which they had long been unaccustomed among those who had chanced to observe the progress of their personal histories; and I heard many name, when the novel was new, a booby of some rank, in whom they recognised a sufficiently accurate prototype for Sir Bingo.

Sir Walter had shown a remarkable degree of goodnature in the completion of this novel. When the end came in view, James Ballantyne suddenly took vast alarm about a particular feature in the history of the heroine. In the original conception, and in the book as actually written and printed, Miss Mowbray's mock marriage had not halted at the profaned ceremony of the church; and the delicate printer shrunk from the idea of obtruding on the fastidious public the possibility of any personal contamination having been incurred by a high-born damsel of the nineteenth century. Scott was at first inclined to dismiss his friend's scruples as briefly as he had done those of Blackwood in the case of the Black Dwarf:—"You would never have quarrelled with it," he said, "had the thing happened to a girl in gingham. The silk petticoat can make little difference." James reclaimed with double energy, and called Constable to the rescue; —and after some pause, the author very reluctantly consented to cancel and rewrite about twenty-four pages, which was enough to obliterate, to a certain extent, the dreaded scandal—and in a similar degree, as he always persisted, to perplex and weaken the course of his narrative, and the dark effect of its catastrophe.

Whoever might take offence with different parts of the book, it was rapturously hailed by the inhabitants of Innerleithen, who immediately identified the most striking of its localities with those of their own pretty village and its picturesque neighbourhood, and foresaw in this celebration a chance of restoring the popularity of their long neglected *Well* —the same to which, as the reader of the early part of these memoirs may have noticed, Sir Walter Scott had occasionally escorted his mother and sister in the days of boyhood. The notables of the little town voted by acclamation that the old name of Innerleithen should be, as far as possible, dropped thenceforth, and that of St. Ronan's adopted. Nor were they mistaken in their auguries. An unheard-of influx of water-bibbers forthwith crowned their hopes; and spruce *hottles* and huge staring lodging-houses soon arose to disturb wofully every association that had induced Sir Walter to make Innerleithen the scene of a romance. Nor were they who profited by these invasions of the *genius loci* at all sparing in their demonstrations of gratitude. The traveller reads on the corner of every new erection there, "Abbotsford Place," "Waverley Row," "The Marmion Hotel," or some inscription of the like coinage.

Among other consequences of the revived fame of the place, a yearly festival was instituted for the celebration of "The St. Ronan's Border Games." A club of "Bowmen of the Border," arrayed in doublets of Lincoln green, with broad blue bonnets, and having the Ettrick Shepherd for Captain, assumed the principal management of this exhibition; and Sir Walter was well pleased to be enrolled among them, and during several years was a regular attendant, both on the Meadow, where (besides archery) leaping, racing, wrestling, stone-heaving, and hammer-throwing, went on opposite to the noble old Castle of Traquair, and at the subsequent banquet, where Hogg, in full costume, always presided as master of the ceremonies. In fact, a gayer spectacle than that of the *St. Ronan's Games*, in those days, could not well have been desired. The Shepherd, even when on the verge of threescore, exerted himself lustily in the field, and seldom failed to carry off some of the prizes, to the astonishment of his vanquished juniors; and the *bon-vivants* of Edinburgh mustered strong among the gentry and yeomanry of Tweeddale, to see him afterwards in his glory, filling the president's chair with eminent success, and commonly supported on this—which was, in fact, the grandest evening of his year—by Sir Walter Scott, Professor Wilson, Sir Adam Ferguson, and "Peter Robertson."

In Edinburgh, at least, the play founded, after the usual fashion, on St. Ronan's Well, had success very far beyond the expectation of the novelist, whatever may have been those of the dramatizer. After witnessing the first representation, Scott wrote thus to Terry—"We had a new piece t'other night from St. Ronan's, which, though I should have supposed it ill adapted for the stage, succeeded wonderfully —chiefly by Murray's acting of the Old Nabob. Mackay also made an excellent Meg Dods, and kept his gestures and his action more within the verge of female decorum than I thought possible."

A broad piece of drollery, in the shape of an epilogue, delivered in character by Mackay when he first took a benefit as Meg Dods, is included in the last edition of Scott's Poetical Works;* but though it caused great merriment at the time in Edinburgh, the allusions are so exclusively local and temporary that I fear no commentary could ever make it intelligible elsewhere.

CHAPTER LX.

PUBLICATION OF REDGAUNTLET—DEATH OF LORD BYRON—LIBRARY AND MUSEUM—"THE WALLACE CHAIR"—HOUSE-PAINTING, ETC.—ANECDOTES—LETTERS TO CONSTABLE—MISS EDGEWORTH—TERRY—MISS BAILLIE—LORD MONTAGU—MR. SOUTHEY—CHARLES SCOTT, ETC.—SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE EDINBURGH ACADEMY—DEATH AND EPITAPH OF MAIDA—FIRES IN EDINBURGH.—1824.

IMMEDIATELY on the conclusion of St. Ronan's Well, Sir Walter began the novel of *Redgauntlet*; —but it had made considerable progress at press before Constable and Ballantyne could persuade him to substitute that title for *Herries*. The book was published in June, 1824, and was received at the time somewhat coldly, though it has since, I believe, found more justice. The reintroduction of the adventurous hero of 1745, in the dulness and dimness of advancing age, and fortunes hopelessly blighted—and the presenting him—with whose romantic portraiture at an earlier period historical truth had been so admirably blended—as the moving principle of events, not only entirely, but notoriously imaginary—this was a rash experiment, and could not fail to suggest many disagreeable and disadvantageous comparisons; yet, had there been

* See edition 1834, vol. xi. p. 389.

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no Waverley, I am persuaded the fallen and fated Ascanius of Redgauntlet would have been universally pronounced a masterpiece. About the secondary personages there could be little ground for controversy. What novel or drama has surpassed the grotesquely ludicrous, dashed with the profound pathos, of Peter Peebles—the most tragic of farces?—or the still sadder merriment of that human shipwreck, Nantie Ewart?—or Wandering Willie and his Tale?—the wildest and most rueful of dreams told by such a person, and in such a dialect! Of the young correspondents Darsie Latimer and Allan Fairford, and the Quakers of Mount Sharon, and indeed of numberless minor features in Redgauntlet, no one who has read the first part of these memoirs will expect me to speak at length here. With posterity assuredly this novel will yield in interest to none of the series—for it contains perhaps more of the author's personal experiences than any other of them, or even than all the rest put together.

This year, *mirabile dictu!* produced but one novel; and it is not impossible that the author had taken deeply into his mind, though he would not *immediately* act upon them, certain hints about the danger of "overcropping," which have been alluded to as dropping from his publishers in 1823. He had, however, a labour of some weight to go through in preparing for the press a Second Edition of his voluminous Swift. The additions to this reprint were numerous, and he corrected his notes, and the Life of the Dean throughout, with considerable care. He also threw off several reviews and other petty miscellanies—among which last occurs his memorable tribute to the memory of Lord Byron, written for Ballantyne's newspaper immediately after the news of the catastrophe at Missolonghi reached Abbotsford.*

The arrangement of his library and museum was, however, the main care of the summer months of this year; and his woods were now in such a state of progress that his most usual exercise out of doors was thinning them. He was an expert as well as powerful wielder of the axe, and competed with his ablest subalterns as to the paucity of blows by which a tree could be brought down. The wood rang ever and anon with laughter while he shared their labours; and if he had taken, as he every now and then did, a whole day with them, they were sure to be invited home to Abbotsford to sup gayly at Tom Purdie's. One of Sir Walter's Transatlantic admirers, by the way, sent him a complete assortment of the tools employed in clearing the Backwoods, and both he and Tom made strenuous efforts to attain some dexterity in using them; but neither succeeded. The American axe, in particular, having a longer shaft than ours, and a much smaller and narrower cutting-piece, was, in Tom's opinion, only fit for paring a *kebbuck* (*i. e.* a cheese of skimmed milk.) The old-fashioned large and broad axe was soon resumed; and the belt that bore it had accommodation also for a chissel, a hammer, and a small saw. Among all the numberless portraits, why was there not one representing the "Belted Knight," accoutred with these appurtenances of his forest-craft, jogging over the heather on a breezy morning, with Thomas Purdie at his stirrup, and Maida stalking in advance?

Notwithstanding the numberless letters to Terry about his upholstery, the far greater part of it was manufactured at home. The most of the articles from London were only models for the use of two or three neat-handed carpenters whom he had discovered in the villages near him: and he watched and directed their operations as carefully as a George Bullock could have done, and the results were such as even Bullock might have admired. The great table in the library, for example, (a most complex and beautiful one,) was done entirely in the room where it now stands, by Joseph Shillinglaw of Darnick—the Sheriff planning and studying every turn as zealously as ever an old lady pondered the development of an embroidered cushion. The hangings and curtains, too, were chiefly the work of a little hunchbacked tailor, by name *William* Goodfellow—(save at Abbotsford, where he answered to *Robin*)—who occupied a cottage on Scott's farm of the Broomielees—one of the race that creep from homestead to homestead, welcomed wherever they appear by housewife and handmaiden, the great gossips and newsmen of the parish,—in Scottish nomenclature *cardoocrs*. Proudly and earnestly did all these vassals toil in his service; and I think it was one of them that, when some stranger asked a question about his personal demeanour, answered in these simple words—"Sir Walter speaks to every man as if they were blood-relations." Not long after he had completed his work at Abbotsford, little Goodfellow fell sick, and as his cabin was near Chiefswood, I had many opportunities of observing the Sheriff's kind attention to him in his affliction. I can never forget, in particular, the evening on which the poor tailor died. When Scott entered the hovel, he found every thing silent, and inferred from the looks of the good women in attendance that their patient had fallen asleep, and that they feared his sleep was the final one. He murmured some syllables of kind regret;—at the sound of his voice the dying tailor unclosed his eyes, and eagerly and wistfully sat up, clasping his hands with an expression of rapturous gratefulness and devotion, that, in the midst of deformity, disease, pain, and wretchedness, was at once beautiful and sublime. He cried with a loud voice, "the Lord bless and reward you," and expired with the effort.

In the painting of his interior, too, Sir Walter personally directed every thing. He abominated the common-place daubing of walls, panels, doors, and windowboards with coats of white, blue, or gray, and thought that sparklings and edgings of gilding only made their baldness and poverty more noticeable. He desired to have about him, wherever he could manage it, rich, though not gaudy, hangings, or substantial, old-fashioned wainscot-work, with no ornament but that of carving; and where the wood was to be painted at all, it was done in strict imitation of oak or cedar. Except in the drawing-room, which he abandoned to Lady Scott's taste, all the roofs were in appearance of antique carved oak, relieved by coats of arms duly blazoned at the intersections of beams, and resting on cornices, to the eye of the same material, but really composed of casts in plaster of Paris after the foliage, the flowers, the grotesque monsters and dwarfs, and sometimes the beautiful heads of nuns and confessors, on which he had doated from infancy among the cloisters of Melrose and Roslin. In the painting of these things, also, he had instruments who considered it as a labour of love. The master-limner, in particular, had a devoted attachment to his person: and this was not wonderful, for he, in fact, owed a prosperous fortune to Scott's kind and sagacious counsel, tendered at the very outset of his career. A printer's apprentice attracted notice by his attempts with the pencil, and Sir Walter was called upon, after often admiring his skill in representing dogs and horses and the like, to assist him with his advice, as ambition had been stirred, and the youth would fain give himself to the regular training of an artist. Scott took him into his room, and conversed with him at some length. He explained the difficulties and perils, the almost certain distresses, the few and narrow chances of this aspiring walk. He described the hundreds of ardent spirits that pine out their lives in solitary garrets, lamenting over the rash eagerness with which they had obeyed the suggestions of young ambition, and chosen a career in which success of any sort is rare, and no success but the highest is worth attaining. "You have talents and energy," said he, "but who can say whether you have genius? These boyish drawings can never be relied on as proofs of *that*. If you feel within you such a glow of ambition, that you would rather run a hundred chances of obscurity and penury than miss *one* of being a Wilkie,—make up your mind, and take the bold plunge; but if your object is merely to raise yourself to a station of

* See Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. iv. p. 343.

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worldly comfort and independence,—if you would fain look forward with tolerable assurance to the prospect of being a respectable citizen, with your own snug roof over your head, and the happy faces of a wife and children about you,—pause and reflect well. It appears to me that there is little demand for fine works of the pencil in this country. Not a few artists, who have even obtained high and merited reputation, find employment scarce, and starve under their laurels. I think profit in Britain is, with very rare exceptions, annexed to departments of obvious and direct utility, in which the mass of the people are concerned; and it has often struck me, that some clever fellow might make a good hit if, in place of enrolling himself among the future Raphaels and Vandykes of the Royal Academy, he should resolutely set himself to introducing something of a more elegant style of house-painting." The young man thus addressed (Mr. D. R. Hay) was modest and wise enough to accept the advice with thankfulness, and to act upon it with patience and steadiness. After a few years he had qualified himself to take charge of all this delicate limning and blazoning at Abbotsford. He is now, I understand, at the head of a great and flourishing establishment in Edinburgh; and a treatise on the science of colour, which has proceeded from his pen, is talked of as reflecting high credit on his taste and understanding. Nor should I omit what seems a particularly honourable trait in Mr. Hay:—he is said to be one of the most liberal patrons of native art now in existence; in fact, to possess an unrivalled collection of the works of contemporary Scottish painters.

Mean-time the progress of Abbotsford stimulated largely both friends and strangers to contribute articles of curiosity towards its final adornment. I have already alluded with regret to the non-completion of the Poet's own catalogue of his literary and antiquarian rarities, begun under the title of "Reliquiæ Trottcosianæ," and mentioned Mr. Train, the affectionate supervisor of excise, as the most unwearied and bountiful of all the contributors to the *Museum*. Now, he would fain have his part in the substantial "*plenishing*" also; and I transcribe, as a specimen of his zeal, the account which I have received from himself of his preparation and transmission of one piece of furniture, to which his friend allotted a distinguished place, for it was one of the *two* chairs that ultimately stood in his own *sanctum sanctorum*. In those days Mr. Train's official residence was at Kirkintilloch, in Stirlingshire; and he says, in his *Memoranda*,—

"Rarbiston, or, as it is now called, Robroyston, where the valiant Wallace was betrayed by Monteith of Ruskie, is only a few miles distant from Kirkintilloch. The walls of the house where the first scene of that disgraceful tragedy was acted were standing, on my arrival in that quarter. The roof was entirely gone; but I observed that some butts of the rafters, built into the wall, were still remaining. As the ruin was about being taken down to make way for the ploughshare, I easily succeeded in purchasing these old stumps from the farmer upon whose ground it stood. When taken out of the building, these pieces of wood were seemingly so much decayed as to be fit only for fuel; but after planing off about an inch from the surface, I found that the remainder of the wood was as hard as a bone, and susceptible of a fine polish. I then resolved upon having a chair of the most antique description made out of these wasted blocks, as a memorial of our most patriotic hero, with a feeling somewhat similar to theirs who remember their Saviour in the crucifix.

"In the execution of this undertaking workmen of various denominations were employed. It was modelled from an old chair in the Palace of Hamilton, and is nearly covered with carved work, representing rocks, heather, and thistles, emblematic of Scotland, and indented with brass, representing the *Harp of the North*, surrounded with laurels, and supported by targets, claymores, Lochaber axes, war horns, &c. The seat is covered with silk velvet, beneath which is a drawer, containing a book bound in the most primitive form in Robroyston Wood, with large clasps. In this book are detailed at length some of the particulars here briefly alluded to, with the affirmations of several persons to whose care the chair was entrusted in the course of making.

"On the (inside) back of the chair is a brass plate, bearing the following inscription:—

"THIS CHAIR,
MADE OF THE ONLY REMAINING WOOD
OF THE
HOUSE AT ROBROYSTON,
IN WHICH THE
MATCHLESS SIR WILLIAM WALLACE
'WAS DOSH TO DEATH BY FELON HAND
FOR GUARDING WELL HIS FATHERS' LAND,'
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY PRESENTED TO
SIR WALTER SCOTT,
AS A SMALL TOKEN OF GRATITUDE,
BY HIS DEVOTED SERVANT,
JOSEPH TRAIN.

"Exaggerated reports of this chair spread over the adjacent country with a fiery-cross-like speed, and raised public curiosity to such a height, that persons in their own carriages came many miles to see it. I happened to be in a distant part of my district at the time; but I dare say many persons in Kirkintilloch yet remember how triumphantly the symbolic chair was borne from my lodgings to the bank of the Great Canal, to be there shipped for Abbotsford, in the midst of the town-band playing—'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,' and surrounded by thousands, who made the welkin resound with bursts of national enthusiasm, justifying the couplet of Pope—

'All this may be, the people's voice is odd;
The Scots will fight for Wallace as for God.'"—

Such arrivals as that of "the Wallace Chair" were frequent throughout 1824. It was a happy, and therefore it need hardly be added, an uneventful year—his last year of undisturbed prosperity. The little incidents that diversified his domestic interior, and the zeal which he always kept up for all the concerns of his friends, together with a few indications of his opinions on subjects of literary and political interest, will be found in his correspondence, which will hardly require any editorial explanations.

Within, I think, the same week in January, arrived a copy of Montfaucon's Antiquities, in fifteen volumes folio, richly bound in scarlet, the gift of King George IV., and a set of the Variorum Classics, in about a hundred volumes octavo, from Mr. Constable. Sir Walter says—

To Archibald Constable, Esq.

"Abbotsford, 6th January, 1824.

"My dear Sir,

"Yesterday I had the great pleasure of placing in my provisional library the most splendid present, as I in sincerity believe, which ever an author received from a bookseller. In the shape of these inimitable *Variorum*, who knows what new ideas the Classics may suggest?—for I am determined to shake off the rust which years have contracted, and to read at least some of the most capital of the ancients before I die. Believe me, my dear and old friend, I set a more especial value on this work as coming from you, and as being a pledge that the long and confidential intercourse betwixt us has been agreeable and advantageous to both.—Yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

Miss Edgeworth had written to him to inquire about the health of his eldest daughter, and told him some anecdotes of an American dame, whose head had been turned by the Waverley Novels, and who had, among other demonstrations of enthusiasm, called her farm in Massachussetts, *Charlie's Hope*. This lady had, it seems, corresponded with Mrs. Grant of Laggan, herself for a time one of the "Authors of Waverley," and Mrs. Grant, in disclaiming such honours, had spoken of the real source in terms of such perfect assurance, that the honest American almost fancied she must have heard Scott confess; yet still she was in doubts and tribulations, and unhappy till she could hear more. The theory prevalent in her own neighbourhood was, it seems, that the authorship was a joint-stock business—Sir Walter being one of the partners, and the other an unfortunate lunatic, of whose papers he had got possession during a lucid interval. Scott answers thus:—

To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworth's town, Ireland.

"Parliament House, 2d Feb., 1824.

"My dear Miss Edgeworth,

"I answer your kind letter immediately, because I am sure your sisters and you will interest yourselves in Sophia's state of health. My news are not of the best—

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'Yet not so ill, but may be well reported.'

On Saturday, 31st January, she had a daughter, but the poor little stranger left us on the Monday following; and though Sophia is very patient in her temper, yet her recovery is naturally retarded, and I am sorry to say she has been attacked in her weak state by those spasms which seem a hereditary disorder in my family,—slightly, however, in comparison of the former occasion; and for the last two days she has been so much recovered as to take a grain or two of calomel, which is specific in the complaint. I have no doubt now, humanly speaking, that her recovery will proceed favourably. I saw her for a quarter of an hour yesterday, which was the first *permanent* visit I have been permitted to make her. So you may conceive we have been anxious enough, living, as is our clannish fashion, very much for, and with each other.

"Your American friend, the good-wife of Charlie's Hope, seems disposed, as we say, 'to sin her mercies.' She quarrels with books that amuse her, because she does not know the author; and she gives up chicken-pie for the opposite reason, that she knows too much about the birds' pedigree. On the last point I share her prejudices, and never could eat the flesh of any creature I had known while alive. I had once a noble yoke of oxen, which, with the usual agricultural gratitude, we killed for the table; they said it was the finest beef in the four counties, but I could never taste Gog and Magog, whom I used to admire in the plough. Moreover, when I was an officer of yeomanry, and used to dress my own charger, formed an acquaintance with a flock of white turkeys, by throwing them a handful of oats now and then when I came from the stable:—I saw their numbers diminish with real pain, and never attempted to eat any of them without being sick. And yet I have as much of the *rugged and tough* about me as is necessary to carry me through all sorts of duty without much sentimental compunction.

"As to the ingenious system of double authorship, which the Americans have devised for the Waverley novels, I think it in one point of view extremely likely; since the unhappy man, whom they have thought fit to bring on the carpet, has been shut up in a madhouse for many years; and it seems probable that no brain but a madman's could have invented so much stuff, and no leisure but that of a prisoner could have afforded time to write it all. But, if this poor man be the author of these works, I can assure your kind friend that I neither could, would, nor durst have the slightest communication with him on that or any other subject. In fact, I have never heard of him twice for these twenty years or more. As for honest Mrs. Grant, I cannot conceive why the deuce I should have selected her for a mother-confessor; if it had been yourself or Joanna, there might have been some probability in the report; but good Mrs. Grant is so very cerulean, and surrounded by so many fetch-and-carry mistresses and missesses, and the maintainer of such an unmerciful correspondence, that though I would do her any kindness in my power, yet I should be afraid to be very intimate with a woman whose tongue and pen are rather overpowering. She is an excellent person notwithstanding. Pray, make my respects to your correspondent, and tell her I am very sorry I cannot tell her who the author of Waverley is; but I hope she will do me the justice not to ascribe any dishonourable transactions to me, either in that matter or any other, until she hears that they are likely to correspond with any part of my known character—which, having been now a lion of good reputation on my own deserts for twenty years and upwards, ought to be indifferently well known in Scotland. She seems to be a very amiable person; and though I shall never see Charlie's Hope, or eat her chicken-pies, I am sure I wish health to wait on the one, and good digestion on the other. They are funny people the Americans; I saw a paper in which they said my father was a tailor. If he had been an *honest tailor*, I should not have been ashamed of the circumstance; but he was what may be thought as great a phenomenon, for he was an *honest lawyer*, a cadet of a good family, whose predecessors only dealt in pinking and slashing doublets, not in making them.

"Here is a long letter, and all about trash—but what can you expect? Judges are numbling and grumbling above me—lawyers are squabbling and babbling around me. The minutes I give to my letter are stolen from Themis. I hope to get to Abbotsford very soon, though only for two or three days, until 12th March, when we go there for some time. Mrs. Spicie seems to be recovering from her asthmatics, which makes a curious case, providing the recovery be completed. Walter came down at Christmas, and speedily assembled three more terriers. One day the whole got off after a hare, and made me remember the basket beagles that Lord Morton used to keep in my youth; for the whole pack opened like hounds, and would have stuck to the chase till they had killed the hare which would have been like being pricked to death with pins, if we had not licked them off so soon as we could for laughing. This is a dull joke on paper; but imagine the presumption of so many long-backed, short-legged creatures, pursuing an animal so very fleet. You will allow it is something ridiculous. I am sure Count O'Halloran would have laughed, and Colonel Heathcock would have been scandalized.* Lady S. sends her best and kindest remembrances, in which she is joined by Anne and Sophia (poor body.) My fair friends, Harriet and Sophia, have a large interest in this greeting, and Lockhart throws himself in with tidings that Sophia continues to mend.—Always, my dear Miss E., most faithfully yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

This is the answer to a request concerning some MS. tragedy, by the late Mrs. Hemans, which seems to have been damned at one of the London theatres, and then to have been tried over again (I know not with what result) at Edinburgh:—

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Edinburgh, February 9, 1824.

"My dear Miss Baillie,

"To hear is to obey, and the enclosed line will show that the Siddonses are *agreeable* to act Mrs. Hemans's drama. When you tell the tale, say nothing about me, for on no earthly consideration would I like it to be known that I interfered in theatrical matters; it brings such a torrent of applications which it is impossible to grant, and often very painful to refuse. Every body thinks they can write blank verse—and *a word of yours to Mrs. Siddons* &c. &c. I had one rogue (to be sure he went mad afterwards, poor fellow) who came to bully me in my own house, until he had almost made the mist of twenty years, as Ossian says, roll backwards from my spirit, in which case he might have come by an excellent good beating. I have great pleasure, however, in serving Mrs. Hemans both on account of her own merit, and because of your patronage. I trust the piece will succeed; but there is no promising, for Saunders is uncanny jealous of being thought less critical than John Bull, and may, perhaps, despise to be pleased with what was less fortunate in London. I wish Mrs. H. had been on the spot to make any alterations, &c. which the players are always demanding. I will read the drama over more carefully than I have yet done, and tell you if any thing occurs. I need hardly apologize for being late in letting you hear all this—for the terror of the cramp attacking poor Sophia in her weak state kept us very feverish; but thank God it did little more than menace her, and the symptoms having now given way, her husband talks of going to town, in which case I intend to take Sophia to Abbotsford, and

'Till she be fat as a Norroway seal,
I'll feed her on bannocks of barleymeal.'

"Betwixt indolence of her own, and Lockhart's extreme anxiety and indulgence, she has foregone the custom of her exercise, to which, please God, we will bring her back by degrees. Little Charles is come down, just entered at Brazen Nose, where, however, he does not go to reside till October. We must see that he fills up the space between to good advantage; he had always quickness enough to learn, and seems now really to have caught the

——' fever of renown,
Sprung from the strong contagion of the gown.'

"I am sorry for Mr. Crabbe's complaint, under which he suffered, I recollect, when he was here in 1822. Did you ever make out how he liked his Scottish tour?—he is not, you know, very *outspoken*, and I was often afraid that he was a little tired by the bustle around him. At another time I would have made a point of attending more to his comforts—but what was to be done amid piping, and drumming, and pageants, and provosts, and bailies, and wild Highlandmen by the score? The time would have been more propitious to a younger poet. The fertility you mention is wonderful, but surely he must correct a great deal to bring his verses into the terse and pointed state in which he gives them to the public. To come back to Mrs. Hemans. I am afraid that I cannot flatter myself with much interest that can avail her. I go so little out, and mix so seldom either with the gay or the literary world here, that I am reduced, like Gil Blas, much to the company of my brother clerks and men of business, a seclusion which I cannot say I regret greatly: but any thing within my power shall not be left undone. I hope you will make my apology to Mrs. Hemans for the

* See "The Absentee," in Miss Edgeworth's Tales of Fashionable Life.

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delay which has taken place; if any thing should occur essential to be known to the authoress, I will write immediately.

"Always yours, my dear friend,
WALTER SCOTT."

In the next letter Scott mentions an application from Mr. James Montgomery for some contribution to a miscellaneous volume compiled by that ever benevolent poet for the benefit of the little chimney-sweeps.

To Miss Baillie, Hampstead.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 12, 1824.

"My dearest Friend,

"I hasten to answer your kind inquiries about Sophia. You would learn from my last that she was in a fair way of recovery, and I am happy to say she continues so well that we have no longer any apprehensions on her account. She will soon get into her sitting-room again, and of course have good rest at night, and gather strength gradually. I have been telling her that her face, which was last week the size of a sixpence, has, in three or four days, attained the diameter of a shilling, and will soon attain its natural and most extensive circumference of half-a-crown. If we live till 12th of next month we shall all go to Abbotsford, and between the black doctor and the red nurse (pony and cow, videlicet) I trust she will be seen well again. As for little Johnnie, I have no serious apprehensions, being quite of your mind, that his knowingness is only a proof that he is much with grown-up people; the child is active enough, and I hope will do well—yet an only child is like a blot at backgammon, and fate is apt to hit it. I am particularly entertained with your answer to Montgomery, because it happened to be precisely the same with mine; he applied to me for a sonnet or an elegy, instead of which I sent him an account of a manner of constructing chimneys so as scarcely to contract soot; and 2dly, of a very simple and effectual machine for sweeping away what soot does adhere. In all the new part of Abbotsford I have lined the chimney-vents with a succession of cones made of the same stuff with common flower-pots, about one and a half inch thick, and eighteen inches or two feet high, placed one above another, and the vent built round them, so that the smoke passing up these round earthen tubes, finds neither corner nor roughness on which to deposit the soot, and in fact there is very little collected. What sweeping is required is most easily performed by a brush like what housemaids call a *pope's head*, the handle of which consists of a succession of pipes, one slipping on the top of another like the joints of a fishing-rod, so that the maid first sweeps the lower part of the vent, then adds another pipe and sweeps a little higher, and so on. I have found this quite effectual, but the lining of the chimneys makes the accumulations of soot very trifling in comparison with the common case. Montgomery thanked me, but I think he would rather have had a sonnet; which puts me in mind of Mr. Puff's intended comedy of The Reformed Housebreaker, in which he was to put burglary in so ridiculous a point of view, that bolts and bars were likely to become useless by the end of the season. Verily I have no idea of writing verse on a grave subject of utility, any more than of going to church in a cinque pace. Lottery tickets and Japan blacking may indeed be exceptions to the general rule. I am quite delighted at us two cool Scots answering in exactly the same manner, but I am afraid your *sooty men* (who are still in regular discharge of their duty) and my *pope's head* and lined vents will not suit the committee, who seem more anxious for poetry than for common sense. For my part, when I write on such subjects, I intend it shall be a grand historico-philosophico poem upon oil-gas, having been made president of the Oil-gas Company of this city; the whale fishery might be introduced, and something pretty said about *palm* oil, which we think is apt to be popular among our lawyers. I am very sorry for poor Richardson, so much attached to his wife, and suffering so much in her suffering. I hope Tom Campbell gets on pretty well, and wish he would do something to sustain his deserved reputation. I wrote with Mrs. Siddons's consent to give Mrs. Hemans's tragedy a trial. I hope that her expectations are not very high, for I do not think our ordinary theatrical audience is either more judicious or less fastidious than those of England. They care little about poetry on the stage—it is situation, passion, and rapidity of action, which seem to be the principal requisites for ensuring the success of a modern drama; but I trust, by dint of a special jury, the piece may have a decent success—certainly I should not hope for much more. I must see they bring it out before 12th March, if possible, as we go to the country that day. I have not seen Mrs. Siddons and her brother William Murray since their obliging answer, for one of my colleagues is laid up with gout, and this gives me long seats in the Court, of which you have reaped the fruits in this long epistle from the Clerk's table, done amid the bustle of pleaders, attorneys, and so forth. I will get a frank, however, if possible, for the matter is assuredly not worth a shilling postage. My kindest remembrances attend Mrs. Baillie and Mrs. Agnes.—Always yours, with sincere respect and affection,

WALTER SCOTT."

To D. Terry, Esq., London.

"Abbotsford, Feb. 18, 1824.

"My dear Terry,

"Your very kind letter reached me here, so that I was enabled to send you immediately an accurate sketch of the windows and chimney-sides of the drawing-room to measurement. I should like the mirrors handsome and the frames plain; the colour of the hangings is green, with rich Chinese figures. On the side of the window I intend to have exactly beneath the glass a plain white side-table of the purest marble, on which to place Chantrey's bust. A truncated pillar of the same marble will be its support; and I think that besides the mirror above there will be a plate of mirror below the table; these memoranda will enable Baldock to say at what price these points can be handsomely accomplished. I have not yet spoken about the marble table; perhaps they may be all got in London. I shall be willing to give a handsome but not an extravagant price. I am much obliged to Mr. Baldock for his confidence about the screen. But what says Poor Richard?' 'Those who want money when they come to buy, are apt to want money when they come to pay.' Again Poor Dick observes,

'That in many you find the true gentleman's fate,
Ere his house is complete he has sold his estate.'

So we will adjourn consideration of the screen till other times; let us first have the needful got and paid for. The stuff for the windows in the drawing-room is the crimson damask silk we bought last year. I enclose a scrap of it, that the fringe may be made to match. I propose they should be hung with large handsome brass rings upon a brass cylinder, and I believe it would be best to have these articles from London—I mean the rings and cylinders; but I dislike much complication in the mode of drawing them separate, as it is eternally going wrong; those which divide in the middle, drawing back on each side like the curtains of an old-fashioned bed, and when drawn back are secured by a loop and tassel, are, I think, the handsomest, and can easily be made on the spot; the fringe should be silk, of course. I think the curtains of the library, considering the purpose of the room, require no fringe at all. We have, I believe, settled that they shall not be drawn in a line across the recess, as in the drawing-room, but shall circle along the inside of the windows. I refer myself to Mr. Atkinson about the fringe, but I think a little mixture of gold would look handsome with the crimson silk. As for the library, a yellow fringe, if any. I send a draught of the windows enclosed; the architraves are not yet up in the library, but they are accurately computed from the drawings of my kind friend Mr. Atkinson. There is plenty of time to think about these matters, for of course the rooms must be painted before they are put up. I saw the presses yesterday; they are very handsome, and remind me of the awful job of arranging my books. About July Abbotsford will, I think, be finished, when I shall, like the old Duke of Queensberry who built Drumlanrig, fold up the accounts in a sealed parcel, with a label bidding 'the deil pike out the een of any of my successors that shall open it.' I beg kind love to Mrs. Terry, Walter the Great, and Missy; delicious weather here, and birds singing St. Valentine's matins as if it were April.—Yours ever,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—Pride will have a fall—I have a whelp of one of Dandie Dinmont's Pepper and Mustard terriers, which no sooner began to follow me into the house than Ourisque fell foul. The Liddesdale devil cocked its nose, and went up to the scratch like a tigress, downed Ourie and served her out completely—since which Ourie has been so low that it seems going into an atrophy, and Ginger takes all manner of precedence, as the best place by the fire, and so on, to Lady Scott's great discomfiture.—Single letters by post; double to Croker, with a card enclosed, asking a frank to me."

About this time Miss Edgeworth announced the approaching marriage of her sister Sophia to Mr. Fox.

* See the works of Dr. Franklin.

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To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworth's town.

"Edinburgh, February 24, 1824

"My dear Miss Edgeworth,

"I do not delay a moment to send my warmest and best congratulations upon the very happy event which is about to take place in your family, and to assure you that you do me but common justice in supposing that I take the warmest interest in whatever concerns my young friend. All Abbotsford to an acre of Poyais* that she will make an excellent wife; and most truly happy am I to think that she has such an admirable prospect of matrimonial happiness, although at the expense of thwarting the maxim, and showing that

'The course of true love *sometimes may* run smooth.'

It will make a pretty vista, as I hope and trust, for you, my good friend, to look forwards with an increase of interest to futurity. Lady Scott, Ann, and Sophia, send their sincere and hearty congratulations upon this joyful occasion. I hope to hear her sing the petticoat of red some day in her own house. I should be apt to pity you a little amid all your happiness, if you had not my friend Miss Harriet, besides other young companions whose merits are only known to me by report, to prevent your feeling so much as you would otherwise the blank which this event must occasion in your domestic society. Sophia, I hope, will be soon able to make her own gratulations; she is recovering very well, and overjoyed to hear such good news from your quarter. I have been on a short trip to Abbotsford, to set painters to work to complete what Slender would call 'Mine own great chamber;' and on my return I was quite delighted to see the change on my daughter. Little John Hugh is likewise much better, but will require nursing and care for some years at least. Yet I have often known such hot-house plants bear the open air as well as those that were reared on the open moor.

"I am not at all surprised at what you say of the Yankees. They are a people possessed of very considerable energy, quickened and brought into eager action by an honourable love of their country and pride in their institutions; but they are as yet rude in their ideas of social intercourse, and totally ignorant, speaking generally, of all the art of good-breeding, which consists chiefly in a postponement of one's own petty wishes or comforts to those of others. By rude questions and observations, and absolute disrespect to other people's feelings, and a ready indulgence of their own, they make one feverish in their company, though perhaps you may be ashamed to confess the reason. But this will wear off, and is already wearing away. Men, when they have once got benches, will soon fall into the use of cushions. They are advancing in the lists of our literature, and they will not be long deficient in the *petite morale*, especially as they have, like ourselves, the rage for travelling. I have seen a new work, the Pilot, by the author of the Spy and Pioneer. The hero is the celebrated Paul Jones, whom I well remember advancing above the island of Inchkeith with three small vessels to lay Leith under contribution. I remember my mother being alarmed with the drum, which she had heard all her life at eight o'clock, conceiving it to be the pirates who had landed. I never saw such a change as betwixt that time, 1779, in the military state of a city. Then Edinburgh had scarce three companies of men under arms; and latterly she furnished 6000, with complete appointments, of cavalry, artillery, and infantry—enough to have eaten Paul Jones and his whole equipage. Nay, the very square in which my father's house stands, could even then have furnished a body of armed men sufficient to have headed back as large a party as he could well have landed. However, the novel is a very clever one, and the sea-scenes and characters in particular are admirably drawn; and I advise you to read it as soon as possible. I have little news to send from Abbotsford: *Spice* is much better, though still asthmatic; she is extremely active, and in high spirits, though the most miserable, thin, long-backed creature, I ever saw. She is extremely like the shadow of a dog on the wall; such a sketch as a child makes in its first attempts at drawing a monster—with a large head, four feet, and a most portentous longitude of back. There was great propriety in Miss Harriet's dream after all, for if ever a dog needed six legs, poor Spice certainly requires a pair of additional supporters. She is now following me a little, though the duty of body-guard has devolved for the present on a cousin of hers, a fierce game devil, that goes at every thing, and has cowed Ourisque's courage in a most extraordinary degree, to Lady Scott's great vexation. Here is a tale of dogs, and dreams, and former days, but the only pleasure in writing is to write whatever comes readiest to the pen. My wife and Anne send kindest compliments of congratulation, as also Charles, who has come down to spend four or five months with us. He is just entered at Brazen-nose—on fire to be a scholar of classical renown, and studying (I hope the humour will last) like a very dragon.—Always, my dear Miss Edgeworth, with best love to the bride and to dear Harriet, very much yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.

"Abbotsford, March 13, 1824.

"My dear Terry,

"We are now arrived here, and in great bustle with painters, which obliges me to press you about the mirrors. If we cannot have them soon, there is now an excellent assortment at Trotter's, where I can be supplied, for I will hardly again endure to have the house turned upside down by upholsterers—and wish the whole business ended, and the house rid of that sort of cattle once for all. I am only ambitious to have one fine mirror over the chimney-piece; a smaller one will do for the other side of the room. Lady Scott has seen some Bannockburn carpets, which will answer very well, unless there are any bespoken. They are putting up my presses, which look very handsome. In the drawing-room the cedar doors and windows, being well varnished, assume a most rich and beautiful appearance. The Chinese paper in the drawing-room is most beautiful, saving the two ugly blanks left for these mirrors of d———n, which I dare say you curse as heartily as I do. I wish you could secure a parcel of old caricatures, which can be bought cheap, for the purpose of papering two *cabinets de l'eau*. John Ballantyne used to make great hawls in this way. The Tory side of the question would of course be most acceptable; but I don't care about this, so the prints have some spirit. Excuse this hasty and pressing letter; if you saw the plight we are in you would pity and forgive. At Baldock, as I have had at you. My mother whips me, and I whip the top. Best compliments to Mrs. Terry.—Believe me always yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Archibald Constable, Esq., Polton House, Lasswade.

"Abbotsford, 29th March, 1824.

"My dear Constable,

"Since I received your letter I have been on the look-out for a companion for you, and have now the pleasure to send one bred at Abbotsford of a famous race. His name has hitherto been Cribb, but you may change it if you please. I will undertake for his doing execution upon the rats, which Polton was well stocked with when I knew it some seventeen or eighteen years ago. You must take some trouble to attach Mr. Cribb, otherwise he will form low connexions in the kitchen, which are not easily broken off. The best and most effectual way is to feed him yourself for a few days.

"I congratulate you heartily, my good old friend, on your look-forward to domestic walks, and a companion of this sort; and I have no doubt your health will gradually be confirmed by it. I will take an early opportunity to see you when we return to Edinburgh. I like the banks of the Esk, which to me are full of many remembrances, among which those relating to poor Leyden must come home to you as well as to me. I am ranging in my improvements—painting my baronial hall with all the scutcheons of the Border clans, and many similar devices. For the roof-tree I tried to blazon my own quarterings, and succeeded easily with eight on my father's side; but on my mother's side I stuck fast at the mother of my great-grand-father. The ancestor himself was John Rutherford of Grundismock, which is an appanage of the Hunthill estate, and he was married to Isabel Ker of Bloodylaws. I think I have heard that either this John of Grundismock or his father was one of the nine sons of the celebrated Cock of Hunthill, who seems to have had a reasonable brood of chickens. Do you know any thing of the pedigree of the Hunthills? The Earl of Teviot was of a younger branch, Rutherford of Quarrelholes, but of the same family. If I could find out these Rutherfords, and who they married, I could complete my tree, which is otherwise correct; but if not, I will paint clouds on these three shields, with the motto *Videruntfortes ante*. These things are trifles, when correct, but very absurd and contemptible if otherwise. Edgerstane cannot help me; he only knows that my grandfather was a cousin of his—and you know he represents Hunthill. My poor mother has often told me about it, but it was to regardless ears. Would to God I had old Mrs. Kedie of Leith, who screeded off all the alliances between the Andersons of Ettrick House and the Andersons of Ettrick Hall, though Michael was the name of every second man, and to complete the mess, they intermarried with each other.—Yours truly,

WALTER Scott."

* One of the bubbles of this bubble period, was a scheme of colonization at Poyais.

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A bad accident in a fox-chase occurred at this time to Sir Walter's dear friend Mr. Scott of Gala. The ice-house at Abbotsford was the only one in the neighbourhood that had been filled during the preceding winter, and to Tom Purdie's care in that particular Mr. Scott's numerous friends owed the preservation of his valuable life.

To the Lord Montagu, &c., Ditton Park.

"Edinburgh, 14th April, 1824.

"My dear Lord,

"You might justly think me most unmerciful, were you to consider this letter as a provoke requiring an answer. It comes partly to thank you twenty times for your long and most kind letter, and partly, which I think not unnecessary, to tell you that Gala may now, I trust, be considered as quite out of danger. He has swam for his life though, and barely saved it. It is for the credit of the clan to state that he had no dishonour as a horseman by his fall. He had alighted to put his saddle to rights, and the horse, full of corn and little work, went off with him before he got into his seat, and went headlong down a sort of precipice. He fell at least fifteen feet without stopping, and no one that saw the accident could hope he should be taken up a living man. Yet, after losing a quart of blood, he walked home on foot, and no dangerous symptoms appeared till five or six days after, when they came with a vengeance. He continues to use the ice with wonderful effect, though it seems a violent remedy.

"How fate besets us in our sports and in our most quiet domestic moments! Your lordship's story of the lamp makes one shudder, and I think it wonderful that Lady Montagu felt no more bad effects from the mere terror of such an accident; but the gentlest characters have often most real firmness. I once saw something of the kind upon a very large scale. You may have seen at Somerset House an immense bronze chandelier, with several hundred burners, weighing three or four tons at least. On the day previous to the public exhibition of the paintings, the Royal Academicians are in use, as your Lordship knows, to give an immensely large dinner-party to people of distinction, supposed to be patrons of the art, to literary men, to amateurs in general, and the Lord knows whom besides. I happened to be there the first time this ponderous mass of bronze was suspended. It had been cast for his Majesty, then Prince Regent, and he not much liking it—I am surprised he did not, as it is very ugly indeed—had bestowed it on the Royal Academicians. Beneath it was placed, as at Ditton, a large round table, or rather a tier of tables, rising above each other like the shelves of a dumb-waiter, and furnished with as many glasses, tumblers, decanters, and so forth, as might have set up an entire glass shop—the numbers of the company, upwards of 150 persons, requiring such a supply. Old West presided, and was supported by Jockey of Norfolk on the one side, and one of the royal Dukes on the other. We had just drunk a preliminary toast or two, when—the Lord preserve us!—a noise was heard like that which precedes an earthquake, the links of the massive chain, by which this beastly lump of bronze was suspended, began to give way, and the mass descending slowly for several inches encountered the table beneath, which was positively annihilated by the pressure, the whole glassware being at once destroyed. What was very odd, the chain, after this manifestation of weakness, continued to hold fast; the skilful inspected it, and declared it would yield no farther—and we, I think to the credit of our courage, remained quiet and continued our sitting. Had it really given way, as the architecture of Somerset House has been in general esteemed unsubstantial, it must have broke the floor like a bombshell, and carried us all down to the cellars of that great national edifice. Your Lordship's letter placed the whole scene in my recollection. A fine paragraph we should have made."

"I think your Lordship will be much pleased with the fine plantation on Bowden Moor. I have found an excellent legend for the spot. It is close by the grave of an unhappy being, called *Wattie Waeman*, (whether the last appellative was really his name, or has been given him from his melancholy fate, is uncertain,) who being all for love and a little for stealing, hung himself there seventy or eighty years since (*quere*, where did he find a tree?) at once to revenge himself of his mistress and to save the gallows a labour. Now, as the place of his grave and of his suicide is just on the verge where the Duke's land meets with mine and Kippilaw's—(you are aware that where three laird's lands meet is always a charmed spot) —the spirit of Wattie Waeman wanders sadly over the adjacent moors, to the great terror of all wandering wights who have occasion to pass from Melrose to Bowden. I begin to think which of his namesakes this omen concerns, for I take Walter Kerr of Kippilaw to be out of the question. I never heard of a Duke actually dying for love, though the Duke in the Twelfth Night be in an alarming way. On the other hand, Sir John Græme of the West Countries, who died for cruel Barbara Allan, is a case in point against the Knight. Thus, in extreme cases, your Duke loses his head, whereas your Knight or Esquire is apt to retain it upon a neck a little more elongated than usual. I will pursue the discussion no further, as the cards appear to turn against me. The people begin to call the plantation Waeman's Wood—rather a good name.

"It is quite impossible your Lordship should be satisfied with the outside view of my castle, for I reckon upon the honour of receiving your whole party, *quot quot adestis*, as usual, in the interior. We have plenty of room for a considerable number of friends at bed as well as board. Do not be alarmed by the report of the gas, which was quite true, but reflects no dishonour on that mode of illumination. I had calculated that fifteen hundred cubic feet of gas would tire out some five-and-twenty or thirty pair of feet of Scotch dancers, but it lasted only till six in the morning, and then, as a brave soldier does on his post, went out when burned out. Had I kept the man sitting up for an hour or two to make the gas as fast as consumed, I should have spoiled a good story.

"My hall is in the course of having all the heavy parts of my armorial collection bestowed upon it, and really, though fanciful, looks very well, and I am as busy as a bee, disposing suits of armour, battle-axes, broadswords, and all the nick-nacks I have been breaking my shins over in every corner of the house for these seven years past, in laudable order, and to the best advantage.

"If Mr. Blakeney be the able person that fame reports him, he will have as great a duty to perform as his ancestor at Stirling Castle;* for to keep no young a person as my chief, in his particular situation, from the inroads of follies, and worse than follies, requires as much attention and firmness as to keep Highland claymores and French engineers out of a fortified place. But there is an admirable garrison in the fortress, kind and generous feelings, and a strong sense of honour and duty, which Duke Walter has by descent from his father and grandfather. God send him life and health, and I trust he will reward your Lordship's paternal care, and fulfil my hopes. They are not of the lowest, but such as must be entertained by an old and attached friend of the family who has known him from infancy. My friend Lord John wants the extreme responsibility of his brother's situation, and may afford to sow a few more wild oats, but I trust he will not make the crop a large one. Lord * * * and his tutor have just left us for the south, after spending three or four days with us. They could not have done worse than sending the young Viscount to Edinburgh, for though he is really an unaffected natural young man, yet it was absurd to expect that he should study hard when he had six invitations for every hour of every evening. I am more and more convinced of the excellence of the English monastic institutions of Cambridge and Oxford. They cannot do all they may be expected, but there is at least the exclusion of many temptations to dissipation of mind; whereas with us, supposing a young man to have any pretensions to keep good society—and, to say truth, we are not very nice in investigating them—he is almost pulled to pieces by speculating mammas and flirting misses. If a man is poor, plain, and indifferently connected, he may have excellent opportunities of study at Edinburgh; otherwise, he should beware of it.

"Lady Anne is very naughty not to take care of herself, and I am not sorry she has been a *little* ill, that it may be a warning. I wish to hear your Lordship's self is at home. I hate unformed complaints. A doctor is like Ajax—give him light and he may make battle with a disease; but, no disparagement to the Esculapian art, they are bad guessers. My kindest compliments, I had almost said *love*, attend Lady Isabella. We are threatened with a cruel deprivation in the loss of our friend Sir Adam, the first of men. A dog of a banker has bought his house for an investment of capital, and I fear he must trudge. Had I still had the Highland piper† in my service, who would not have refused me such a favour, I would have had him dirked to a certainty—I mean this cursed banker. As it is, I must think of some means of poisoning his hot rolls and butter, or setting his house on fire, by way of revenge. It is a real affliction. I am happy to hear of Lady Margaret's good looks. I was one of her earliest acquaintance, and at least half her godfather, for I took the

* This story is also told in Scott's Essay on the Life of Kemble. See his Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xx. pp. 186–7.

* General Blakeney, grandfather to Lord M.'s friend, was governor of Stirling Castle in 1745.

† John of Skye had left Abbotsford—but he soon returned.

vows on me for somebody or other who, I dare say, has never thought half so often of her as I have done. And so I have written out my paper, and, I fear, your Lordship's patience. My respectful compliments attend Lady Montagu and the young ladies of Ditton.—Always most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT."

The estate of Gattonside was purchased about this time by Mr. George Bainbridge of Liverpool—and Sir Adam and Lady Ferguson, to Scott's great regret, went a year or two afterwards to another part of Scotland. The "cursed banker," however, had only to be known to be liked and esteemed. Mr. Bainbridge had, among other merits, great skill in sports—especially in that which he has illustrated by the excellent manual entitled "The Fly-fisher's Guide;" and Gattonside-house speedily resumed its friendly relations with Abbotsford.

The next letter was in answer to one in which Lord Montagu had communicated his difficulties about fixing to which of the English Universities he should send the young Duke of Buccleuch.

To the Lord Montagu, &c., &c.

"Edinburgh, 15th June, 1824.

"My dear Lord,

"I was much interested by your Lordship's last letter. For some certain reasons I rather prefer Oxford to Cambridge, chiefly because the last great University was infected long ago with liberalism in politics, and at present shows some symptoms of a very different heresy, which is yet sometimes blended with the first—I mean enthusiasm in religion—not that sincere zeal for religion, in which mortals cannot be too fervid, but the far more doubtful enthusiasm which makes religion a motive and a pretext for particular lines of thinking in politics and in temporal affairs. This is a spirit which, while it has abandoned the lower classes, where perhaps it did some good, for it *is* a guard against gross and scandalous vice—has transferred itself to the upper classes, where, I think, it can do little but evil—disuniting families, setting children in opposition to parents, and teaching, as I think, a new way of going to the Devil for God's sake. On the other hand, this is a species of doctrine not likely to carry off our young friend; and I am sure Mr. Blakeney's good sense will equally guard him against political mistakes, for I should think my friend Professor Smyth's historical course of lectures likely to be somewhat Whiggish, though I dare say not improperly so. Upon the whole, I think the reasons your Lordship's letter contains in favour of Cambridge are decisive, although I may have a private wish in favour of Christ Church, which I dare say will rear its head once more under the new Dean. The neighbourhood of Newmarket is certainly in some sort a snare for so young persons as attend college at Cambridge; but, alas! where is it that there be not snares of one kind or other? Parents, and those who have the more delicate task of standing in the room of parents, must weigh objections and advantages, and without expecting to find any that are without risk, must be content to choose those where the chances seem most favourable. The turf is no doubt a very forceful temptation, especially to a youth of high rank and fortune. There is something very flattering in winning, when good fortune depends so much on shrewdness of observation, and, as it is called, knowingness; the very sight is of an agitating character; and perhaps there are few things more fascinating to young men, whose large fortune excludes the ordinary causes of solicitude, than the pleasures and risks of the race course; and though, when indulged to excess, it leads to very evil consequences, yet, if the Duke hereafter should like to have a stud of racers, he might very harmlessly amuse himself in that way, provided he did not suffer it to take too eager possession of his mind, or to engross his time. Certainly one would rather he had not the turn at all, but I am far more afraid of sedentary games of chance, for wasting time and fortune, than I am of any active out-of-door's sport whatsoever.

"Old Paradise did not number a neighbourhood among its pleasures; but Gattonside has that advantage, and great will be the regret of the said neighbours, if Sir Adam and Lady Eve are turned out. I parted with them at Blair-Adam on this day—for, taking a fit of what waiting-maids call *the clevers*, I started at six this morning, and got here to breakfast. As it blew hard all night, there was a great swell on the ferry, so that I came through

'Like Chieftain to the Highlands bound,
Crying, boatman, do not tarry—' *

or rather,

'Like Clerk unto the Session bound.'

"I could have borne a worse toss, and even a little danger, since the wind brought rain, which is so much wanted. One set of insects is eating the larch—another the spruce. Many of the latter will not, I think, recover the stripping they are receiving. Crops are looking well, except the hay, which is not looking at all. The sheep are eating roasted grass, but will not be the worse mutton, as I hope soon to prove to your Lordship at Abbotsford.

I am, always, my dear Lord,
Yours faithful to command,
WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—I am here, according to the old saying, *bird-alone*; for my son Charles is fishing at Lochleven, and my wife and daughter (happy persons!) are at Abbotsford. I took the opportunity to spend two days at Tyninghame. Lord Haddington complains of want of memory, while his conversation is as witty as a comedy, and his anecdote as correct as a parish register.

"I will be a suitor for a few acorns this year, if they ripen well at Ditton, or your other forests. Those I had before from you (raised in the nursery, not planted out) are now fine oak plants."

Among Scott's visiters of the next month, first in Edinburgh, and afterwards on Tweedside, were the late amiable and venerable Dr. Hughes, one of the Canons-residentiary of St. Paul's, and his warm-hearted lady. The latter had been numbered among his friends from an early period of life, and a more zealously affectionate friend he never possessed. On her way to Scotland she had halted at Keswick to visit Mr. Southey, whom also she had long known well, and corresponded with frequently. Hence the following letters.

To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick, Cumberland.

"My dear Southey,

"Do you remember Richardson's metaphor of two bashful lovers running opposite to each other in parallel lines, without the least chance of union, until some good-natured body gives a shove to the one, and a shove to the other, and so leads them to form a junction? Two lazy correspondents may, I think, form an equally apt subject for the simile, for here have you and I been silent for I know not how many years, for no other reason than the uncertainty which wrote last, or, which was in duty bound to write first. And here comes my clever, active, bustling friend, Mrs. Hughes, and tells me that you regret a silence which I have not the least power of accounting for, except upon the general belief that I wrote you a long epistle after your kind present of the Lay of the Laureate, and that I have once every week proposed to write you a still longer, till shame of my own indolence confirmed me in my evil habits of procrastination—when here comes good Mrs. Hughes, gives me a shake by the collar, and assures me, that you are in pretty nearly the same case with myself—and, as a very slight external impulse will sometimes drive us into action when a long succession of internal resolutions have been made and broke, I take my pen to assure my dear Southey, that I love him as well as if our correspondence had been weekly or daily. The years which have gone by have found me dallying with the time, and you improving it as usual—I tossing my ball and driving my hoop, a grayheaded schoolboy, and you playing your task unremittingly for the instruction of our own and future ages. Yet I have not been wholly idle or useless—witness five hundred acres of moor and moss, now converted into hopeful woodland of various sizes, to the great refreshment, even already, of the eyes of the pilgrims who still journey to Melrose. I wish you could take a step over the Border this season with Mrs. Southey, and let us have the pleasure of showing you what I have been doing. I twice intended an invasion of this sort upon your solitude at Keswick, one in spring 1821, and then again in the summer of the same year, when the coronation took place. But the convenience of going to London by the steam-packet, which carries you on whether you wake or sleep, is so much preferable to a long land journey, that I took it on both occasions. The extreme rapidity of communication, which places an inhabitant of Edinburgh in the metropolis sooner than a letter can reach it by the post, is like to be attended with a mass of most important consequences, some, or rather most of them, good, but some also which are not to be viewed without apprehension. It must make the public feeling and sentiment of London, whatever they may chance to be, much more readily and emphatically influential upon the rest of the kingdom, and I am by no means sure that it will be on the whole desirable that the-

* Campbell's "Lord Ullin's Daughter."

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whole country should be as subject to be moved by its example as the inhabitants of its suburbs. Admitting the metropolis to be the heart of the system, it is no sign of health when the blood flows too rapidly through the system at every pulsation. Formerly in Edinburgh and other towns the impulse received from any strong popular feeling in London was comparatively slow and gradual, and had to contend with opposite feelings and prejudices of a national or provincial character; the matter underwent a reconsideration, and the cry which was raised in the great mart of hallo and humbug was not instantly echoed back, as it may be in the present day and present circumstances, when our opinion, like a small drop of water brought into immediate contiguity with a bigger, is most likely to be absorbed in and united with that of the larger mass. However, you and I have outlived so many real perils, that it is not perhaps wise to dread those that are only contingent, especially where the cause out of which they arise brings with it so much absolute and indisputable advantage. What is Wordsworth doing? I was unlucky in being absent when he crossed the Border. I heartily wish I could induce him to make a foray this season, and that you and Mrs. Southey, and Miss Woods worth, my very good and well remembered friend, could be of the party. Pray think of this, for the distance is nothing to well resolved minds, and you in particular owe me a visit. I have never quite forgiven your tour in Scotland without looking in upon my poor premises. Well, as I have re-appeared like your floating island, which I see the newspapers aver hath again, after seven years' soaking, become visible to mortal ken, it would not be fair in me to make my visit too long a one—so, with kindest respects to Mrs. Southey, in which my wife sincerely joins, I am always most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT.

"8th July, 1824, Edinburgh.

"Address Abbotsford, Melrose.

"You may have heard that about four years since I was brought to death's door by a violent, and at the same time most obstinate complaint, a sort of spasms in the stomach or diaphragm, which for a long time defied medicine. It gave way at length to a terrific course of calomel, such as made the cure almost as bad as the disease. Since that time, I have recovered even a better portion of health than I generally had before, and that was excellent. I do not indeed possess the activity of former days either on foot or horseback, but while I can ride a pony, and walk five or six miles with pleasure, I have no reason to complain. The rogue Radicals had nearly set me on horseback again, but I would have had a good *following* to help out my own deficiencies, as all my poor neighbours were willing to fight for *Kirk* and *King*.

Mr. Southey's next letter enclosed a MS. copy of his Ode on the King's Northern Progress of 1822. Sir Walter, in his reply, adverts to the death of Louis XVIII., which occurred on the 17th of September, 1824—and prophesies the fate of his successor.

To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick, Cumberland.

"Bowhill 26th Sept., 1824.

"My dear Southey,

"I did not immediately thank you for your beautiful poem on the King's Visit, because I was afraid you might think that I was trespassing too much on time which is always well employed; but I must not let the ice settle again on the stream of our correspondence, and therefore, while I have a quiet morning, I employ part of it to thank you for the kindness you have done me as a friend, and still more for the honour you have bestowed on my country. I hope these verses are one day to see the light, and am too much personally interested not to expect that period with impatience.

"I had a letter from Gifford some time since, by which I perceive with regret he renounces further management of the Quarterly. I scarce guess what can be done by Murray in that matter, unless he could prevail on you to take the charge. No work of the kind can make progress (though it may be kept afloat) under a mere bookselling management. And the difficulty of getting a person with sufficient independence of spirit, accuracy of judgment, and extent of knowledge, to exercise the profession of Aristarch, seems very great. Yet I have been so long out of the London circles that new stars may have arisen, and set for aught I know, since I was occasionally within the hemisphere.

"The King of France's death, with which one would think I had wondrous little to do, has produced to me the great disappointment of preventing Canning's visit. He had promised to spend two or three days at Abbotsford on his road to Edinburgh,* and it is the more provoking, as I dare say, after all, there is no further occasion for his being at his post than arises from matter of mere form, since I suppose there is no reason to think that Charles X. will change the line of policy adopted by his brother. I remember him in Edinburgh about 1794, one of the most elegant men in address and exterior whom I ever saw. Strange times we have lived in! I am speaking of Charles X. as a Frenchman of 1661 might have spoken of Charles II. By the way, did you ever observe how easy it would be for a good historian to run a parallel betwixt the great Rebellion and the French Revolution, just substituting the spirit of fanaticism, for that of soi-disant philosophy. But then how the character of the English would rise—whether you considered the talents and views of the great leaders on either side, or the comparative moderation and humanity with which they waged their warfare! I sometimes think an instructive comparative view might be made out, and it would afford a comfortable augury that the Restoration in either case was followed by many amendments in the Constitution. I hope Louis Baboon will not carry the matter so far as to require completing the parallel by a second Revolution—but it would be very singular if the devotion of this King to the Catholic priests and forms should occasion such a catastrophe. Heber has promised to come down here, and if so, I will perhaps return with him as far as Rokeby, and, if we can, take Keswick on our way were it but to see you for an hour. All this, however, is speculation. I am just sending off my younger son to Oxford. My eldest is an officer in the 15th hussars, and I believe will soon get that object of every young officer's ambition, a troop, which would be great luck.—Believe me, dear Southey, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

In October of this year, Sir Walter's son Charles began his residence at Brazen-nose College, Oxford. The adoption of this plan implied finally dropping the appointment in the civil service of the East India Company, which had been placed at his disposal by Lord Bathurst in the spring of 1820; a step, I need not observe, which, were there any doubt on that subject, would alone be sufficient to prove, to the conviction of the most envious sceptic, that the young gentleman's father at this time considered his own worldly fortunes as in a highly prosperous situation. A writership in India is early independence;—in the case of a son of Scott, so conducting himself as not to discredit the name he inherited, it could hardly have failed to be early wealth. And Sir Walter was the last man to deprive his boy of such safe and easy prospects of worldly advantage, turning him over to the precarious chances of a learned profession in Great Britain, unless in the confidence that his own resources were so great as to render ultimate failure in such a career a matter of no primary importance.

The Vicar of Lampeter, mean-while, had become a candidate for the rectorship of a new classical academy, founded this year at Edinburgh; and Sir Walter Scott's influence was zealously exerted in behalf of his son's learned and estimable tutor. Mr. Williams was successful in his object; and at the opening of the institution (1st October) the Poet appeared in Edinburgh to preside over the ceremonial in which this excellent friend was so deeply concerned. I transcribe what follows from a report prepared at the time (but never until now published) by the honorary secretary of the academy, Mr. John Russell, W. S.:—

"The Rev. Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, Bart. (minister of the parish,) at the request of Sir Walter Scott, opened the business of the meeting, by an eloquent and impressive prayer, in which he invoked the blessing of the Almighty on the institution.

"Sir Walter Scott then rose, and observed, that it had been determined by the directors, that some account should be given on this occasion of the nature and meaning of the institution. He wished that some one better qualified had been appointed for this purpose; but as the duty had been imposed upon him, he should endeavour to discharge it as briefly as possible. In Scotland, and before such an assembly, it was unnecessary for him to enlarge on the general advantages of education. It was that which distinguished man from the lower animals in the creation—which recorded every fact of history, and transmitted them in perfect order from one generation

* Mr. Canning spent some part of the summer of 1824 in a visit to the Marquess Wellesley, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; and had proposed to return from Dublin by the way of Scotland. I think there was to have been a public dinner in his honour at Edinburgh.

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to another. Our forefathers had shown their sense of its importance by their conduct; but they could little have conceived the length to which discoveries in science and literature had gone in this age; and those now present could as little anticipate to what extent posterity might carry them. Future ages might probably speak of the knowledge of the 18th and 19th centuries, as we now do of that of the 15th and 16th. But let them remember that the progress of knowledge was gradual; and as their ancestors had been anxious to secure to them the benefits of education, so let it be said of the present age, that it paved the way for the improvement of the generations which were to follow. He need not repeat to Scotsmen, that at an early period the most anxious solicitude had been shown on this subject. While Scotland was torn with convulsions, and the battle-brand was yet red, our forefathers had sat down to devise the means of spreading the blessings of knowledge among their posterity, as the most effectual means of preventing those dark and bloody times from recurring. We had but lately sheathed a triumphant sword, and lived now in a period of profound peace; and long, long might it be before the sword was again unsheathed! This was therefore a proper time for improving the institutions of the country, and endeavouring to cause its literature to keep pace with its high martial achievements. In forming an institution like the present, there was something generous and disinterested. The founders of a library might enjoy the benefit of reading in that library. The founder of an hospital had had sometimes the melancholy gratification, in the decline of his fortunes, of reposing under the roof of the asylum which his charity had erected for others: but such could not be the case with those who subscribed for this institution. It was like a torch held out in the hand of a dead man, which imparted light to others, but to the bearer it gave none. He therefore called on the young to attend to the instructions that would be addressed to them in this academy, erected exclusively for their benefit, and not for that of those by whom it had been founded.

"The establishment of those excellent institutions, the Parochial Schools, had early induced the moral and orderly habits which had so much tended to raise the character of our countrymen. King James, whatever had been his failings in other respects, had attended to the education of the youth, and had founded an institution (the High School) which flourished at this moment, the pride and boast of our City; but, from the great increase of population, its size was now found inadequate to the duty originally intended. Since its establishment, the city had increased to six times the extent it then was; and the great number of subscribers to the present institution, proved the general feeling that something must be done to relieve the Metropolitan school. It was true there were many private seminaries, whose teachers were men of great talent; but schools of that description were not so well calculated to secure the education of children as an institution like the present. It was plain to the most common understanding, that one man could not teach four or five classes of pupils with the same success that one man could teach one class; that was quite plain. A jealousy had been entertained that the design of the present institution was to hurt the more ancient seminary. Look at those who were the leading members of this society;—many of them who had received their education at the High School, whose fathers and grandfathers had been instructed there, and who also had their children there: they were not capable of entertaining a thought to the prejudice of that seminary. The effect of the present institution would only be to relieve the High School of superfluous scholars, and thereby leave the hands of its teachers more at liberty to educate those who were left. He trusted he should hear nothing more of such an unworthy motive. He was sure there would be no petty jealousies—no rivalry between the two institutions, but the honourable and fair rivalry of scholarship. He was convinced Palinurus would not slumber at the helm, while he beheld another vessel striving to gain the port before him.

"In appropriating the funds which had so liberally been placed at their disposal, the directors had observed the strictest economy. By the ingenuity of Mr. Burn, the Architect, whose plans for, and superintendence of the buildings had been a labour of love, it would be observed, that not much had been lost. If they had not the beauty of lavish ornament, they had at least taste and proportion to boast of—a more important part of architecture than high finishing. The directors had a more difficult and delicate duty to perform than the rearing of stone walls, in choosing the gentlemen who were to carry into execution their plans; a task important beyond the power of language to describe, from the number of certificates produced by men of talent who were willing to abandon their situations in other seminaries, and to venture the credit of their reputation and prospects in life on this experimental project of ours—a task so delicate, that the directors were greatly at a loss whom to choose among seventy or eighty individuals, of almost equal merit, and equally capable of undertaking the task. The one principle which guided the directors in their selection was—who where most likely to give satisfaction to them and to the public? He trusted they had been successful in the performance of this task. The University of Oxford had given them one of its most learned scholars, (the Rector,) in the flower of his age, with fifteen years' experience as a teacher, and of whose acquirements, in that gentleman's presence, he would not speak in the terms he would employ elsewhere. To him the directors trusted as the main pillar of the establishment: he was sure also he would be well supported by the other gentlemen: and that the whole machine would move easily and smoothly.

"But there was still another selection of no mean difficulty. In the formation of a new, they must lose some of the advantages of an ancient and venerable institution. One could not lay his hands on the head of his son, and say, this is the same bench on which I sat; this is the voice which first instructed me.—They had to identify their children with a new institution. But they had something to counterbalance these disadvantages. If they had not the venerable Gothic temple, the long sounding galleries, and turreted walls—where every association was favourable to learning—they were also free from the prejudices peculiar to such seminaries,—the 'rich windows which *exclude* the light, and passages that lead to nothing.' Something might be gained from novelty. The attention of the directors had been particularly turned to the fact, that while Scotland was, on the whole, the best informed country in Europe, it had not of late produced many eminent classical scholars. The observation of Dr. Johnson was well known, that in learning Scotland resembled a besieged city, where every man had a mouthful, but no man a belly ful. It might be said, in answer to this, that it was better education should be divided into mouthfuls, than served up at the banquet of some favoured individuals, while the great mass were left to starve. But, sturdy Scotsman as he was, he was not more attached to Scotland than to truth; and it must be admitted that there was some foundation for the Doctor's remark. The directors were anxious to wipe off this reproach, and for this purpose had made every provision in their power. They had made some additions to the course adopted in the High School, but in no case had they made any innovation from the mere love of change. It was a part of their plan to lay a foundation for a thorough knowledge of the Latin tongue, by the most precise and careful study of its elemental principles. With this they meant to conjoin the study of Greek, to be begun at an earlier period, and prosecuted to a greater extent, than hitherto was customary in Scotland. It was the language of the fathers of history, and of a people whose martial achievements and noble deeds were the ornament of their pages. At no moment was the study of that beautiful language so interesting as at present, when the people among whom it was still in use, were again, as he trusted, about to emancipate themselves from slavery and barbarism, and take their rank among free nations. There would also be instruction in Writing and Arithmetic—and a class for the study of Mathematics, from which the directors hoped great advantage would accrue to the pupils. There would be another class in this institution, which was not to be found in any other similar academy—a class for the study of English Literature. It had been justly remarked, that the study of classics had sometimes led to the neglect of our own language, and that some scholars could express themselves better in Latin than in English. To avoid this error, a teacher was added to the institution, who was to instruct the boys in the principles of English Composition, and to connect with this a knowledge of the history of their own country. He would have the youths taught to venerate the patriots and heroes of our own country, along with those of Greece and Rome; to know the histories of Wallace and Bruce, as well as those of Themistocles and of Cæsar; and that the recollection of the fields of Flodden and Bannockburn, should not be lost in those of Platæa and Marathon. The masters would open their classes every morning with prayer; and a portion of Scripture would be read by one of the boys every Monday morning, before the commencement of the week's labours.

"In conclusion, Sir Walter addressed a few words to his young friends around him. He observed, that the public could not have given a more interesting mark of their confidence in the managers of the seminary, than they had done, in placing under their direction these young persons, characterised by the Roman matron as

her most precious jewels, for every one of whom he was sensible more than one bosom was at present beating, anxious for their future happiness and prosperity. He exhorted them to give their whole souls and minds to their studies, without which it was little that either their teachers or directors could do. If they were destined for any of the learned professions, he begged them to remember that a physician without learning was a mere quack; a lawyer without learning was a pettifogger; and a clergyman without learning was like a soldier without a sword, who had not the means of enforcing the authority of his Divine Master. Next to a conscience void of offence towards God and man, the greatest possession they could have was a well cultivated mind; it was that alone which distinguished them from the beasts that perish. If they went to India or other distant quarters of the globe, it would sweeten their path, and add to their happiness. He trusted that his words, poor as they were, would sink into their hearts, and remain on their memories, long after they had forgotten the speaker. He hoped they would remember the words of their reverend friend, who had just implored the blessing of God upon their studies, for they were the outpourings of the soul of one not young in years, nor void of experience; and when they were come to manhood, they might say to their children, 'Thus and thus were we taught, and thus and thus we teach you. By attending to these things we rose to honour and distinction.' Happy (said Sir Walter) will it be if you can say, 'I have followed that which I heard. May you do so and live.'"

The Academy, opened under these auspices, throve from the beginning, and may now be considered as one of the most important among the national establishments of Scotland; nor have Sir Walter's anticipations as to the result of honourable rivalry between it and the old High School been disappointed.

As it happens, I have to place in the same page with Sir Walter's speech, in honour of classical learning, the record of a *false quantity* which his generosity may almost be said to have made classical. In the course of that same October, died his faithful friend and servant Maida, the noblest and most celebrated of all his dogs—might I not safely say of all dogs that ever shared the fellowship of man? His exit was announced in this letter to the young Oxonian.

To Charles Scott, Esq., Brazen-nose College, Oxford.

"Abbotsford, 22d October, 1824.

"My dear Charles,

"I am glad to hear that you are safely settled at College, I trust with the intention of making your residence there subservient to the purposes of steady study, without which it will be only a waste of expense and of leisure. I believe the matter depends very much on a youth himself, and therefore I hope to hear that you are strenuously exerting yourself to hold an honourable situation among the students of your celebrated university. Your course will not be unmarked, as something is expected from the son of any literary person; and I sincerely hope in this case those expectations will be amply gratified.

"I am obliged to Mr. Hughes* for his kind intentions in your favour, as I dare say that any to whom he introduces you will be acquaintance worth cultivating. I shall be glad to hear that you have taken up your ground at College, and who are like to compose your set. I hope you will make your way to the clever fellows and not put up with Doldrums. Every man soon falls behind that does not aspire to keep up with the foremost in the race.

"I have little domestic news to tell you. Old Maida died quietly in his straw last week after a good supper, which, considering his weak state, was rather a deliverance. He is buried below his monument, on which the following epitaph is engraved—though it is great audacity to send Teviotdale Latin to Brazen-nose—

'Maidæ Marmoreâ dormis sub imagine Maida,
Ad januam domini sit tibi terra levis.'

Thus Englished by an eminent hand,—

'Beneath the sculptured form which late you wore,
Sleep soundly, Maida, at your master's door.'

"Yesterday we had our solemn hunt and killed fourteen hares,—but a dog of Sir Adam's broke her leg, and was obliged to be put to death in the field. Little Johnnie talks the strangest gibberish I ever heard, by way of repeating his little poems. I wish the child may ever speak plain. Mamma, Sophia, Anne, and I, send love.—Always your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

* John Hughes, Esq. of Oriel College—son of Sir Walter's old friends, Dr. and Mrs. Hughes—the same whose "Itinerary of the Rhone," &c., is mentioned with high praise in the Introduction to Quentin Durward.

The monument here mentioned was a *leaping-stone*, to which the skill of Scott's master-mason had given the shape of Maida recumbent. It had stood by the gate of Abbotsford a year or more before the dog died, and after he was laid under it, his master, dining that evening at Chiefswood, said, over his glass of toddy and cigar, that he had been bothering his brains to make an epitaph for his ancient favourite, but could not please himself. He said it must be in Latin, because *Maida* seemed made on purpose to close a hexameter—and begged, as I was fresher off the irons than himself, that I would try to help him. The unfortunate couplet above printed was what suggested itself at the moment—and though his own English version of it, extemporized next minute, was so much better, on his way home he gave directions to have it engraved, and engraved it was before many hours had passed. Mr. James Ballantyne was the first person that saw it; believing it to be Scott's, he admired it, of course—and of course, also, he thought fit to print it soon after (as Sir Walter's) in his newspaper—but his memory had played him a trick before he reached Edinburgh, and as he printed the lines they showed not only their original blunder, but another of his own creation; he had put *jacet* for *dormis*. His printing the thing at all was unfortunate; for some friend (I believe it was Lord Minto) had pointed out in the interim the false quantity of *januam*, and the mason was just about to rectify that by substituting some legitimate dactyl or spondee, suggested by this critic, when the newspaper reached Abbotsford. Sir Walter on seeing it said, "Well, well, since Ballantyne has printed lines at all, I shan't have any corrections made here—I shall write and tell him of *his* blunder, and let the other stand as it is." But mean-time "*Sir Walter Scott's false quantities*" had headed various paragraphs in the newspapers both in Edinburgh and in London; and, strange to say, even the undoubted double blunder of Ballantyne's edition found gallant defenders. A Mr. Lionel Berguer, who, I think, had published some poems, and dedicated them to Scott, was one of these champions: and Sir Walter himself had twice pleaded guilty in the newspapers, before the matter was allowed to rest. It is sufficient to quote the following:—

To the Editor of the Morning Post.

"Abbotsford, Nov. 12, 1824.

"Sir,—As I am a friend to truth, even in trifles, I cannot consent to shelter myself under the classical mantle which Mr. LIONEL BERGUER and some unknown friend have chosen to extend, in their charity, over my faults in prosody. The two lines were written in mere whim, and without the least intention of their being made public. In the first line, the word *jaces* is a mistake of the transcriber, (whoever took that trouble;) the phrase is *dormis*, which I believe is good prosody. The error in the second line, *ad januam*, certainly exists, and I bow to the castigation. I must plead the same apology which was used by the great Dr. JOHNSON, when he misinterpreted a veterinary phrase of ordinary occurrence—"ignorance—pure ignorance" was the cause of my blunder. Forty years ago, longs and shorts were little attended to in Scottish education; and I have, it appears, forgot the little I may then have learned. I have only to add, that I am far from undervaluing any branch of scholarship, because I have not the good fortune to possess it, and heartily wish that those who succeed us may have the benefit of a more accurate classical education than was common in my earlier days.

"The inscription cannot now be altered; but if it remains a memorial of my want of learning, it shall not, in addition, convey any imputation on my candour. I should have been ashamed, at a more stirring time, to ask admission for this plea of guilty; but at present you may think it worth a place in your paper. *Pugna est de paupere regno.*—I remain your obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

The culprit whose sin had brought this controversy on Sir Walter, was not in his vicinity when it

was going on—nor cognisant of it until he had committed himself; and on the same 12th of November, being the Poet's last day at Abbotsford for the long vacation, he indited the following rhymes—which savour of his recent overhauling of Swift and Sheridan's doggrel epistles.

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq., Northumberland Street, Edinburgh.

"Dear John,—I some time ago wrote to inform his
Fat worship of *jaces*, misprinted for *dormis*;
But that several Southrons assured me the *januam*,
Was a twitch to both of ears of Ass Priscian's cranium.
You, perhaps, may observe that one Lionel Berguer,
In defence of our blunder appears a stout arguer:
But at length I have settled, I hope, all these clatters,
By a *row*t in the papers—fine place for such matters.
I have, therefore, to make it for once my command, sir,
That my gudeson shall leave the whole thing in my hand, Sir,
And by no means accomplish what James says you threaten,
Some banter in Blackwood to claim your dog-Latin.
I have various reasons of weight, on my word, sir,
For pronouncing a step of this sort were absurd, sir.
Firstly, erudite sir, 'twas against your advising
I adopted the lines this monstrosity lies in;
For you modestly hinted my English translation
Would become better far such a dignified station.
Second—how, in God's name, would my bacon be saved,
By not having writ what I clearly engraved?
On the contrary, I, on the whole, think it better
To be whipped as the thief, then his lousy resetter.
Thirdly—don't you perceive that I don't care a boddle
Although fifty false metres were flung at my noddle,
For my back is as broad and as hard as Benjomon's,
And I treat as I please both the Greeks and the Romans;
Whereas the said heathens might look rather serious
At a kick on their drum from the scribe of Valerius.
And, fourthly and lastly—it is my good pleasure
To remain the sole source of that murderous measure.
So *stet pro ratione voluntas*—be tractile,
Invade not, I say, my own dear little dactyl;
If you do, you'll occasion a breach in our intercourse:
To-morrow will see me in town for the winter-course,
But not at your door, at the usual hour, sir,
My own pye-house daughter's good prog to devour, sir.
Ergo—peace, on your duty, your squeamishness throttle,
And we'll soothe Priscian's spleen with a canny third bottle.
A fig for all dactyls, a fig for all spondees,
A fig for all dunces and Dominie Grundys;
A fig for dry thrapples, south, north, east, and west, sir,
Speates and raxes* ere five for a famishing guest, sir;
And as Fatsman† and I have same topics for haver, he'll
Be invited, I hope, to meet me and Dame Peveril,
Upon whom, to say nothing of Oury and Anne, you a
Dog shall be deemed if you fasten your *Janua*.

"P. S.—*Hoc joceso*—but I am nevertheless in literal earnest. You incur my serious displeasure if you move ae inch in this contemptible rumpus. So adieu till to-orrow.—Yours affectionately, W. S."

In the course of that November several of the age antique buildings which gave its peculiar character to the Old Town of Edinburgh, perished by fire; and no one, it may be believed, witnessed this demolition with more regret than Sir Walter. He says to Lord Montagu on the 18th,—

My dear Lord,

"Since I came here I have witnessed a horrible calamity. A fire broke out on Monday night in the High Street, raged all night, and great part of the next day, catching to the steeple of the Tron Church, which being wood was soon in a blaze, and burned like regular fireworks till all was consumed. All this while the flames were spreading down to the Cowgate amongst those closes where the narrowness of the access, and the height of the houses, rendered the approach of engines almost impossible. On Tuesday night a *second* fire broke out in the Parliament Square, greatly endangering the Courts of Justice, and the Advocates' more than princely Library. By great exertions it was prevented approaching this public building; and Sir William Forbes' bank also escaped. But all the other houses in the Parliament Square are totally destroyed; and I can conceive no sight more grand or terrible than to see these lofty buildings on fire from top to bottom, vomiting out flames like a volcano from every aperture, and finally crashing down one after another into an abyss of fire, which resembled nothing but hell; for there were vaults of wine and spirits which sent up huge jets of flame, whenever they were called into activity by the fall of these massive fragments. Between the corner of the Parliament Square and the South Bridge all is destroyed, excepting some new buildings at the lower extremity; and the devastation has extended down the closes, which I hope will never be rebuilt on their present, I should say their *late* form. The general distress is, of course, dreadful.—Ever yours,

W. Scott."

CHAPTER LXI.

TALES OF THE CRUSADERS BEGUN—A CHRISTMAS AT ABBOTSFORD, IN EXTRACTS FROM THE MS. JOURNAL OF CAPTAIN BASIL HALL, R. N.—DEC. 29, 1824—JAN. 10, 1825.

During the Winter Session of his Court, Sir Walter resumed his usual course of literary exertion, which the supervision of carpenters, painters, and upholsterers had so long interrupted. The Tales of the Crusaders were begun: but I defer, for the present, the history of their progress.

Abbotsford was at last finished, and in all its splendour; and at Christmas, a larger party than the house could ever before have accommodated, were assembled there. Among the guests was one who kept a copious journal during his stay, and has kindly furnished me with a copy of it. I shall, therefore, extract such passages as bear immediately upon Sir Walter Scott himself, who certainly was never subjected to sharper observation than that of his ingenious friend Captain Basil Hall.

EXTRACTS FROM CAPTAIN HALL'S JOURNAL.

"*Abbotsford December* 29, 1824.

"This morning my brother James and I set out from Edinburgh in the Blucher coach, at eight o'clock, and although we heard of snow-storms on the hills, we bowled along without the smallest impediment, and with a fine bright sun and cheerful green fields around us, with only here and there a distant streak of snow in some shady ravine. We arrived in good time—and found several other guests at dinner. . . . . .

"The public rooms are lighted with oil-gas in a style of extraordinary splendour. The passages, also, and the bedrooms, are lighted in a similar manner. The whole establishment is on the same footing—I mean the attendance and entertainment—all is in good order, and an air of punctuality and method, without any waste or ostentation, pervades every thing. Every one seems at his ease; and although I have been in some big houses in my time, and amongst good folks who studied these sort of points not a little, I don't remember to have any where met with things better managed in all respects.

"Had I a hundred pens, each of which at the same time should separately write down an anecdote, I could not hope to record one half of those which our host, to use Spenser's expression, 'Welled out alway.' To write down one or two, or one or two dozen, would serve no purpose, as they were all appropriate to the moment, and were told with a tone, gesture, and look, suited exactly to the circumstances, but which it is of course impossible in the least degree to describe.

"*Abbotsford, 30th December.*

"This morning Major Stisted, my brother, and I, accompanied Sir Walter Scott on a walk over his

* There is an excellent story (but too long for quotation) in the *Memorie of the Somervilles*, (vol. i. p. 240) about an old Lord of that family, who, when he wished preparations to be made for a feasting at his Castle of Cowthally, used to send on a billet inscribed with this laconic phrase, "*Speates and raxes*,"—i. e. *spits and ranges*. Upon one occasion, Lady Somerville (being newly married, and not yet skilled in her husband's hieroglyphics) read the mandate as *spears* and *jacks*, and sent forth 200 armed horsemen, whose appearance on the moors greatly alarmed Lord Somerville and his guest, who happened to be no less a person than King James III.

† *Fatsman* was one of Mr. James Ballantyne's many *aliases*. Another (to which Constable mostly adhered) was "Mr. Basket"—an allusion to the celebrated printer Baskerville.

grounds, a distance of five or six miles. He led us through his plantations, which are in all stages of advancement, and entertained us all the way with an endless string of anecdotes, more or less characteristic of the scenes we were passing through. Occasionally he repeated snatches of songs, sometimes a whole ballad, and at other times he planted his staff in the ground and related some tale to us, which though not in verse, came like a stream of poetry from his lips. Thus, about the middle of our walk, we had first to cross, and then to wind down the banks of the Huntly-burn, the scene of old Thomas the Rymer's interview with the Queen of the Fairies. Before entering this little glen, he detained us on the heath above till he had related the whole of that romantic story, so that by the time we descended the path, our imaginations were so worked upon by the wild nature of the fiction, and still more by the animation of the narrator, that we felt ourselves treading upon classical ground; and though the day was cold, the path muddy and scarcely passable, owing to the late floods, and the trees all bare, yet I do not remember ever to have seen any place so interesting as the skill of this mighty magician had rendered this narrow ravine, which in any other company would have seemed quite insignificant.

"On reaching an elevated point near a wild mountain lake, from whence we commanded a view of many different parts of his estate, and saw the progress of his improvements, I remarked that it must be interesting to engage in planting. 'Interesting!' he cried; 'You can have no idea of the exquisite delight of a planter—he is like a painter laying on his colours—at every moment he sees his effects coming out. There is no art or occupation comparable to this; it is full of past, present, and future enjoyment. I look back to the time when there was not a tree here, only bare heath: I look round and see thousands of trees growing up, all of which, I may say almost each of which, have received my personal attention. I remember five years ago looking forward, with the most delighted expectation, to this very hour, and as each year has passed, the expectation has gone on increasing. I do the same now; I anticipate what this plantation and that one will presently be, if only taken care of, and there is not a spot of which I do not watch the progress. Unlike building, or even painting, or indeed any other kind of pursuit, this has no end, and is never interrupted, but goes on from day to day, and from year to year, with a perpetually augmenting interest. Farming I hate; what have I to do with fattening and killing beasts, or raising corn only to cut it down, and to wrangle with farmers about prices, and to be constantly at the mercy of the seasons? There can be no such disappointments or annoyances in planting trees.'

"It is impossible to touch for an instant on any theme, but straightway he has an anecdote to fit it. 'What is the name of that bright spot,' I said, 'on which the sun is shining, just there in the line of Cowdenknowes?'—'That,' said he, 'is called *Hazel Cleugh*. I was long puzzled,' he added, 'to find the etymology of this name, and inquired in vain on every hand to discover something suitable. I could learn nothing more than that near the Cleugh there was a spot which tradition said had been a Druidical place of worship. Still this did not help me, and I went on for a long time tormenting myself to no purpose. At length when I was reading very early one fine summer's morning, I accidentally lighted upon a passage in some German book, which stated that Haxa was the old German term for a Druidess.* Here, then, the mystery was solved, and I was so enchanted with the discovery, that I was wild with impatience to tell it to some one; so away I mounted up stairs to my wife's room, where she was lying fast asleep. I was well aware that she neither knew nor cared one jot about the matter; that did not signify—tell it I must immediately to some one; so I roused her up, and although she was very angry at being awakened out of her comfortable doze, I insisted upon bestowing Haxa, and Hazel Cleugh, and all my beautiful discovery of the Druid's temple, upon her, notwithstanding. Now, don't you understand this?' said he, turning to me—'Have not you sometimes on board your ship hit upon something which delighted you, so that you could not rest till you had got hold of some one down whose throat you might cram it—some stupid dolt of a lieutenant, or some gaping midshipman, on whom in point of fact it was totally thrown away?—but still you had the satisfaction of imparting it, without which half the pleasure is lost.'

"Thus we strolled along, borne as it were on this strange stream of song and story. Nothing came amiss to him; the most trivial and commonplace incident, when turned in his hand, acquired a polish and a clearness of the first water. Over all, too, there was breathed an air of benignity and good-will to all men, which was no less striking than the eloquence and point of his narrations. The manner in which he spoke of his neighbours, and of distant persons of whose conduct he disapproved, was all in the same spirit. He did not cloak their faults—he spoke out manfully in contempt of what was wrong; but this was always accompanied by some kindly observation, some reservation in favour of the good they possessed, some natural and proper allowance. I say natural, because I should be giving a wrong impression of the character of his conversation were I to let it be supposed that these excuses or extenuations were mawkishly uttered, or that he acted a part, and as a matter of rule said something in favour even of those he condemned.

. . . . . .

"He is loyal to the back bone, to use a vulgar phrase; but with all this there is nothing servile or merely personal in his loyalty. When the King was coming to Edinburgh, and it was known he was to pass over Waterloo Bridge, a gentleman suggested to him the fitness of concealing or erasing the inscription respecting Prince Leopold* on the arch of the bridge, as it was known there was a coolness between the King and his son-in-law. 'What!' said he, 'shall we insult the King's son-in-law, and through him the King himself, by any allusion to, or notice of, what is so unworthy of all parties? Shall we be ashamed of our own act, and without any diminution of our respect for those to whom the compliment was paid, draw back and eat our words because we have heard of a petty misunderstanding? shall we undo that which our respect for the King and his family alone prompted us, right or wrong, to do? No, sir! sooner than that inscription should be erased, or even covered with flags or flowers, as you propose, or that any thing, in short, should be done to show that we were ashamed of our respect for Prince Leopold, or sought to save the King's feelings by a sacrifice of our own dignity, I would with my own hand set the town of Edinburgh on fire, and destroy it!'

. . . . . .

"In the evening we had a great feast indeed. Sir Walter asked us if we had ever read Christabel, and upon some of us admitting with shame that we had never even seen it, he offered to read it, and took a chair in the midst of all the party in the library. He read the poem from end to end with a wonderful pathos and variety of expression—in some parts his voice was deep and sonorous, at others loud and animated, but all most carefully appropriate, and very sweetly modulated. In his hands, at all events, Christabel justified Lord Byron's often-quizzed character of it—'a wild and singularly original and beautiful poem.'

"Sir Walter also read us, with the utmost delight, or, as it is called, completely *con amore*, the famous poem on Thomas the Rymer's adventure with the Queen of the Fairies; but I am at a loss to say which was the most interesting, or even I will say poetical—his conversational account of it to us today on the very spot, Huntly-burn, or the highly characteristic ballad which he read to us in the evening.†

* *Hexe* is modern German for *witch*.

* Prince Leopold had been present at the opening of this bridge—and the inscription records that circumstance.

† See this ballad in the Border Minstrelsy, vol. iv.

"Interspersed with these various readings were hundreds of stories, some quaint, some pathetical—some wild and fairylike, and not a few warlike, especially of the old times, and now and then one of Wellington and Waterloo; and sometimes he gave anecdotes of things close to his own doors,—ay, and incidents of this very day, which we had passed unseen, but which were now kindled into interest and importance, as if by the touch of a magician's wand.

"There was also much pleasing singing—many old ballads, and many pretending to be old ballads, were sung to the harp and pianoforte. The following is so exquisitely pathetic, that I copied it, after I went to my room, from the young ladies' book, and give it a place, though perhaps it is to be found somewhere in print:—

'My love he built me a bonnie bower,' &c. &c.*

"*Abbotsford*, 31*st December*, 1824.

"The fashion of keeping up old holidays by bonefires and merriment, is surely decreasing. Or is it that we, the recorders of these things, are getting older, and take consequently less interest in what no longer amuses us, so that we may be deceived in supposing the taste of our juniors to be altered, while in fact it is only our own dispositions and habits that are changed in complexion? It may be so—still I suspect that the progress of education, and the new habits of industry, and the more varied and generous objects which have been opened of late years to all classes, have tended greatly to banish those idle ceremonies and jovialities, which I can just recollect in my childhood as being of doubtful pleasure, but which our ancestors describe as being near the summit of their enjoyments. Be this as it may in the eyes of others, I confess, for my part, that your Christmas and New-Years' parties seem generally dull. There are several causes for this: The mere circumstance of being brought together for the express purpose of being merry, acts in opposition to the design in view; no one is pleased on compulsion; then it seldom happens that a party is quite well sorted; and a third reason is, that it will scarcely ever happen that a family circle can be drawn together on two successive years, without betraying to the eye of affection some fatal blanks 'that were not there before.'

"I took notice at supper, as we waited for the moment that was to give birth to a new year, that there was more than one 'unquiet drooping of the eye;' and amidst the constrained hilarity of the hour, I could trace a faltering in some voices, which told distinctly enough to an ear that was watching for it, that however present the smiling cheek and laughing eye might seem to be, the bleeding heart was far away.†

"It is true enough that it is to 'moralize too deeply' to take things in this way, and to conjure up with an ingenuity of self-annoyance these blighting images. So it is, and so I acted; and as *my* heart was light and unloaded with any care, I exerted myself to carry through the ponderous evening—ponderous only because it was one set apart to be light and gay. I danced reels like a wild man, snapped my fingers, and halloed with the best of them, flirted with the young ladies at all hazards—and with the elder ones, of which there was a store, I talked and laughed finely. As a suit of rooms was open, various little knots were formed, and nothing would have been nicer had we been left alone, but we must needs be dancing, singing, playing, jesting, or something or other different from that which we might be naturally disposed to be doing. Wherever the Great Unknown went, indeed, there was a sort of halo of fun and intelligence around him; but his plan of letting all things *bide* was not caught up somehow, and we were *shoved* about more than enough.

"Supper was over just at midnight, and as the clock was striking twelve, we all stood up, after drinking a hearty bumper to the old year, and having joined hands crosswise, each with his right hand seizing his neighbour's left, all joined chorus in an appropriate song by Sir Adam Ferguson, a worthy knight, possessed of infinite drollery. Then followed other toasts of a loyal description, and then a song, a good red-hot Jacobite song *to the King**—a ditty which, a century ago, might have cost the company their heads, or at least their hands—but now it did no more than draw broad smiles of affected apprehension, and that roguish sort of look natural when people are innocently employed in doing what is held to be mischievous, but harms no one.

"Still, still it was ponderous. Not all the humour and miraculous vivacity and readiness of our host could save it—long blank pauses occurred—and then a feeble whisper—but little more, and the roar of a jolly toast subsided into a hollow calm. I dwell upon all this merely to make people consider how useless it is to get up such things nowadays—for if Walter Scott, with all appliances and means to boot—in his noble house—surrounded by his own choice friends—full of health and all he can wish, is unable to exempt a Hogmanay party from the soporific effect proverbially attendant upon manufactured happiness, who else need venture on the experiment! At about one we broke up, and every one seemed rejoiced to be allowed to go about at pleasure: while the horses were putting to, to carry off our numerous company, and shawls were hunting for, people became bright again, and not being called upon to act any part, fell instantly into good-humour; and we had more laughing and true hilarity in the last half hour than in all the evening before. The Author of Waverley himself seemed to feel the reviving influence of freedom, and cruized about from group to group, firing in a shot occasionally to give spirit to what was going on, and then *hauling off* to engage with some other—to show his stores of old armour—his numerous old carved oak cabinets, filled with the strangest things—adder stones of magical power—fairies' rings—pearls of price, and amongst the rest a mourning ring of poor Lord Byron's, securely stowed away in one of the inmost drawers!

"On one of those roving expeditions he pushed his head into the circle of which I happened to make one, and seizing upon some casual analogy, said, 'that reminds me of a story of a fair, fair lady,' &c. All became mute and crowded about him, and he began, in a low, solemn, and very impressive voice, with a sort of mock earnestness which fixed the attention in a wonderful degree, and gave an air of truth and importance to what he was telling, as if it were some material fact which he had to communicate for our serious consideration. 'There was,' said he, 'a very merry party collected in a town in France, and amongst all the gay lords and ladies there assembled, there was none who caused so great a sensation, as a beautiful young lady, who danced, played, and sang in the most exquisite style. There were only two unaccountable circumstances belonging to her—one was, that she never went to church, or attended family prayers; the other, that she always wore a slender black velvet band or girdle round her waist. She was often asked about these peculiarities, but she always evaded the interrogatories, and still by her amiable manners and beauty won all hearts. One evening, in a dance, her partner saw an opportunity of pulling the loop of her little black girdle behind; it fell to the ground, and immediately the lady became pale as a sheet—then gradually shrunk and shrunk—till at length nothing was to be seen in her place but a small heap of gray ashes!' . . . . . .

"I forgot to mention that in the course of a conversation about ghosts, fears in the dark, and such matters, Sir Walter mentioned having once arrived at a country inn, when he was told there was no bed

* See "The Border Widow's Lament," in the Minstrelsy, vol. ii. p. 94.

† The widow and daughters of the poet's brother, Mr. Thomas Scott, were of the party.

* "Here's to the King, boys,
Ye ken wha I mean, boys," &c. &c.
See Hogg's Jacobite Relics.

for him. 'No place to lie down at all?' said he.—'No,' said the people of the house—'None, except a room in which there is a corpse lying.' 'Well,' said he, 'did the person die of any contagious disorder?' 'Oh no—not at all,' said they. 'Well, then,' continued he, 'let me have the other bed.—So,' said Sir Walter, 'I laid me down, and never had a better night's sleep in my life.'

"*Abbotsford, January* 1, 1825.

"Yesterday being Hogmanay there was a constant succession of *Guisards*—*i. e.* boys dressed up in fantastic caps, with their shirts over their jackets, and with wooden swords in their hands. These players acted a sort of scene before us, of which the hero was one Goloshin, who gets killed in a 'battle for love,' but is presently brought to life again by a doctor of the party.

"As may be imagined, the taste of our host is to keep up these old ceremonies. Thus, in the morning, yesterday, I observed crowds of boys and girls coming to the back door, where each one got a penny and an oaten cake. No less than 70 pennies where thus distributed—and very happy the little bodies looked, with their well stored bags.

"People accustomed to the planting of trees are well aware how grateful the rising generations of the forest are to the hand which thins and prunes them. And it makes one often melancholy to see what a destructive sort of waste and retardation goes on by the neglect of young woods—how much beauty is lost—how much wealth is wantonly thrown away, and what an air of sluttishness is given to scenery which, with a very little trouble, might have adorned and embellished, not to say enriched, many a great estate.

"I never saw this mischievous effect of indolence more conspicuously made manifest than in a part of the grounds here. Sir Walter's property on one side is bounded by a belt of fir trees, say twenty yards across. The 'march' runs directly along the centre of this belt, so that one-half of the trees belong to his neighbour, the other to him. The moment he came in possession he set about thinning and pruning the trees, and planting a number of hardwood shoots under the shelter of the firs. In a very short time the effect was evident: the trees, heretofore choked up, had run into scraggy stems, and were sadly stunted in growth; but having now room to breathe and to take exercise, they have shot up in the course of a few years in a wonderful manner, and have set out branches on all sides, while their trunks have gradually lost the walking-stick or hop-pole aspect which they were forced to assume before, and the beeches and oaks and other recent trees are starting up vigorously under the genial influence of their owner's care. Meanwhile, the obstinate, indolent, or ignorant possessor of the other half of the belt has done nothing to his woods for many years, and the growth is apparently at a stand in its original ugliness and uselessness. The trees are none of them above half the height of Sir Walter's, and few, if any, of half the diameter. So very remarkable is the difference, that without the most positive assurances I could not believe it possible that it could have been brought about by mere care in so short a period as five years. The trees on the one side are quite without value, either to make fences or to sell as supports to the coal-pits near Berwick, while Sir Walter already reaps a great profit from the mere thinning out of his plantations. To obtain such results, it will be easily understood that much personal attention is necessary, much method and knowledge of the subject. It happens, however, that in this very attention he finds his chief pleasure—he is a most exact and punctual man of business, and has made it his favourite study to acquire a thorough knowledge of the art.

"His excellent taste in planting has produced a very important effect. In laying out his plantations, he was guided, partly, by a feeling that it was natural and beautiful to follow the 'lie of the ground,' as it is called, and partly by an idea that by leading his young wood along hollows and gentle slopes, he would be taking the surest course to give it shelter. But though he had only the prosperity and picturesqueness of the wood in view, he has also, he finds, added to the value of the adjoining fields that remain unplanted. The person who formerly rented one farm came to him and offered to take the unplanted part again, and to pay the same rent for it as he had paid originally for the whole, although one half of it is now a young forest and effectually enclosed. On Sir Walter's expressing his surprise at this, the man said that, both for growing corn and for the pasture of sheep, the land was infinitely improved in value by the protection which his rising woods and numerous enclosures afforded.

"This will seem still more remarkable when it is mentioned that, whenever circumstances permitted, his best land has been selected for planting trees. 'I have no patience,' he exclaimed, 'with those people who consider that a tree is not to be placed except on a soil where nothing else will grow. Why should the noblest of all vegetables be condemned to the worst soil? After all, it is the most productive policy to give trees every advantage, even in a pecuniary point of view, as I have just shown you. The immediate return in cash is not so great indeed as from wheat, but it is eventually as sure, if matters be properly attended to—and this is all over and above one's great and constantly increasing source of enjoyment in the picturesque beauty which rising woods afford."

"*Abbotsford January* 2, 1825.

"At breakfast to-day we had, as usual, some 150 stories—God knows how they came in, but he is, in the matter of anecdote, what Hudibras was in figures of speech—'his mouth he could not ope—but out there flew a trope'—so with the Great Unknown, his mouth he cannot open without giving out something worth hearing—and all so simply, good-naturedly, and naturally! I quite forget all these stories but one:—'My cousin Watty Scott' (said he) 'was a midshipman some forty years ago in a ship at Portsmouth; he and two other companions had gone on shore, and had overstaid their leave, spent all their money, and run up an immense bill at a tavern on the Point—the ship made the signal for sailing, but their landlady said, "No, gentlemen—you shall not escape without paying your reckoning;"—and she accompanied her words by appropriate actions, and placed them under the tender keeping of a sufficient party of bailiffs. They felt that they were in a scrape, and petitioned very hard to be released; "No, no," said Mrs. Quickly, "I must be satisfied one way or t'other: you must be well aware, gentlemen, that you will be totally ruined if you don't get on board in time." They made long faces, and confessed that it was but too true. "Well," said she, "I'll give you one chance—I am so circumstanced here that I cannot carry on my business as a single woman, and I must contrive somehow to have a husband, or at all events I must be able to produce a marriage certificate; and therefore the only terms on which you shall all three have leave to go on board to-morrow morning is, that one of you consent to marry me. I don't care a d——— which it is, but, by all that's holy, one of you I will have, or else you all three go to jail, and your ship sails without you!" The virago was not to be pacified, and the poor youths, left to themselves, agreed after a time to draw lots, and it happened to fall on my cousin. No time was lost, and off they marched to church, and my poor relative was forthwith spliced. The bride, on returning, gave them a good substantial dinner and several bottles of wine a piece, and having tumbled them into a wherry sent them off. The ship sailed, and the young men religiously adhered to the oath of secrecy they had taken previous to drawing lots. The bride, I should have said, merely wanted to be married, and was the first to propose an eternal separation. Some months after, at Jamaica, a file of papers reached the midshipmen's berth, and Watty, who was observed to be looking over them carelessly, reading an account of

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a robbery and murder at Portsmouth, suddenly jumped up, in his ecstasy forgot his obligation of secresy, and cried out "Thanks be to God, my wife is hanged!"'

"Mixed up with all this fun, Sir Walter has much admirable good sense, and makes many valuable reflections, which are apt sometimes to escape notice from the unpretending manner in which they are introduced. Talking of different professions to-day, and of the universal complaint of each one being overstocked, he observed—'Ay, ay, it is the same in all; we wear our teeth out in the hard drudgery of the outset, and at length when we do get bread to eat—we complain that the crust is hard—so that in neither case are we satisfied.'

"Taking up a book with a pompous dedication to the King, he read the first paragraph, in which the style was inverted in such a manner as scarcely to be intelligible, but yet was so oddly turned as to excite curiosity. 'Now this,' he said, 'is just like a man coming into a room bottom foremost in order to excite attention: he ought to be kicked for his pains.'

"Speaking of books and booksellers, he remarked, that, considered generally, an author might be satisfied if he got one sixth part of the retail price of his book for his share of the profits:—this seems very moderate—but who should have such means of making a right calculation on such a point.

"Some conversation arose about stranger tourist's, and I learned that Sir Walter had at length been very reluctantly obliged to put a stop to the inundation of these people, by sending an intimation to the inns at Melrose and Selkirk to stop them by a message, saying it was not convenient to receive company at Abbotsford, unless their visit had been previously announced and accepted. Before this, the house used to be literally stormed: no less than *sixteen* parties, all uninvited, came in one day—and frequently eight or ten forced themselves in. So that it became impossible for the family to have a moment to themselves. The tourists roved about the house, touched and displaced the armour, and I dare say (though this was not admitted) many and many a set carried off some trophy with them.

"Just as breakfast was concluded to-day he said, 'Ladies and gentlemen, I shall read prayers at eleven, when I expect you all to attend.' He did not treat the subject as if ashamed of it, which some do. He did not say 'those who please may come, and any one who likes may stay away,' as I have often heard. He read the Church of England service, and did it with singular beauty and impressiveness, varying his voice according to the subject; and as the first lesson was from a very poetical part of Isaiah, he kindled up, and read it with a great deal of animation, without, however, overstepping the solemnity of the occasion.

"We had an amusing instance of his playfulness this evening. Something introduced the subject of lions. 'Well,' said he, 'I think it amusing enough to be a lion; what think you, Captain Hall?' 'Oh,' I answered, 'I am always too much flattered by it—and nothing gratifies me more than being made to wag my tail and roar in my small way.' 'That's right,' he said, turning to the company, 'nothing is more diverting than being handed about in that way, and for my part I enjoy it exceedingly; I was once hunted by a well-known lion-catcher, who I found was also in search of Miss O'Neil, and so it chanced that we met together at Highgate or in that neighbourhood, and we were carried out to see some grounds, in the course of which both the lion and lioness found themselves in a place where there was an iron railing all round. "Now," said I, "if you have got a lock there to turn upon us, you have us both for ever, and your fortune is made. You have only to hoist a flag on a pole at the top of the hill and stick up a few bills, saying that you have just caught those two beautiful animals, and in an hour's time you have half the metropolis to see us at a shilling a-head, and we shall roar in grand style—shall we not, Miss O'Neil?"'

"He then laughed much at some lions about town, who disdained being stirred up with a long pole, as every good lion ought to be. 'You and I, Captain Hall, know better, and we enjoy ourselves accordingly in our noble beast capacity—whereas those poor wretches lose all the good things we get—because, forsooth, they must be loved and admired, and made much of for their mere *human* qualities—while we are content with our pretensions as monsters!'

"*Abbotsford, January* 3.

"There has been an immense flood in the Tweed lately, which overflowed its banks, and did a world of mischief, though not quite so great as that at St. Petersburgh. But what is comical, this rise of the river actually set Abbotsford on fire; at least the offices on the *haugh* below the house, where the water rose three feet perpendicular above the floor; and happening to encounter a pile of unslacked lime in the corner of a cow-house, presently set it in a blaze! There was no want of water you may be sure—'too much of water, poor Ophelia'—and no great damage was done. This flood raised the water considerably more than a foot; exactly three inches higher than that of 1812, the highest ever known up to that date.

"A neighbouring laird and his son joined our party yesterday, Mr. Henderson of Eildon Hall, and the proprietor of the well-known hills of that name. His history may amuse you. He was, long ago, clerk of the Cocket at Leith, an office worth £60 a-year, and this was his whole substance. It chanced that Mr. Ramsay, the banker, was in want of a clerk, and said to a friend, 'Do you know any one who writes a good hand, is honest and steady, and who never opens his mouth from one year's end to the other?' 'I know your man exactly,' said the other; and Mr. H. was accordingly made clerk under Mr. Ramsay, with whom he kept up the necessary communication by means of a sort of telegraph, as it is alleged, as Mr. R. had a great dislike to speech. In process of time our hero insinuated himself so completely into the good graces of his patron, that he got a small share in the bank, then a larger, and so on. It happened about this time that the man who had taken Craigleith quarry failed for want of capital; and our friend, the silent clerk of the Cocket, who had the bank under his lee, bought up the contract, and cleared ten thousand a-year for nine or ten years by this one job. So that what with the bank, and sundry other speculations, which all turned out well, he amassed great wealth, and resolved to turn country gentleman.

"One day in company he was making inquiries about land, and a gentleman opposite was so eloquent in praise of Eildon Hall, then in the market, that he was seized with a desire to be the purchaser. 'What is the price?' asked he. 'Why,' said the other, 'I dare say you may get it for forty thousand pounds.' 'Indeed!' said our quarryman, 'I will give that with pleasure—and I authorize you to make the offer.'

"Now, the amusing thing about this transaction is, that the estate in question had been some time advertised for sale for thirty-seven thousand pounds only; thus our worthy friend of the telegraph gave three thousand more for the property than was asked, to the great delight and astonishment of Messrs. Todd and Romanes, the agents for the sale. A fact, by the way, which goes far to support the Lord Chancellor's estimate of a banker's intellects.

"With all this, our taciturn friend makes 'a very decent lord,' is well esteemed in the neighbourhood, and, as he has the discretion now to take good advice, he is likely to do well.

"Sir Adam Ferguson, who is the most humourous man alive, and delights in showing up his neighbour, mentioned to him the other day that the Eildon estate was sadly in want of lime. 'Eh!' said the laird, 'I am much obliged to you for that hint—I am just ruined for want o' hints!'

"At this moment there is a project for making a railway from Berwick to Kelso, as all the world

knows; but the Great Unknown and several other gentlemen are anxious to tail on a branch from Melrose to meet the great one; and as Mr. H., with his long purse, and his willingness to receive hints, is no bad card in the game, he has been brought up to Abbotsford for a week: his taciturnity has long ago fled, and he is now one of the most loquacious Borderers going. Torwoodlee, too, and his son the Skipper, came to breakfast to-day, in order that the whole party might have a consultation before going to the railroad meeting at Melrose. I should suspect that when the Author of Waverley sets his shoulders to any wheel, it must be in a devilish deep slough if it be not lifted out.

"As my brother James was obliged to return to Edinburgh, and I thought that I had staid long enough, we set out from Abbotsford, after luncheon, very reluctantly, for the party had grown upon our esteem very much, and had lately been augmented by the arrival from England of Mr. Lockhart, whom I wished to get acquainted with, and of Captain Scott, the poet's eldest son. The family urged me very much to stay, and I could only get away by making a promise to return for their little dance on Friday evening; so that it is not impossible this journal may have some additions made to it in the same strain."

"*Abbotsford, 7th January*, 1825.

"To-day my sister Fanny and I came here. In the evening there was a dance in honour of Sir Walter Scott's eldest son, who had recently come from Sandhurst College, after having passed through some military examinations with great credit.

"We had a great clan of Scotts. There were no less than nine Scotts of Harden, and ten of other families. There were others besides from the neighbourhood—at least half-a-dozen Fergusons, with the jolly Sir Adam at their head—Lady Ferguson, her niece Miss Jobson, the pretty heiress of Lochore—&c. &c. &c. . . . . .

"The evening passed very merrily, with much spirited dancing; and the supper was extremely cheerful, and quite superior to that of Hogmanay."

"*Abbotsford, 8th January.*

"It is wonderful how many people a house can be made to hold upon occasions such as this; and when, in the course of the morning, the neighbours came to stream off to their respective homes, one stared, like the man in the Arabian Nights who uncorked the genie, thinking how the deuce they ever got in. There were a few who stayed awhile to saunter about the dressed grounds, under the guidance of Sir Walter; but by one or two o'clock, my sister and I found ourselves the only guests left, and on the Great Unknown proposing a walk to a point in his plantations, called Turn-again, we gladly accepted his offer and set out.

"I have never seen him in better spirits, and we accompanied him for several hours with great delight. I observed that, on this occasion, the tone of his innumerable anecdotes was somewhat different from what it had been when James and I, and some other gentlemen, formed his companions. There was then an occasional roughness in the point and matter of the stories; but no trace of this to-day. He was no less humorous, however, and varied than before;—always appropriate, too—in harmony with the occasion, as it were—never lugging in stories by the head and shoulders. It is very difficult, I may say impossible, to give a correct conception of this by mere description. So much consists in the manner and the actual tone and wording of what is said; so much, also, which cannot be imparted, in the surrounding circumstances—the state of the weather—the look of the country—the sound of the wind in the trees close at hand—the view of the distant hills:—all these and a thousand other things produce an effect on the minds of those present which suits them for the reception of the conversation at the moment, and prevents any transfer of the sentiments produced thereby to any one differently circumstanced.

"On reaching the brow of the hill on the eastern side of one of his plantations, we came in sight of Melrose Abbey, on which there was a partial gleam of sunshine lighting up an angle of the ruins. Straightway we had an anecdote of Tom Purdie, his gamekeeper and *factotum*. Tom has been many years with Sir Walter, and being constantly in such company, has insensibly picked up some of the taste and feeling of a higher order. 'When I came here first,' said Tom to the factor's wife, 'I was little better than a beast, and knew nae mair than a cow what was pretty and what was ugly. I was cuif enough to think that the bonniest thing in a country-side was a corn-field enclosed in four stane dykes; but now I ken the difference. Look this way, Mrs. Laidlaw, and I'll show you what the gentlefolks likes. See ye there now the sun glinting on Melrose Abbey? It's no aw bright, nor its no aw shadows neither, but just a bit screed o' light here—and a bit daud o' dark yonder like, and that's what they ca' picturesque; and, indeed, it maun be confessed it is unco bonnie to look at!'

"Sir Walter wished to have a road made through a straight belt of trees which had been planted before he purchased the property, but being obliged to return to Edinburgh, he entrusted it to Tom Purdie, his 'right-hand man.' 'Tom,' said he, 'you must not make this walk straight—neither must it be crooked.' 'Diel, Sir! than what maun it be like?' 'Why, said his master, 'don't you remember when you were a shepherd, Tom, the way in which you dandered hame of an even? You never walked straight to your house, nor did you go much about; now make me just such a walk as you used to take yourself." Accordingly, '*Tom's walk*' is a standing proof of the skill and taste of the *ci-devant* shepherd, as well as of the happy power which his master possesses, in trifles as well as in great affairs, of imparting his ideas to those he wishes to influence. . . .

"In the course of our walk he entertained us much by an account of the origin of the beautiful song of 'Auld Robin Gray.' 'It was written (he said) by Lady Anne Lindsay, now Lady Anne Bernard. She happened to be at a house where she met Miss Suff Johnstone, a well-known person, who played the air, and accompanied it by words of no great delicacy, whatever their antiquity might be; and Lady Anne lamenting that no better words should belong to such a melody, immediately set to work and composed this very pathetic story. Truth, I am sorry to say, obliges me to add that it was a fiction. Robin Gray was her father's gardener, and the idea of the young lover going to sea, which would have been quite out of character here amongst the shepherds, was natural enough where she was then residing, on the coast of Fife. It was long unknown,' he added, 'who the author was; and indeed there was a clergyman on the coast whose conscience was so large, that he took the burden of this matter upon himself, and pleaded guilty to the authorship. About two years ago, I wrote to Lady Anne to know the truth—and she wrote back to say she was certainly the author, but wondered how I could have guessed it, as there was no person alive to whom she had told it. When I mentioned having heard it long ago from a common friend who was dead, she then recollected me, and wrote one of the kindest letters I ever received, saying, she had till now not the smallest idea that I was the little *lame boy* she had known so many years before.'

"I give this anecdote partly from its own interest, and partly for the sake of introducing the unconcerned allusion to his own lameness—which I have heard him mention repeatedly, in the same sort of way, without seemingly caring about it. Once, speaking of the old city wall of Edinburgh (which, by the way, he says was built during the panic caused by the disastrous battle of Flodden Field)—he said it used to be a great *ploy* in his youth to climb the said wall. 'I used often to do it,' he observed, 'notwithstanding my bad foot, which made it no very easy job.'

"On coming to a broad path in the middle of the woods, we took notice of a finger-post, on which

was written, 'The *Rod* to Selkirk.' We made some remark about Tom's orthography, upon which he laughed, and said that that finger-post had gained him great popularity in the neighbourhood. 'I cannot say,' he remarked, 'that I had any such view when I ordered it to be put up. The public road, it is true, is not far off, and this leads through the very centre of my grounds, but I never could bring myself to make that a reason for excluding any person who finds it agreeable or advantageous to take over the hill if he likes. But although my practice in this respect had always been well-known, the actual admission of it, the avowed establishment of it as a sort of right, by sticking up the finger-post, was received as a kind of boon, and I got a world of credit for a thing which had certainly not any popularity for its object. Nevertheless,' he continued, 'I have no scruple in saying that what I did deserved the good people's acknowledgment; and I seriously disapprove of those proprietors who act on a different principle in these matters. Nothing on earth would induce me to put up boards threatening prosecution, or cautioning one's fellow creatures to beware of man-traps and spring-guns. I hold that all such things are not only in the highest degree offensive and hurtful to the feelings of people whom it is every way important to conciliate, but that they are also quite inefficient—and I will venture to say, that not one of my young trees has ever been cut, nor a fence trodden down, or any kind of damage done, in consequence of the free access which all the world has to my place. Round the house, of course, there is a set of walks set apart and kept private for the ladies—but over all the rest of my land any one may rove as he likes. I please myself with the reflection, that many people of taste may be indulging their fancies in these grounds, and I often recollect how much of Burns's inspiration was probably due to his having near him the woods of Ballochmyle to ramble through at his will when he was a ragged callant.'

"He told us of the different periods at which he had planted his grounds. 'I bought this property bit by bit,' he said, 'as accident threw the means of purchase into my hands; I could not lay it all out in a consistent plan, for when I first came here I merely bought a few acres and built a cottage, as a kind of occasional retreat from the bustle of Edinburgh. By degrees, I got another and another farm, until all you now see came to me. If things go on improving at the rate they do in the matter of travelling, I dare say I shall be able to live here all the year round, and come out every day from the Court. At present, I pass about seven months of the year at Abbotsford, but if the projected railway is established, and we have steam-coaches upon it running at twenty miles an hour, it will be merely good exercise to go in to breakfast and come back to dinner.'

"In a hilly country, such as this, one is more dependent upon the taste of one's neighbours than where the surface is flat, for the inequalities bring into view many distant points which one must constantly be wishing to see turned to advantage. Thus it is of consequence to be on such friendly terms with the neighbourhood, especially the proprietors on the opposite side of the river, that they may take one's comfort and pleasure into consideration when they come to plant, or otherwise to embellish their ground. Sir Walter pointed out several different plantations which had been made expressly with a view to the improvement of the prospect from Abbotsford. The owner of one of these estates came over to him one day to point out the line which he had traced with a plough, as the limit of a new plantation, and asked Sir Walter how he liked it, or if he wished any alteration to be made. The Author of Waverley thanked him for his attention, and the two gentlemen climbed the hill above Abbotsford to take the matter into consideration. It was soon seen that, without extending the projected plantation, or diminishing its beauty with reference to the estate on which it was made, a new line might be drawn which would double its apparent magnitude, and greatly enhance the beauty of its form, as seen from Abbotsford. The gentleman was delighted to have an opportunity of obliging the Great well-known Unknown, and cantered back to change the line. The young trees are already giving sufficient evidence of the good taste of the proposer of the change, and it may be said also, of his good sense and his good nature, for, unless he possessed both in an eminent degree, all his gigantic talents would be insufficient to bring round about him the ready hearts and hands of all within his reach. Scott of Gala, for instance, has, out of pure kindness, planted, for a space of several miles, the whole of the opposite bank of the Tweed, and with great pains improved all the lines of his father's planting, solely to please his neighbour, and without any benefit to his own place. His worthy friend, also, of Eildon Hall, he told us to-day, had kindly undertaken, in the same spirit, to plant the base of these two beautiful hills, which, without diminishing their grandeur, will greatly add to their picturesque effect, and, in fact, increase the bold magnificence of their summits.

"'I make not a rule to be on intimate terms,' he told us, 'with all my neighbours—that would be an idle thing to do. Some are good—some not so good, and it would be foolish and ineffectual to treat all with the same cordiality; but to live in harmony with all is quite easy, and surely very pleasant. Some of them may be rough and *gruff* at first, but all men, if kindly used, come about at last, and by going on gently, and never being eager or noisy about what I want, and letting things glide on leisurely, I always find in the end that the object is gained on which I have set my heart, either by exchange or purchase, or by some sort of compromise by which both parties are obliged, and good-will begot, if it did not exist before—strengthened if it did exist'——

"'There, see,' he continued, 'that farm there, at the foot of the hill, is occupied by a respectable enough tenant of mine; I told him I had a great desire for him to try the effect of lime on his land. He said he doubted its success, and could not venture to risk so much money as it would cost. Well, said I, fair enough; but as I wish to have the experiment tried, you shall have the lime for the mere carting; you may send to the place where it is to be bought, and at the term-day you shall strike off the whole value of the lime from the rent due to me. When the day came, my friend the farmer came with his whole rent, which he laid down on the table before me without deduction. How's this, my man, you are to deduct for the lime, you know. Why, Sir Walter, replied he, my conscience will not let me impose on you so far—the lime you recommended me to try, and which but for your suggestion I never would have tried, has produced more than would have purchased the lime half-a-dozen times over, and I cannot think of making a deduction.'

"In this way, by a constant quiet interchange of good offices, he extends his great influence amongst all classes, high and low; and while in the morning, at breakfast-time, he gets a letter from the Duke of Wellington, along with some rare Spanish manuscripts taken at Vittoria*—at mid-day he is gossiping with a farmer's wife, or pruning his young trees cheek by jowl with Tam Purdie—at dinner he is keeping the table merry, over his admirable good cheer, with ten hundred good stories, or discussing railroads, black-faced sheep, and other improvements with Torwoodlee—in the evening he is setting the young folks to dance, or reading some fine old ballad from Percy's Reliques, or some black-letter tome of Border lore, or giving snatches of beautiful songs, or relating anecdotes of chivalry—and ever and anon coming down to modern home life with some good honest practical remark, which sinks irresistibly into the minds of his audience,—and all with such ease and unaffected simplicity as never, perhaps, was seen before in any man so gifted—so qualified to take the loftiest, proudest line at

* About this time the Duke sent Scott some curious documents about the proposed duel between Charles V. and Francis I.

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the head of the literature, the taste, the imagination of the whole world! Who can doubt that, after such a day as I have glanced at, his slumbers must be peaceful, and that remorse is a stranger to his bosom, and that all his renown, all his wealth, and the love of such 'troops of friends,' are trebly gratifying to him, and substantial, from their being purchased at no cost but that of truth and nature.

"Alas for poor Lord Byron, of whom he told us an anecdote to-day, by which it appeared that his immense fame as an author was altogether insufficient to harden him against the darts of calumny or malevolence levelled at his private life. He quoted, with the bitterest despair, to Scott the strong expression of Shakspeare,

'Our pleasant vices are but whips to scourge us;'*

And added, 'I would to God that I could have your peace of mind, Mr. Scott; I would give all I have, all my fame, every thing, to be able to speak on this subject' (that of domestic happiness) 'as you do!'

"Sir Walter describes Lord Byron as being a man of real goodness of heart, and the kindest and best feelings, miserably thrown away by his foolish contempt of public opinion. Instead of being warned or checked by public opposition, it roused him to go on in a worse strain, as if he said, 'Ay, you don't like it—well, you shall have something worse for your pains.' Thus his Lordship, poor fellow, by taking the wrong view, went on from bad to worse, and at every struggle with the public sunk deeper and deeper in their esteem, while he himself became more and more sensitive about their disapprobation. 'Many, many a pleasant hour have I spent with him,' Sir Walter added, 'and I never met a man with nobler feelings, or one who, had he not unfortunately taken the wrong course, might have done more to make himself beloved and respected. A man of eminence in any line, and perhaps a man of great literary eminence especially, is exposed to a thousand eyes which men, not so celebrated, are safe from—and in consequence, right conduct is much more essential to his happiness than to those who are less watched; and I may add, that only by such conduct can the permanence of his real influence over any class be secured. I could not persuade Byron to see it in this light—the more's the pity, for he has had no justice done him.'

"Some one talked of the pains taken to provide the poor with receipts for making good dishes out of their ordinary messes. 'I dislike all such interference,' he said,—'all your domiciliary, kind, impertinent visits—they are all pretty much felt like insults, and do no manner of good; let people go on in their own way, in God's name. How would you like to have a nobleman coming to you to teach you how to dish up your beefsteak into a French kickshaw? And who is there so miserably put to his ways and means, that will endure to have another coming to teach him how to economize and keep his accounts? Let the poor alone in their domestic habits, I pray you; protect them and treat them kindly, of course, and trust them; but let them enjoy in quiet their dish of porridge, and their potatoes and herrings, or whatever it may be—but for any sake don't torment them with your fashionable soups. And take care,' he added, 'not to give them any thing gratis; except when they are under the gripe of immediate *misery*—what *they* think misery—consider it as a sin to do any thing that can tend to make them lose the precious feelings of independence. For my part, I very, very rarely give any thing away. Now, for instance, this pile of branches which has been thinned out this morning, is placed here for sale for the poor people's fires, and I am perfectly certain they are more grateful to me for selling it at the price I do (which, you may be sure, is no great matter,) than if I were to give them ten times the quantity for nothing. Every shilling collected in this and other similar manners, goes to a fund which pays the doctor for his attendance on them when they are sick; and this is my notion of charity.'

"I shall have given a false impression of this great man's character to those who do not know him, if I have left an impression that he is all goodness and forbearance—that there is no acid in his character; for I have heard him several times as sharp as need be, when there was occasion. To-day, for instance, when a recent trial, in which a beautiful actress was concerned, happened to be brought into discussion, he gave his opinion of all the parties with great force and spirit; and when the lady's father's name was mentioned as having connived at his daughter's disgrace, he exclaimed, 'Well, I do not know what I would not give to have one good kick at that infernal rascal—I would give it to him,' said he, drawing his chair back a foot from the table, 'I would give it to him in such style as should send the vagabond out of that window as far as the Tweed. Only, God forgive me,' added he, smiling at his own unwonted impetuosity, and drawing his chair forward quietly to the table, 'only it would be too good a death for the villain; and besides,' said he, his good-humoured manner returning as he spoke, 'it would be a sad pollution to our bonny Tweed to have the drowning of such a thoroughbred miscreant as could sell his daughter's honour!'

"It is interesting to see how all ranks agree to respect our hero, and to treat him with respect at once, and with kindness and familiarity. On high days and holidays, a large blue ensign, such as is worn by ships of war, is displayed at a flag-staff, rising from a round tower built for the purpose at one angle of his garden. The history of this flag is as follows:—

"The 'Old Shipping Smack Company' of Leith, some time ago launched one of the finest vessels they had ever sailed, and called her 'The Walter Scott,' in honour of their countryman. In return for this compliment, he made the Captain a present of a set of flags; which flags you may be sure the noble commander was not shy of displaying to all the world. Now, it so happens that there is a strict order, forbidding all vessels, except King's ships, to hoist any other flag than a red ensign, so that when our gallant smack-skipper chanced to fall in with one of his Majesty's cruizers, he was ordered peremptorily to pull down his blue colours. This was so sore a humiliation, that he refused to obey, and conceiving that he could out-sail the frigate, crowded all sail, and tried to make off with his ensign still flying at his mast-head. The ship-of-war, however, was not to be so satisfied, and hinted as much by dropping a cannon-shot across his fore-foot. Down came the blue ensign, which was accordingly made prize of, and transmitted forthwith to the Lords of the Admiralty, as is usual in such cases of contumely. Their Lordships, in merry mood, and perhaps even in the plenitude of their power, feeling the respect which was due to genius, sent the flag to Abbotsford, and wrote an official letter to Sir Walter, stating the case, and requesting him to have the goodness to give orders to his cruizers in future not to hoist colours appropriated exclusively to the ships of his Majesty. The transaction was creditable to all parties, and he, instead of taking offence,* as a blockhead in his place would have done, immediately sent for his masons, and built him a tower on which to erect his flag—and the first occasion on which it was displayed was the late return of his eldest son from England. . . .

"I have caught the fever of story-telling from contact with this Prince of all Story-tellers! During the riots for the immaculate Queen lately deceased, a report went abroad, it seems, that Abbotsford had been attacked by a mob, its windows broken, and the interior ransacked. 'Ay, ay,' said one of the neighbouring country people, to whom the story was told, 'so there was a great slaughter of

* 'The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us.'—*King Lear.*

* I do not understand how any man could have taken offence under these circumstances. The First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Melville, and the Secretary, Mr. Croker, were both intimate friends of Sir Walter' —and all that passed was, of course, matter of pleasantry.

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people?' 'Na, na,' said his informant, 'there was naebody killed.'—'Weel, then,' said the other, 'depend upon it, it's aw a lee—if Abbotsford is taken by storm, and the Shirra in it, ye'll hae afterwards to tak account o' the killed and wounded, I'se warrant ye!'"

"*Abbotsford, January* 9.

"We saw nothing of the chief till luncheon-time, between one and two, and then only for a few minutes. He had gone out to breakfast, and on his return seemed busy with writing. At dinner he was in great force, and pleasant it was to observe the difference which his powers of conversation undergo by the change from a large to a small party. On Friday when we sat down twenty to dinner, it cost him an effort apparently to keep the ball up at table; but next day, when the company was reduced to his own family, with only two strangers, (Fanny and I,) he appeared delighted to be at home, and expanded with surprising animation, and poured forth his stores of knowledge and fun on all hands. I have never seen any person on more delightful terms with his family than he is. The best proof of this is the ease and confidence with which they all treat him, amounting quite to familiarity. Even the youngest of his nephews and nieces can joke with him, and seem at all times perfectly at ease in his presence—his coming into the room only increases the laugh, and never checks it—he either joins in what is going on, or passes. No one notices him any more than if he were one of themselves. These are things which cannot be got up—no skill can put people at their ease where the disposition does not sincerely co-operate.

"Very probably he has so correct a knowledge of human character in all its varieties, that he may assist by art in giving effect to this naturally kind bent of his disposition, and this he may do without ceasing to be perfectly natural. For instance, he never sits at any particular place at table—but takes his chance, and never goes, as a matter of course, to the top or to the bottom.* Perhaps this and other similar things are accidental, and done without reflection; but at all events, whether designed or not, their effect is to put every one as much at his ease as if a being of a superior order were not present.

"I know no one who takes more delight in the stories of others than he does, or who seems less desirous of occupying the ears of the company. It is true that no one topic can be touched upon, but straightway there flows out a current of appropriate story—and let the anecdote which any one else tells be ever so humorous, its only effect is to elicit from him another, or rather a dozen others, still more in point. Yet, as I am trying to describe this singular man to others who have not seen him, I should be leaving a wrong impression of his style in this respect, were I to omit mentioning that there is nothing in the least like triumph on these occasions, or any apparent wish to excel the last speaker—the new key is struck, as it were, and instantly the instrument discourses most eloquent music—but the thing is done as if he could not help it; and how often is his story suggested by the obvious desire to get the man that has been speaking out of a scrape, either with some of the hearers, or perhaps with his own conscience. 'Are you a sportsman?' he asked me to-day. I said I was not—that I had begun too late in life, and that I did not find shooting in particular at all amusing. 'Well, neither do I,' he observed; 'time has been when I did shoot a good deal, but somehow I never very much liked it. I was never quite at ease when I had knocked down my blackcock, and going to pick him up, he cast back his dying eye with a look of reproach. I don't affect to be more squeamish than my neighbours,—but I am not ashamed to say, that no practice ever reconciled me fully to the cruelty of the affair. At all events, now that I can do as I like without fear of ridicule, I take more pleasure in seeing the birds fly past me unharmed. I don't carry this nicety, however, beyond my own person—as Walter there will take good occasion to testify to-morrow.'

"Apparently fearing that he had become a little too sentimental, he speedily diverted our thoughts by telling us of a friend of his, Mr. Hastings Sands, who went out to shoot for the first time, and after firing away for a whole morning without any success, at length brought down a bird close to the house, and ran up to catch his pheasant, as he supposed—but which, to his horror, he found was a pet parrot, belonging to one of the young ladies. It was flapping its painted plumage, now all dripping with blood—and ejaculating quickly, pretty Poll! pretty Poll! as it expired at the feet of the luckless sportsman—who, between shame and regret, swore that, as it was his first experiment in shooting, it should be his last; and on the spot broke his gun all to pieces, and could never afterwards bear to hear a shot fired.

"But I am forgetting what I hinted at as a very characteristic turn of his good nature. I had mentioned among other reasons why I was not very fond of shooting, that when I missed I was mortified at my want of skill, and that when I saw the bird lying dead at my feet it recalled to my mind a boyish piece of cruelty which I had been guilty of some five-and-twenty or thirty years ago, the recollection of which has been a source of frequent and bitter remorse. It is almost too bad to relate—suffice it that the nest was robbed, the young ones drowned before the mother's eyes, and then she was killed. 'You take it too deeply now,' he said, 'and yet an early circumstance of that kind properly reflected upon is calculated to have the best effect on our character throughout life. I too,' he continued, 'have my story of boyish cruelty, which has often given me the bitterest remorse in my after life; but which I think has carried with it its useful lesson in practice. I saw a dog coming towards me, when I was a boy about the age you describe yourself to have been when you murdered the ox-eye family. What devil tempted me I know not, but I took up a large stone, threw it, and hit the dog. Nevertheless, it had still strength to crawl up to me, and lick my feet kindly, though its leg was broken—it was a poor bitch big with pup.'

"From parrots we got to *corbies*, or ravens, and he told us with infinite humour a story of a certain tame bird of this description, whose constant delight was to do mischief, and to plague all mankind and beastkind. 'A stranger' (he said) 'called one day with a very surly dog, whose habit it was to snarl and bite at every animal save man; and he was consequently the terror and hatred of his own fraternity, and of the whole race of cats, sheep, poultry, and so on. "Maitre Corbeau" seemed to discover the character of the stranger, and from the moment of his arrival determined to play him a trick. I watched him all the while, as I saw clearly that he had a *month's mind*, for some mischief. He first hopped up familiarly to Cato, as if to say, "How d'ye do?" Cato snapped and growled like a bear. Corbie retired with a flutter, saying, "God bless me, what's the matter? I had no idea, my good sir, that I was offending you—I scarcely saw you, I was looking for a worm." By and by he made another studied sort of approach—and when Cato growled he drew off, with an air as if he said, "What the devil is the matter with *you*?—I'm not meddling with you—let *me* alone." Presently the dog became less and less suspicious of Mr. Corbie, and composed himself on the sunny gravel-walk in a fine sleep. Corbie watched his moment, and hopped and hopped quietly till close up, and then leaping on Cato's back, flapped his wings violently, gave one or two severe dabs with his bill, and then flew up to the edge of the cornice over the gateway, and laughed and screamed with joy at the impotent fury of the dog—a human being could not have laughed more naturally—and no man that ever existed could have enjoyed a mischievous joke more completely than our friend Corbie.' . . .

* This seems refining. Sir Walter, like any other gentleman of his standing, might be expected to devolve the labour of carving on one of his sons.

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"*10th January*, 1826.

"The party at Abbotsford breaks up this morning, to the sorrow, I believe, of every member of it. The loadstar of our attraction, accompanied by his sister-in-law, Mrs. Thomas Scott, and her family, sat off for Lord Dalhousie's—and all the others, except Lady Scott and her daughter, who are to follow in a day or two, are streaming off in different directions. Sir Walter seemed as unwilling to leave the country, and return to the bustle of the city, as any schoolboy could have been to go back to his lessons after the holidays. No man perhaps enjoys the country more than he does, and he is said to return to it always with the liveliest relish. It may be asked, if this be so, why he does not give up the town altogether? He might do so, and keep his Sheriffship; but his Clerkship is a thing of more consequence, and that he must lose; and what is far more important still, his constant transactions with the booksellers could never be carried on with convenience, were he permanently settled at a distance from them and their marts. His great purchases of land, his extensive plantations, the crowd of company which he entertains, and the splendid house he has just completed, are all severe pulls on his income—an income, it must be recollected, which is produced not from any fund, but by dint of labour, and from time to time. He is too prudent and sagacious a man not to live within his means; but as yet he cannot have laid by much, and he will have to write a good deal more before he can safely live where he pleases, and as he pleases.

"It becomes a curious question to know when it is that he actually writes these wonderful works which have fixed the attention of the world. Those who live with him, and see him always the idlest man of the company, are at a loss to discover when it is that he finds the means to compose his books. My attention was of course directed this way, and I confess I see no great difficulty about the matter. Even in the country here, where he comes professedly to be idle, I took notice that we never saw him till near ten o'clock in the morning, and, besides this, there were always some odd hours in the day in which he was not to be seen.

"We are apt to wonder at the prodigious quantity which he writes, and to imagine the labour must be commensurate. But, in point of fact, the quantity of mere writing is not very great. It certainly is immense if the quality be taken into view; but if the mere amount of handwriting be considered, it is by no means large. Any clerk in an office would transcribe one of the Waverley Novels, from beginning to end, in a week or ten days—say a fortnight. It is well known, or at least generally, and I have reason to believe truly admitted, that Sir Walter composes his works just as fast as he can write—that the manual labour is all that it costs him, for his thoughts flow spontaneously. He never corrects the press, or if he does so at all, it is very slightly—and in general his works come before the public just as they are written. Now, such being the case, I really have no difficulty in supposing that a couple of hours every day before breakfast may be quite sufficient for all the MS. of Waverley Novels produced in the busiest year since the commencement of the series.

"Since writing the above I have taken the trouble to make a computation, which I think fair to give, whichever way it may be thought to make in the argument.

"In each page of Kenilworth there are, upon an average, 864 letters: in each page of this Journal 777 letters. Now I find that in ten days I have written 120 pages, which would make about 108 pages of Kenilworth; and as there are 320 pages in a volume, it would, at my rate of writing this Journal, cost about 29¼ days for each volume, or say three months for the composition of the whole of that work. No mortal in Abbotsford-house ever learned that I kept a Journal. I was in company all day and all the evening till a late hour—apparently the least occupied of the party; and I will venture to say not absent from the drawing-room one quarter of the time that the Unknown was. I was always down to breakfast before any one else, and often three quarters of an hour before the Author of Kenilworth—always among the very last to go to bed—in short, I would have set the acutest observer at defiance to have discovered when I wrote this Journal—and yet it is written, honestly and fairly, day by day. I don't say it has cost me much labour; but it is surely not too much to suppose that its composition has cost me, an unpractised writer, as much study as Kenilworth has cost the glorious Unknown. I have not had the motive of £6500 to spur me on for my set of volumes; but if I had had such a bribe, in addition to the feelings of good-will for those at home, for whose sole perusal I write this; and if I had had in view, over and above, the literary glory of contributing to the happiness of two thirds of the globe, do you think I would not have written ten times as much, and yet no one should have been able to discover when it was that I had put pen to paper?

"All this assumes Sir Walter Scott to be *the man*. If at a distance there still exist any doubt on the question, there seems to be no longer any in Edinburgh. The whole tenor of Sir Walter's behaviour on the occasion shows him to be the writer; and the single argument of a man of his candour and literary taste never speaking of, or praising works such as these, would alone be sufficient. It would be totally irreconcilable with every part of his character to suppose that he would for an instant take the credit of another's work—and this *silence* is equivalent to the claim.

"It may then be settled that he is certainly the author—but some may ask, why then does he affect any mystery about it? This is easily answered—it saves him completely from a world of flattery and trouble, which he sincerely detests. He never reads the criticisms on his books: this I know from the most unquestionable authority. 'Praise,' he says, 'gives him no pleasure—and censure annoys him.' He is fully satisfied to accept the intense avidity with which his novels are read—the enormous and continued sale of his works, as a sufficient commendation of them; and I can perfectly understand how the complete exemption from all idle flattery addressed to himself personally is a great blessing. Be it remembered that this favour would be bummed into his ears by every stupid wretch whom he met with, as well as by the polite and learned—he would be literally worried to death by praise, since not a blockhead would ever let him pass. As it is, he enjoys all the reputation he would have if his name were on the titlepage, perhaps more; he enjoys all the profit—and he escapes all worry about the matter. There is, no doubt, some little bookselling trick in it too; but this is fair enough; his works are perhaps more talked of, and consequently more sold, than if the author were avowed—but the real cause of the mystery undoubtedly is his love of quiet, which he can thus indulge without the loss of one grain of literary fame, or advantage of any description.

"To conclude—Sir Walter Scott really seems as great as a man as he is as an author; for he is altogether untouched by the applause of the whole civilized world. He is still as simple in his manners, as modest, unassuming, kind, and considerate in his behaviour to all persons, as he was when the world were unaware of his enormous powers. If any man can be said to have a right to be presumptuous in consequence of possessing acknowledged talents far above those of his company, he is this man. But what sagacity and intimate knowledge of human nature does it not display, when a man thus gifted, and thus entitled as it were to assume a higher level, undazzled by such unanimous praise, has steadiness of head enough not to be made giddy, and clearness enough of moral vision to discover that, so far from lessening the admiration which it is admitted he might claim if he pleased, he augments it infinitely by seeming to wave that right altogether! How wisely he acts by mixing familiarly with all men, drawing them in crowds around him, placing

them at their ease within a near view of his excellence, and taking his chance of being more correctly seen, more thoroughly known, and having his merits more heartily acknowledged, than if, with a hundred times even his abilities, he were to trumpet them forth to the world, and to frighten off spectators to a distance by the brazen sound!

"It is, no doubt, in a great measure, to this facility of access, and engaging manner, that his immense popularity is due; but I should hold it very unfair to suppose that he proceeds upon any such calculation. It is far more reasonable to conclude that Providence, in giving him such astonishing powers of pleasing others, should also have gifted him with a heart to understand and value the delight of being beloved as well as wondered at and admired; and we may suppose that he now enjoys a higher pleasure from seeing the happiness which he has given birth to both abroad in the world, and at home by his own fire-side, than any which his readers are conscious of. If a man does act well, it is an idle criticism to investigate the motive with any view of taking exception to that. Those motives which induce to good results, must, in the long run, be good also. A man may be wicked, and yet on a special occasion act virtuously, with a view to deceive and gain under false colours some advantage which his own flag denies him; but this will not do to go on with. Thus it signifies nothing to say that Sir Walter Scott, knowing the envious nature of the world, and the pleasure it has in decrying high merit, and picking holes in the reputation of great men, deports himself as he does, in order to avoid the cavils of his inferiors. Where we find the success so great as in this case, we are quite safe in saying that it is not by rule and compass that the object is gained, but by genuine sentiment and right-mindedness—by the influence of those feelings which prompt men to take pleasure in good and kindly offices—by that judgment which sees through the mists of prejudice and error, finds *some* merit in every man, and makes allowances for the faults and weaknesses of all;—above all, by that admirable self-command which scarcely allows any unfavorable opinion to pass the lips,—the fruit of which is, that by concealing even from himself, as it were, every unkindly emotion, he ceases to feel it. His principle is, by every means, to banish from his mind all angry feelings of every description, and thus to exempt himself both from the pain of disappointment in disputes where he should fail, and from the pain of causing ill-will in cases where he might succeed. In this way he keeps on good terms with all his neighbours, without exception, and when others are disputing about boundaries and all the family of contiguous wrangling, he manages to be the universal friend. Instead of quarrelling with his eminent brother authors, whether poets or novelists (as so many others have done, and now do, to their mutual discomfort and shame), he is in friendly and thoroughly unenvious correspondence with them all. So far from any spark of jealousy being allowed to spring up, his delight is to discover and to foster, and make the most of genius wherever it exists. But the great trial is every day life, and among every-day people: his house is filled with company all the year round, with persons of all ranks—from the highest down to the lowest class that is received at all in society; he is affable alike to them all, makes no effort at display on any occasion, is always gay and friendly, and puts every one at his ease; I consider all else as a trifle compared with the entire simplicity of his manners, and the total apparent unconsciousness of the distinction which is his due. This, indeed, cannot possibly be assumed, but must be the result of the most entire modesty of heart, if I may use such an expression, the purest and most genuine kindness of disposition, which forbids his drawing any comparison to the disadvantage of others. He has been for many years the object of most acute and vigilant observation, and as far as my own opportunities have gone, I must agree with the general report—namely, that on no occasion has he ever betrayed the smallest symptom of vanity or affectation, or insinuated a thought bordering on presumption, or even on a consciousness of his own superiority in any respect whatsoever. Some of his oldest and most intimate friends assert, that he has even of late years become more simple and kindly than ever; that this attention to those about him, and absence of all apparent concern about himself go on, if possible, increasing with his fame and fortune. Surely if Sir Walter Scott be not a happy man, which he seems truly to be, he deserves to be so!"

Thus terminates Captain Hall's Abbotsford Journal; and with his flourish of trumpets I must drop the curtain on a scene and period of unclouded prosperity and splendour. The muffled drum is in prospect.

CHAPTER LXII.

MARRIAGE OF LIEUTENANT WALTER SCOTT—LETTER TO LADY DAVY—PROJECT OF CONSTABLE'S MISCELLANY—TERRY AND THE ADELPHI THEATRE—PUBLICATION OF THE TALES OF THE CRUSADERS—PREPARATIONS FOR THE LIFE OF BUONAPARTE—LETTERS TO MR. TERRY, MRS. WALTER SCOTT, &C.—1825.

With all his acuteness Captain Basil Hall does not seem to have caught any suspicion of the real purpose and meaning of the ball for which he was invited back to Abbotsford on the 9th of January, 1825. That evening was one of the very proudest and happiest in Scott's brilliant existence. Its festivities were held in honour of a young lady, whom the Captain names cursorily among the guests as "the pretty heiress of Lochore." It was known to not a few of the party, and I should have supposed it might have been surmised by the rest, that those halls were displayed for the first time in all their splendour, on an occasion not less interesting to the Poet than the conclusion of a treaty of marriage between the heir of his name and fortunes, and the amiable niece of his friends, Sir Adam and Lady Ferguson. It was the first regular ball given at Abbotsford, and the last. Nay, though twelve years have elapsed, I believe nobody has ever danced under that roof since then. I myself never again saw the whole range of apartments thrown open for the reception of company except once—on the day of Sir Walter's funeral.

The lady's fortune was a handsome one, and her guardians exerted the powers with which they were invested, by requiring that the marriage-contract should settle Abbotsford (with reservation of Sir Walter's own liferent) upon the affianced parties, in the same manner as Lochore. To this condition he gave a ready assent, and the moment he had signed the deed, he exclaimed, "I have now parted with my lands with more pleasure than I ever derived from the acquisition or possession of them; and if I be spared for ten years, I think I may promise to settle as much more again upon these young folks." It was well for himself and his children that his auguries, which failed so miserably as to the matter of worldly wealth, were destined to no disappointment as respected considerations of a higher description. I transcribe one of the letters by which he communicated the happy event to the wide circle of friends, who were sure to sympathize in his feelings of paternal satisfaction.

To the Lady Davy, Grosvenor Street, London.

"Edinburgh, 24th January, 1825.

"My dear Lady Davy.

"As I know the kind interest which you take in your very sincere friend and Scotch cousin, I think you will like to hear that my eldest hope, who, not many years ago, was too bashful to accept your offered salute, and procured me the happiness of a kiss on his account, beside that which I always claim on my own, has, as he has grown older, learned a little better how such favours are to be estimated. In a word, Walter, then an awkward boy, has now turned out a smart young fellow, with good manners, and a fine figure, if a father may judge, standing well with the Horse-Guards, and much master of the scientific part of his profession, retaining at the same time much of the simple honesty of his original character.

ter, though now travelled, and acquainted with courts and camps. Some one of these good qualities, I know not which, or whether it were the united force of the whole, and particularly his proficiency in the attack of strong places, has acquired him the affection and hand of a very sweet and pretty Mrs. Anne Page, who is here as yet known by the name of Miss Jobson of Lochore, which she exchanges next week for that of Mrs. Scott of Abbotsford. It would seem some old flirtation betwixt Walter and her had hung on both their minds, for at the conclusion of a Christmas party we learned the pretty heiress had determined to sing the old tune of—

'Mount and go—mount and make you ready,
Mount and go, and be a soldier's lady.'

Though her fortune be considerable, the favours of the public will enable me to make such settlements as her friends think very adequate. The only impediment has been the poor mother, (a Highland lady of great worth and integrity,) who could not brook parting with the sole object of her care and attention, to resign her to the vicissitudes of a military life, while I necessarily refused to let my son sink into a mere fox-hunting, muirfowl-shooting squire. She has at length been obliged to acquiesce rather than consent—her friends and counsellors being clear-sighted enough to see that her daughter's happiness could scarce be promoted by compelling the girl to break off a mutual attachment, and a match with a young lieutenant of hussars, sure of having a troop very soon, with a good estate in reversion, and as handsome a fellow as ever put his foot in a stirrup. So they succeeded in bringing matters to a bearing, although old Papa has practised the 'profane and unprofitable art of poem-making'—and the youngster wears a pair of formidable mustachios. They are to be quiet at Abbotsford for a few days, and then they go to town to make their necessary purchases of carriage, and so forth; they are to be at my old friend, Miss Dumergue's, and will scarcely see any one; but as I think you will like to call on my dear little Jane, I am sure she will see you, and I know you will be kind and indulgent to her. Here is a long letter when I only meant a line. I think they will be in London about the end of February, or beginning of March, and go from thence to Ireland, Walter's leave of absence being short. My kindest compliments to Sir Humphry, and pray acquaint him of this change in our family, which opens to me another vista in the dark distance of futurity, which, unless the lady had what Sir Hugh Evans calls *good gifts*, could scarce otherwise have happened during my lifetime—at least without either imprudence on Walter's part, or restrictions of habits of hospitality and comfort on my own.—Always, dear Lady Davy, your affectionate and respectful friend and cousin,

WALTER SCOTT."

The marriage took place at Edinburgh on the 3d day of February, and when the young couple left Abbotsford two or three weeks afterwards, Sir Walter promised to visit them at their regimental quarters in Ireland in the course of the summer. Before he fulfilled that purpose he had the additional pleasure of seeing his son gazetted as Captain in the King's Hussars—a step for which Sir Walter advanced the large sum of £3500. Some other incidents will be gathered from his letters to his son and daughter-in-law—of which, however, I give such copious extracts chiefly for the illustration they afford of his truly paternal tenderness for the young lady who had just been admitted into his family—and which she, from the first hour of their connexion to the last, repaid by a filial love and devotedness that formed one of the sweetest drops in his cup of life.

To Mrs. Walter Scott, Dublin.

"Abbotsford, March 20, 1825.

"My dearest Child,

"I had the great pleasure of receiving your kind and attentive letter from London a few days later than I ought to have done, because it was lying here while I was absent on a little excursion, of which I have to give a most interesting account. Believe me, my love, I am VERY grateful for the time you bestow on me, and that you cannot give so great happiness to any one as to me by saying you are well and happy. My daughters, who deserve all the affection a father can bestow, are both near me, and in safe guardianship, the one under the charge of a most affectionate husband, and the other under the eye of her parents. For my sons, I have taught them, and what was more difficult, I have taught myself the philosophy, that for their own sake and their necessary advancement in life, their absences from my house must be long, and their visits short: and as they are both, I hope, able to conduct themselves wisely and honourably, I have learned to be contented to hope the best, without making myself or them uneasy by fruitless anxiety. But for YOU, my dear Jane, who have come among us with such generous and confiding affection, my stoicism must excuse me if I am more anxious than becomes either a philosopher or a hackneyed man of the world, who uses in common cases to take that world as it goes. I cannot help worrying myself with the question, whether the object of such constant and affectionate care may not feel less happy than I could wish her in scenes which must be so new, and under privations which must be felt by you the more that your earlier life has been an entire stranger to them. I know Walter's care and affection will soften and avert these as much as possible, and if there be any thing in the power of old papa to assist him in the matter, you will make him most happy by tasking that power to the utmost. I wrote to him yesterday that he might proceed in bargain for the troop, and send me the terms that I might provide the needful, as mercantile folks call it, in time and place suitable. The rank of Captain gives, I am aware, a degree of consideration which is worth paying for; and what is still more, my little Jane, as a Captain's lady, takes better accommodation every way than is given to a subaltern's. So we must get the troop by all means, *coute qui coute*.

"Now I will plague you with no more business; but give you an account of myself in the manner of Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck, if ever you heard of such a person. You must suppose that you are busy with your work, and that I am telling you some long story or other, and that you now and then look round and say *eh*, as you do when you are startled by a question or an assertion—it is not quite *eh* neither, but just a little quiet interjection, which shows you are attending. You see what a close observer papa is of his child.

"Well then, when, as I calculate; (as a Yankee would say,) you were tossing on the waves of the Irish Channel, I was also tossing on the Vadum Scotticum of Ptolemy, on my return from the celebrated *Urbs Orrea* of Tacitus. 'Eh,' says Jane; 'Lord, Walter, what can the old gentleman mean?'—'*Weiss nichts davon*,' says the hussar, taking his cigar from under his moustaches, (no, I beg pardon, he does not take out the cigar, because, from the last advices, he has used none in his London journey.) He says *weiss nichts*, however, which is, in Italian, *No so*—in French, *Je ne'n scais rien*—in broad Scotch, *I neither ken nor care*—Well—you ask Mr. Edgeworth, or the chaplain of the regiment, or the first scholar you come by—that is to say, you don't attempt to pronounce the hieroglyphical word, but you fold down the letter just at the place, show the talismanic *Urbs Orrea* and no more, and ask him in which corner of the earth Sir Walter can have been wandering? So, after a moment's recollection, he tells you that the great Roman general, Agricola, was strangely put to his trumps at the *Urbs Orrea* during his campaign in Caledonia, and that the ninth legion was surprised there by the British and nearly destroyed; then he gets a county history and a Tacitus, and Sir Robert Sibbald's Tracts, and begins to fish about, and finds at length that the *Urbs Orrea* is situated in the kingdom of Fife*—that it is now called Lochore—that it belongs to the Lochores—the De Vallences—the Wardlaws—the Malcolms—and Lord knows whom in succession—and then, in a sheet wet from the press, he finds it is now the property of a pretty and accomplished young lady, who, in an unthrift generosity, has given it—with a much more valuable present, namely, *her own self*—to a lieutenant of hussars. So there the scholar shuts his book, and observes that as there are many cairns and tumuli and other memorials upon the scene of action, he wonders whether Sir Walter had not the curiosity to open some of them. 'Now heaven forbid,' says Jane; 'I think the old knight has stock enough for boring one with his old Border ballads and battles, without raising the bones of men who have slept 1000 years quietly on my own estate to assist him.' Then I can keep silence no longer, but speak in my own proper person. 'Pray do you not bore me, Mrs. Jane, and have not I a right to retaliate?'—'*Eh*,' says the Lady of Lochore, 'how is it possible I should bore you, and so many hundred miles between us?'—'That's the very reason,' says the Laird of Abbotsford, 'for if you were near me the thing would be impossible—but being, as you say, at so many hundred miles distant, I am always thinking about you, and asking myself an hundred questions which I cannot answer; for instance, I cannot go about my little improvements without teasing myself with thinking whether Jane would like the green-house larger or less—and whether Jane would like such line of walk, or such

* According to the general creed (out of the "Kingdom of Fife," that is to say)—Mr. Oldbuck was quite wrong as to the identification of this *prætorium*.

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another—and whether that stile is not too high for Jane to step over.' 'Dear papa,' says Jane, '*your own style* is really too high for my comprehension.'

"Well then, I am the most indulgent papa in the world, and so you see I have turned over a new leaf. The plain sense of all this rambling stuff, which escapes from my pen as it would from my tongue, is that I have visited for a day, with Isaac Bayley,* your dominions of Lochore, and was excellently entertained and as happy as I could be, where every thing was putting me in mind that she was absent whom I could most have wished present. It felt, somehow, like an intrusion; and as if it was not quite right that I should be in Jane's house, while Jane herself was amongst strangers; this is the sort of false colouring which imagination gives to events and circumstances. Well, but I was much pleased with all I saw, and particularly with the high order Mr. Bayley has put every thing in'o; and I climbed Bennarty like a wild goat, and scrambled through the old crags like a wild-cat, and pranced through your pastures like a wild-buck, (fat enough to be in season though,) and squattered through your drains like a wild-duck, and had nearly lost myself in your morasses like the ninth legion, and visited the old castle, which is *not* a *stupit place*, and in short, wandered from Dan to Beersheba, and tired myself as effectually in your dominions as I did you in mine upon a certain walk to the Rhymer's Glen. I had the offer of your pony, but the weather being too cold, I preferred walking; a cheerful little old gentleman, Mr. Burrell, and Mr. Gray the clergyman, dined with us, and your health was not forgotten. On my retreat (Border fashion) I brought away your pony and the little chaise, believing that both will be better under Peter Mathieson's charge than at Lochore, in case of its being let to strangers. Don't you think Jane's pony will be taken care of?

"The day we arrived the weather was gloomy and rainy, the climate sorrowful for your absence, I suppose; the next, a fine sunny frost; the third, when I came off, so checkered with hail showers, as to prevent a visit I had meditated to two very interesting persons in the neighbourhood. 'The Chief Commissioner and Charles Adam, I suppose?'—'Not a bit, guess again.'—'O, Mr. Beaton of Contal, or Mr. Sym of Blair?'—'Not a bit, guess again.'—'I won't guess any more.'—Well, then, it was two honest gentlemen hewn in stone—some of the old knights of Lochore, who were described to me as lying under your gallery in the kirk; but as I had no reason to expect a warm reception from them, I put off my visit till some more genial season.

"This puts me in mind of Warwick unvisited, and of my stupidity in not letting you know that the church is as well worth seeing as the castle, and you might have seen that, notwithstanding the badness of the morning. All the tombs of the mighty Beauchamps and Nevilles are to be seen there, in the most magnificent style of Gothic display, and in high preservation. However, this will be for another day, and you must comfort yourself that life has something still to show.

"I trust you will soon find yourself at Edgeworthstown, where I know you will be received with open arms, for Miss Edgeworth's kindness is equal to her distinguished talents.

"I am glad you like my old acquaintance, Mathews. Some day I will make him show his talent for your amusement in private; for I know him well. It is very odd, he is often subject to fits of deep melancholy.

"This is a letter of formidable length, but our bargain is, long or short, just as the humour chances to be, and you are never to mend a pen, or think upon a sentence, but write whatever comes readiest. My love to Walter. I am rather anxious to know if he has got his horses well over, and whether all his luggage has come safe. I am glad you have got a carriage to your mind; it is the best economy to get a good one at once. Above all, I shall be anxious to hear how you like the society of the ladies of the 15th. I know my Jane's quiet prudence and good sense will save her from the risk of making sudden intimacies, and induce her to consider for a little while which of her new companions may suit her best; in the meanwhile being civil to all.

"You see that I make no apology for writing silly letters; and why should you think that I can think yours stupid? There is not a *stupit* bit about them, nor any word, or so much as a comma, that is not interesting to me. Lady Scott and Anne send their kindest love to you, and grateful compliments to Mrs. Edgeworth, Miss Edgeworth, our friend Miss Harriet, and all the family at Edgeworthstown. *Buona notte amata bene.* Good-night, darling, and take good care of yourself.—I always remain your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT.

* A cousin of the young lady, and the legal manager of her affairs.

P. S.—They say a man's fortune depends on a wife's pleasure. I do not know how that may be; but I believe a lady's comfort depends much on her *fille-de-chambre*, and therefore beg to know how Rebecca discharges her office."

To Mrs. Walter Scott, Edgeworthstown, Ireland.

"Abbotsford, March 23, 1825.

"My dearest Jane,

"I am afraid you will think me a merciless correspondent, assailing you with so close a fire of letters; but having a frank, I thought it as well to send you an epistle, though it can contain nothing more of interest excepting that we are all well. I can, however, add more particularly than formerly, that I learn from Mrs. Bayley that Mrs. Jobson's health is not only good, but her spirits are remarkably so, so as to give the greatest pleasure to all friends. I can see, I think, a very good reason for this; for, after the pain of the first separation from so dear an object, and after having brought her mind to believe that your present situation presented to you a fair chance for happiness, I can easily suppose that her maternal anxiety is greatly relieved from fears and apprehensions which formerly distressed her. Nothing can be more kind and more handsome than the way in which Mrs. Jobson speaks of Walter, which I mention, because it gives me sincere pleasure, and will, I am sure, afford the same to you, or rather much more.

"My troops here are sadly diminished. I have only Anne to parade for her morning walk, and to domineer over for going in thin slippers and silk stockings through dirty paths, and in lace veils through bushes and thorn brakes. I think Jane sometimes came in for a share of the lectures on these occasions. So I walk my solitary round—generally speaking—look after my labourers, and hear them regularly enquire, 'If I have heard from the Captain and his Leddy?' I wish I could answer them—*yes*; but have no reason to be impatient. This is the 23d, and I suppose Walter will be at Cork this evening to join the 15th, and that you are safe at Edgeworthstown to spend your first short term of widowhood. I hope the necessary hospitality to his mess will not occasion his dissipating too much; for, to be a very strong young man, I know no one with whom what is called hard living agrees so ill. A happy change in the manners of the times fortunately renders such abuse of the good creature, wine, much less frequent and less fashionable than it was in my days and Sir Adam's. Drinking is not now the vice of the times, whatever vices and follies they may have adopted in its stead.

"I had proceeded thus far in my valuable communication, when, lo! I was alarmed by the entrance of that terrific animal a two-legged boar—one of the largest size and most tremendous powers. By the way, I learned, from no less an authority than George Canning, what my own experience has since made good, that an efficient bore must always have something respectable about him, otherwise no one would permit him to exercise his occupation. He must be, for example, a very rich man (which, perhaps, gives the greatest privilege of all)—or he must be a man of rank and condition too important to be treated *sans ceremonie*—or a man of learning (often a dreadful bore)—or of talents undoubted, or of high pretensions to wisdom and experience—or a great traveller; —in short he must have some tangible privilege to sanction his profession. Without something of this kind, one would treat a bore as you do a vagrant mendicant, and send him off to the workhouse if he presumed to annoy you. But when properly qualified, the bore is more like a beggar with a badge and pass from his parish, which entitles him to disturb you with his importunity whether you will or no. Now, my bore is a complete gentleman and an old friend, but, unhappily for those who know him, master of all Joe Miller's stories of sailors and Irishmen, and full of quotations from the classics as hackneyed as the post-horses of Melrose. There was no remedy; I must either stand his shot within doors, or turn out with him for a long walk, and, for the sake of elbow-room, I preferred the last. Imagine an old gentleman, who has been handsome, and has still that sort of pretension which leads him to wear tight pantaloons and a smart half-boot, neatly adapted to show off his leg; suppose him as upright and as straight as a poker, if the poker's head had been, by some accident, been bent to one side; add to this, that he is a dogged Whig; consider that I was writing to Jane, and desired not to be interrupted by much more entertaining society—well, I was *had*, however—fairly caught—and out we sallied, to make the best we could of each other. I felt a sort of necessity to ask him to dinner; but the invitation, like Macbeth's *amen*, stuck in my throat. For the first hour he got the lead, and kept it; but opportunities always occur to an able general, if he knows how to make use of them.

In an evil hour for him, and a happy one for me, he started the topic of our intended railroad; *there* I was a match for him, having had, on Tuesday last, a meeting with Harden, the two Torwoodlees, and the engineer, on this subject, so that I had at my finger-end every *cut*, every lift, every degree of elevation or depression, every pass in the country, and every possible means of crossing them. So I kept the whip-hand of him completely, and never permitted him to get off the railway again to his own ground. In short, so thoroughly did I bore my bore, that he sickened and gave in, taking a short leave of me. Seeing him in full retreat, I *then* ventured to make the civil offer of a dinner. But the railroad had been breakfast, luncheon, dinner and supper to boot—he hastily excused himself, and left me at double quick-time, sick of railroads, I dare say, for six months to come. But I must not forget that I am perhaps abusing the privilege I have to bore you, being that of your affectionate papa.

"How nicely we could manage without the said railroad, now the great hobby of our Teviotdale lairds, if we could by any process of conjuration waft to Abbotsford some of the coal and lime from Lochore—though if I were to wish for such impossibilities, I would rather desire Prince Houssein's tapestry in the Arabian Nights to bring Walter and Jane to us now and then, than I would wish for 'Fife and all the lands about it.'"

"By the by, Jane, after all, though she looks so demure, is a very sly girl, and keeps her accomplishments to herself. You would not talk with me about planting and laying out ground; and yet, from what you had been doing at Lochore, I see what a pretty turn you have for these matters. I wish you were here to advise me about the little pond which we passed, where, if you remember, there is a new cottage built. I intend to plant it with aquatic trees, willows, alders, poplars, and so forth—and put trouts and perches into the water—and have a preserve of wild ducks on the pond, with Canadian geese and some other water-fowl. I am to get some eggs from Lord Traquair of a curious species of half-reclaimed wild ducks, which abound near his solitary old chateau, and no where else in Scotland that I know of; and I can get the Canadian geese, curious painted animals, that look as if they had flown out of a figured Chinese paper, from Mr. Murray of Broughton. The foolish folks, when I was absent, chose to improve on my plan by making an island in the pond, which is exactly the size and shape of a Stilton cheese. It will be useful, however, for the fowl to breed in.

"Mamma drove out your pony and carriage to-day. She was (twenty years ago,) the best *lady-whip* in Edinburgh, and was delighted to find that she retained her dexterity. I hope she will continue to exercise the rein and whip now and then, as her health is much improved by moderate exercise.

"Adieu, my dear Jane. Mamma and Anne join in the kindest love and best wishes. I please myself with the idea that I shall have heard you are well and happy long before this reaches you.—Believe me always your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT.

"I hope you will take my good example, and write without caring or thinking either what you have got to say, or in what words you say it."

To Walter Scott, Esq., &c. &c. Barracks, Cork.

"Abbotsford, 4th April, 1825.

"My dear Children,

"I received your joint composition without a date, but which circumstances enabled me to fix it as written upon the 24th or 25th March. I am very sorry on Jane's account for the unpleasant necessity of night journeys, and the inconvenience of bad quarters. I almost wish you had stuck by your original plan of leaving Jane at Edgeworthstown. As for you, Mr. Walter I do not grudge your being obliged to pay a little deference to the wig and gown. *Cedant arma togæ* is a lesson well taught at an assize. But although you, thanks to the discipline of the most excellent of fathers, have been taught not to feel greatly the inconvenience of night journeys or bad lodgings, yet, my poor Jane, who has not had these advantages, must, I fear, feel very uncomfortable; and I hope you will lay your plans so that she shall be exposed to them as little as possible. I like old songs, and I like to hear Jane sing them; but I would not like that she had cause to sing,

'Oh but I'm weary with wandering,
Oh but my fortunes are bad;
It sets not a gentle young lady
To follow a sodger lad.'

But against the recurrence of these inconveniences I am sure Walter will provide as well as he can. I hope you have delivered your introduction to Mrs. Scott (or Harden's) friend in the neighbourhood of Cork. Good introductions should never be neglected, though numerous ones are rather a bore. A lady's society, especially when entering on life, should be, as they are said to choose their liquor, little but good; and Mrs. Scott being really a woman of fashion, a character not quite so frequent in reality as aspire to—and being, besides, such an old friend of yours, is likely to introduce you to valuable and creditable society.

"We had a visit from Lockhart yesterday. He rode out on Saturday with a friend, and they dined here, remained Sunday, and left us this morning early. I feel obliged to him for going immediately to Mrs. Jobson's when the explosion took place so near her in my friend Colin Mackenzie's premises.* She had experienced no inconvenience but the immediate fright, for the shock was tremendous—and was rather proud of the substantial capacity of the house, which had not a pane broken, when many of the adjoining tenements scarce had one left.

"We have had our share of casualties. Sibyl came down with me, but without any injury; but Tom Purdie being sent on some business by Mr. Laidlaw, she fell with him, and rolled over him, and bruised him very much. This is rather too bad, so I shall be on the *qui vive* for a pony, my neck being rather precious.

"Touching Colonel Thwack-well,† of whom I know nothing but the name, which would bespeak him a strict disciplinarian, I suppose you are now arrived at that time of life you can take your ground from your observation, without being influenced by the sort of cabal which often exists in our army, especially in the corps where the officers are men of fortunes or expectations, against a commanding officers. The execution of their duty is not *always* popular with young men, who may like the dress and show of a regimental officer; and it often happens that a little pettishness on the one side begets a little repulsiveness of manner on the other, so that it becomes the question how the one shall command, and the other obey, in the way most disagreeable to the other, without a tangible infringement of rules. This is the shame of our army, and in a greater degree that of our navy. A humble and reflecting man keeps as much aloof as possible from such feuds. You have seen the world more than when you joined the 18th.

"The Catholic question seems likely to be carried at last. I hope, though I doubt it a little, that Ireland will be the quieter, and the people more happy. I suspect, however, that it is laying a plaster to the foot while the head aches, and that the fault is in the landholders' extreme exactions, not in the disabilities of the Catholics, or any more remote cause.

"My dear Jane, pray take care of yourself, and write me soon how you are and what you are doing. I hope it will contain a more pleasant account of your travels than the last. Mamma and Anne send best loves. I hope my various letters have all come to your hand, and am, my dear children, always your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Walter Scott, Esq., Lieutenant, 15th Hussars, Barracks, Dublin.

"Abbotsford, 27th April, 1825.

"My dear Walter,

"I received to-day your interesting communication, and have written to Edinburgh to remit the price of this troop as soon as possible. I can make this out without troubling Mr. Bayley; but it will pare my nails short for the summer, and I fear prevent my paying your carriage, as I had intended.

"Nicol is certainly going to sell Faldonside.‡ The Nabal asks £40,000,—at least £5000 too much. Yet in the present low rate of money, and general thirst for land, there is no saying but he may get a fool to offer him his price, or near it. I should like to know your views about this matter, as it is more your concern than mine, since you will, I hope, have a much longer date of it. I think I could work it all off during my life, and also improve the estate highly; but then it is always a heavy burden, and I would not like to undertake it, unless I was sure that Jane and you desired such an augmentation of territory. I do not mean to do any thing hasty, but, as an opportunity may cast up suddenly, I should like to know your mind.

"I conclude, this being 27th April, that you are all snugly settled in Dublin. I am a little afraid of the gale-

* A song of Dr. Blacklock's.

* This alludes to an explosion of gas in Shandwick Place, Edinburgh.

† Sir Walter had misread, or chose to miswrite, the name of his son's new commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel *Thackwell*.

‡ See *ante*, Vol. iv. p. 302.

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ties for Jane, and hope she will be gay moderately that she may be gay long. The frequent habit of late hours is always detrimental to health, and sometimes has consequences which last for life. *Avis au lecteur*; of course I do not expect you to shut yourselves up at your period of life. Your course gaiety at Cork reminds me of Jack Johnstone's song—

'Then we'll visit the Callaghans, Brallaghans,
Nowlans, and Dowlans likewise,
And bother them all with the beauty
Which streams from my Judy's (or Jeanie's) black eyes.'

"We have better accounts of little Johnnie of late—his cough is over for the present, and the learned cannot settle whether it has been the hooping-cough or no. Sophia talks of taking him to Germiston. Lockhart comes here for the Circuit, and I expect him to-morrow.

"Sir Adam and Lady Ferguson bring most excellent accounts of Mrs. Jobson's good health and spirits. Sir Henry Jardine (he writes himself no less now) hath had the dignity of knighthood inflicted on him. Mamma and Anne join in kind love. I expect a long letter from Jane one of these days soon; she whites too well not to write with ease to herself, and therefore I am resolved her talent shall not be idle, if a little jogging can prevail on her to exercise it.

"You have never said a word of your horses, nor how you have come on with your domestics, those necessary plagues of our life. Two or three days since, that cub of Sir Adam's chose to amuse himself with flinging crackers about the hall here when we were at dinner. I think I gave him a proper jobation.

"Here is the first wet day we have had—very welcome, as the earth required it much, and the season was backward. I can hear Bogie whistling for joy.

"Your affectionate father,
WALTER SCOTT."

In May 1825, Sir Walter's friend Terry, and his able, brother comedian, Mr. Frederick Yates, entered on a negotiation, which terminated, in July, in their becoming joint lessees and managers of the Adelphi Theatre, London. Terry requested Scott and Ballantyne to assist him on this occasion by some advance of money, or if that should be inconvenient, by the use of their credit. They were both very anxious to serve him, but Sir Walter had a poor opinion of speculations in theatrical property, and, moreover, entertained suspicions, too well justified by the result, that Terry was not much qualified for conducting the pecuniary part of such a business. Ultimately Ballantyne, who shared these scruples, became Terry's security for a considerable sum (I think £500,) and Sir Walter pledged his credit in like manner to the extent of £1200. He had, in the sequel, to pay off both this sum and that for which Ballantyne had engaged.

Several letters were interchanged before Terry received the support he had requested from his Scotch friends; and I must extract two of Sir Walter's The first is, in my opinion, when considered with reference to the time at which it was written, and the then near though unforeseen result of the writer's own commercial speculations, as remarkable a document as was ever penned. It is, moreover, full of shrewd and curious suggestions touching theatrical affairs in general—from the highest to the lowest. The second is, at least, a specimen of friendly caution and delicate advice most inimitably characteristic of Scott.

To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.

"Edinburgh, May 5th, 1825.

"My Dear Terry,

"I received your long confidential letter; and as the matter is in every respect important, I have given it my anxious consideration. The plot is a good plot, and the friends, though I know them only by your report, are, I doubt not, good friends, and full of expectation. There are, however, two particulars unfavourable to all theatrical speculations, and of which you are probably better aware than I am. The first is, that every scheme depending on public caprice must be irregular in its returns. I remember John Kemble, complaining to me of Harry Siddons' anxious and hypochondriac fears about his Edinburgh concern, said, 'He does not consider that no theatre whatever can be considered as a regular source of income, but must be viewed as a lottery, at one time strikingly successful, at another a total failure.' Now this affects your scheme in two ways. First, you can hardly expect, I fear, your returns to be so regular every season, even though your calculation be just as to the recent average. And, secondly, you must secure some fund, either of money or credit, to meet those blanks and bad seasons which must occassionally occur. The best business is ruined when it becomes pinched for money, and gets into the circle of discounting bills, and buying necessary articles at high prices and of inferior quality, for the sake of long credit. I own your plan would have appeared to me more solid, though less splendid, if Mr. Jones, or any other monied man, had retained one-half or one-third of the adventure; for every speculation requires a certain command of money, and cannot be conducted with any plausibility upon credit alone. It is easy to make it feasible on paper, but the times of payment arrive to a certainty. Those of supply are less certain, and cannot be made to meet the demands with the same accuracy. A month's difference between demand and receipt makes loss of credit; loss of credit is in such a case ruin. I would advise you and Mr. Yates to consider this, and sacrifice some view of profit to obtain stability by the assistance of some monied man—a class of whom many are in your great city just gaping for such an opportunity to lay out cash to advantage. This difficulty, the want of solid cash, is an obstacle to all attempts whatsoever; but there is something, it would seem, peculiarly difficult in managing a theatre. All who practise the fine arts in any department are, from the very temperament necessary to success, more irritable, jealous, and capricious than other man made up of heavier elements; but the jealousy among players is signally active, because their very persons are brought into direct comparison, and from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot they are pitted by the public in express rivalry against each other. Besides, greatly as the profession has risen in character of late years, theatrical talent must still be found frequently allied with imperfect general education, low habits, and sometimes the follies and vices which arise out of them. All this makes, I should think, a theatre very difficult to manage, and liable to sudden checks when your cattle *jibb* or do not work kindly. I think you have much of the talent to manage this; and bating a little indolence, which you can always conquer when you have a mind and a motive, I know no one whose taste, temper, and good sense make him more likely to gain and secure the necessary influence over the performers. But *il faut de l'argent*—you must be careful in your situation, that a check shall not throw you on the breakers, and for this there is no remedy but a handsome provision of the blunt. This is the second particular, I think, unfavourable to undertakings of a theatrical description, and against which I would wish to see you guarded by a more ample fund than your plan involves.

"You have of course ascertained from the books of the theatre that the returns of receipts are correct; but I see no provision made for wear and tear of stock, expense of getting up new pieces, &c. which, in such an undertaking, must be considerable. Perhaps it is included in the charge of £35 per night; but if not, it seems to me that it will materially alter your calculations for the worse, for you are naturally disposed to be liberal in such expenses, and the public will expect it. Without baits the fish cannot be caught. I do not state these particulars from any wish to avoid assisting you in this undertaking; much the contrary. If I saw the prospect of your getting fairly on the wing, nothing could give me more pleasure than to assist to the extent of my means, and I shall only, in that case, regret that they are at present more limited than I could wish by circumstances which I will presently tell you. But I should not like to see you take flight, like the ingenious mechanist in Rasselas—only to flutter a few yards, and fall into the lake. This would be a most heart-breaking business, and would hang like a millstone about your neck for all your life. Capital and talent will do excellent things together; but depend on it, talent without capital will no more carry on an extensive and progressive undertaking of this nature than a race-horse will draw a Newcastle waggon. Now, I cannot at present assist you with ready money, which is the great object in your undertaking. This year has been, owing to many reasons, the heaviest of my expenditure, and the least fruitful of profit, because various anxieties attending Walter's marriage, and feasting, &c. after it, have kept me from my usual lucrative labours. It has no doubt been a most advantageous concern, for he has got an amiable girl, whom he loves, and who is warmly attached to him, with a very considerable fortune. But I have had to find cash for the purchase of a troop for him—about £3500: *item*, the bride's jewels and so forth, becoming her situation and fortune, £500: *item*, for a remount to him on joining his regiment, equipage for quarters, carriage, and other things, that they may enter life with a

free income, £1000 at least. Moreover, I am a sharer to the extent of £1500 on a railroad, which will bring coals and lime here at half price, and double the rent of the arable part of my property, but is dead outlay in the meantime; and I have shares in the oil-gas, and other promising concerns, not having resisted the mania of the day, though I have yielded to it but soberly; also, I have the dregs of Abbotsford House to pay for—and all besides my usual considerable expenditure; so I must look for some months to be put to every corner of my saddle. I could not let my son marry her like a beggar; but, in the mean-time, I am like my namesake in the days of the crusades—Walter the Penniless.

"Every one grumbles at his own profession, but here is the devil of a calling for you, where a man pays £3000 for an annuity of £400 a-year and less—renounces his free will in almost every respect;—must rise at five every morning to see horses curried—dare not sleep out of a particular town without the leave of a cross Colonel, who is often disposed to refuse it merely because he has the power to do so; and, last of all, may be sent to the most unhealthy climates to die of the rot, or be shot like a black-cock. There is a per contra, to be sure—fine clothes and fame; but the first must be paid for and the other is not come by by one out of the hundred. I shall be anxious to know what you are able to do. Your ready is the devil.

'The thing may to-morrow be all in your power,
But the money, gadzooks, must be paid in hour.'

If you were once set a-rolling, time would come round with me, and then I should be able to help you a little more than at present. Mean-while, I am willing to help you with my credit by becoming one of your guarantees to the extent of £1250.

"But what I am most anxious about is to know how you raise the £5000 cash; if by bills and discounts, I beg to say I must decline having to do with the business at all; for besides the immense expense of renewals, that mode of raising money is always liable to some sudden check, which throws you on your back at once, and I should then have hurt myself and deprived myself of the means of helping you some other way. If you can get such a sum in loan for a term of years certain, that would do well. Still better, I think, could you get a monied partner in the concern to pay the sum down, and hold some £2000 more ready for current expenses. I wish to know whether in the £36 for nightly expenses you include your own salary, within which you would probably think it prudent to restrain your own expenses, at least for a year or two; for, believing as I do, that your calculation of £70 per night (five per cent on the outlay) is rather sanguine, I would like to know that your own and Mr. Yates's expenses were provided for, so as to leave the receipts, whatever they may be, free to answer the burdens. If they do so, you will have great reason to be contented. I need not add that Theodore Hook's assistance will be *impayable*. On the whole, my apprehension is for want of money in the outset. Should you either start with marked success, or have friends sufficient to carry on at some disadvantage for a season or two, I should have little fear; but great attention and regularity will be necessary. You are no great accountant yourself, any more than I am, but I trust Mr. Yates is. All rests with prudence and management. Murray is making a fortune for his sister and family on the very bargain which Siddons, poor fellow, could not have sustained for two years longer. If I have seemed more cautious in this matter than you might expect from my sincere regard for you, it is because caution is as necessary for you as myself; and I assure you I think as deeply on your account as on my own. I beg kind compliments to Mrs. Terry, and inclose a look of my gray hair, which Jane desired me to send you for some brooch or clasp at Hamlet's.—Ever yours, very truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"My dear Terry,

"You have long ere this heard from honest James that he accedes to your proposal of becoming one of your sureties. I did not think it right in the first instance either to encourage or deter him from taking this step, but sent him the whole correspondence upon the subject, that he might judge for himself, and I fancy he concluded that his own risk of loss was not by any means in proportion to your fair prospect of advantage.

"There is an idea among some of your acquaintance, which I partly acquiesce in, that you are in general somewhat of a procrastinator. I believe I have noticed the same thing myself; but then I consider it the habit of one accustomed to alternations of severe exertion and great indolence; and I have no doubt that it will give place to the necessity of following out a regular, stated, and daily business—where every hour brings its own peculiar duties, and you feel yourself like the mail-coach compelled to be *in to time*. I know such routine always cures me of the habit of indolence, which, on other occasions, I give way to as much as any man. This objection to the success which all agree is in your own power, I have heard coupled with another, which is also founded on close observation of your character, and connected with an excellent point of it; it is that you will be too desirous to do things perfectly well—to consider the *petite economie* necessary to a very extensive undertaking. This, however, is easily guarded against. I remember Mrs. John Kemble telling me how much she had saved by degrading some unfortunate figurantes into paper veils and ruffles. I think it was a round sum, and without going such lengths, I fear severer economy than one would like to practice is essential to making a theatre profitable. Now, I have mentioned the only two personal circumstances which induce envy to lift her voice against your prospects. I think it right you should know them, for there is something to be considered in both particulars; I would not mention them till the affair was finished, because I would not have you think I was sheltering myself under such apologies. That the perils rising out of them are not formidable in my eyes, I have sufficiently shown; and I think it right to mention them now. I know I need not apologize for my frankness, nor will you regard it either as an undue exercise of the privilege of an adviser, or an abuse of the circumstances in which this matter has placed us.—Yours ever, with best love to Mrs. Terry and Watt,

W. SCOTT."

While this business of Terry's was under consideration, Scott asked me to go out with him one Saturday to Abbotsford, to meet Constable and James Ballantyne, who were to be there for a quiet consultation on some projects of great importance. I had shortly before assisted at a minor conclave held at Constable's villa of Polton, and was not surprised that Sir Walter should have considered his publisher's new plans worthy of very ample deliberation. He now opened them in more fulness of detail, and explained his views in a manner that might well excite admiration, not unmixed with alarm. Constable was meditating nothing less than a total revolution in the art and traffic of bookselling; and the exulting and blazing fancy with which he expanded and embellished his visions of success, hitherto undreamt of in the philosophy of the trade, might also have induced serious suspicions of his sanity, but for the curious accumulation of pregnant facts on which he rested his justification, and the dexterous sagacity with which he uncoiled his practical inferences. He startled us at the outset by saying, "Literary genius may, or may not, have done its best; but printing and bookselling, as instruments for enlightening and entertaining mankind, and, of course, for making money, are as yet in mere infancy. Yes, the trade are in their cradle." Scott eyed the florid bookseller's beaming countenance, and the solemn stare with which the equally portly printer was listening, and pushing round the bottles with a hearty chuckle, bade me "Give our twa *sonsie babbies* a drap mother's milk." Constable sucked in fresh inspiration, and proceeded to say that, wild as we might think him, his new plans had been suggested by, and were in fact mainly grounded upon, a sufficiently prosaic authority—namely, the annual schedule of assessed taxes, a copy of which interesting document he drew from his pocket, and substituted for his *D'Oyley*. It was copiously diversified, "text and margent," by figures and calculations in his own handwriting, which I for one should have regarded with less reverence, had I known at the time this "great arithmetician's" rooted aversion and contempt for all examination of his own balance-sheet. His lecture on these columns and ciphers was, however, as profound as ingenious. He had taken vast pains to fill in the numbers of persons who might fairly be supposed to pay taxes for each separate article of luxury; and his conclusion was, that the immense majority of British families, endowed with liberal fortunes, had never yet conceived the remotest idea that their domestic arrangements were incomplete, unless they expended some considera-

ble sum annually upon the purchase of books. "Take," said he, "this one absurd and contemptible *item* of the tax on hair-powder; the use of it is almost entirely gone out of fashion. Bating a few parsons' and lawyers' wigs, it may be said that hair-powder is confined to the *flunkeys*, and indeed to the livery servants of great and splendid houses exclusively; nay, in many even of these, it is already quite laid aside. Nevertheless, for each head thus vilified in Great Britain, a guinea is paid yearly to the Exchequer; and the taxes in that schedule are an army, compared to the purchasers of even the best and most popular of books." He went on in the same vein about armorial bearings, hunters, racers, and four-wheeled carriages; and having demonstrated that hundreds of thousands in this magnificent country held, as necessary to their personal comfort and the maintenance of decent station, articles upon articles of costly elegance, of which their forefathers never dreamt, said that, on the whole, however usual it was to talk of the extended scale of literary transactions in modern days, our self-love never deceived us more grossly than when we fancied our notions as to the matter of books had advanced in at all a corresponding proportion. "On the contrary," cried Constable, "I am satisfied that the demand for Shakspeare's plays, contemptible as we hold it to have been, in the time of Elizabeth and James, was more creditable to the classes who really indulged in any sort of elegance then, than the sale of Childe Harold or Waverley, triumphantly as people talk, is to the alleged expansion of taste and intelligence in this nineteenth century." Scott helped him on by interposing, that at that moment he had a rich valley crowded with handsome houses under his view, and yet much doubted whether any laird within ten miles spent ten pounds per annum on the literature of the day—which he, of course, distinguished from its periodical press. "No," said Constable, "there is no market among them that's worth one's thinking about. They are contented with a review, or a magazine, or at best with a paltry subscription to some circulating library forty miles off. But if I live for half-a-dozen years, I'll make it as impossible that there should not be a good library in every decent house in Britain as that the shepherd's ingle-nook should want the *saut poke*. Ay, and what's that?" he continued, warming and puffing, "Why should the ingle-nook itself want a shelf for the novels?" "I see your drift, my man," says Sir Walter, "you're for being like Billy Pitt in Gilray's print—you want to get into the salt-box yourself." "Yes," he responded (using a favourite adjuration) —"I have hitherto been thinking only of the wax lights, but before I'm a twelvemonth older I shall have my hand upon the tallow." "Troth," says Scott, "You are indeed likely to be 'The grand Napoleon of the realms of *print*.'" "If you outlive me," says Constable, with a regal smile, "I bespeak that line for my tomb-stone; but, in the mean time, may I presume to ask you to be my right-hand man when I open my campaign of Marengo? I have now settled my outline of operations—a three shilling or half-crown volume every month, which must and shall sell, not by thousands or tens of thousands, but by hundreds of thousands—ay, by millions! Twelve volumes in the year, a halfpenny of profit upon every copy of which will make me richer than the possession of all the copyrights of all the quartos that ever were, or will be, hot-pressed! Twelve volumes, so good that millions must wish to have them, and so cheap that every butcher's callant may have them, if he pleases to let me tax him sixpence a-week!"

Many a previous consultation, and many a solitary meditation, too, prompted Scott's answer. "Your plan," said he, "cannot fail, provided the books be really good, but you must not start until you have not only the leading columns, but depth upon depth of reserve in thorough order. I am willing to do my part in this grand enterprise. Often, of late, have I felt that the vein of fiction was nearly worked out; often, as you all know, have I been thinking seriously of turning my hand to history. I am of opinion that historical writing has no more been adapted to the demands of the increased circles among which literature does already find its way, than you allege as to the shape and price of books in general. What say you to taking the field with a Life of the *other* Napoleon?"

The reader does not need to be told that the series of cheap volumes, subsequently issued under the title of "Constable's Miscellany," was the scheme on which this great bookseller was brooding. Before he left Abbotsford, it was arranged that the first number of this collection should consist of one half of Waverley; the second, of the first section of a "Life of Napoleon Buonaparte, by the author of Waverley;" that this Life should be comprised in four of these numbers; and that, until the whole series of his novels should have been issued, a volume every second month, in this new and uncostly form, he should keep the Ballantyne press going with a series of historical works, to be issued on the alternate months. Such were, as far as Scott was concerned, the first outlines of a daring plan never destined to be carried into execution on the gigantic scale, or with the grand appliances which the projector contemplated, but destined, nevertheless, to lead the way in one of the greatest revolutions that literary history will ever have to record—a revolution not the less sure to be completed, though as yet, after the lapse of twelve years, we see only its beginnings.

Some circumstances in the progress of the Tales of the Crusaders, begun some months before, and now on the eve of publication, must have been uppermost in Scott's mind when he met Constable's proposals on this occasion with so much alacrity. The story of *The Betrothed*—(to which he was mainly prompted by the lively and instructing conversation on Welch history and antiquities of his friend Archdeacon Williams)—found no favour as it advanced with James Ballantyne; and so heavily did the critical printer's candid remonstrances weigh on the author, that he at length lost heart about the matter altogether, and determined to cancel it for ever. The tale, however, all but a chapter or two, had been printed off, and both publisher and printer paused about committing such a mass to the flames. The sheets were hung up meanwhile in Messrs. Ballantyne's warehouse, and Scott, roused by the spur of disappointment, began another story—The Talisman—in which James hailed better omens. His satisfaction went on increasing as the MS. flowed in upon him; and he at last pronounced The Talisman such a masterpiece, that The Betrothed might venture under its wing. Sir Walter was now reluctant on that subject, and said he would rather write two more novels than the few pages necessary to complete his unfortunate Betrothed. But while he hesitated, the German newspapers announced "*a new romance by the author of Waverley*" as about to issue from the press of Leipsig. There was some ground for suspecting that a set of the suspended sheets might have been purloined and sold to a pirate, and this consideration put an end to his scruples. And when the German did publish the fabrication entitled *Walladmor*, it could no longer be doubtful that some reader of Scott's sheets had communicated at least the fact that he was breaking ground in Wales.

Early in June, then, the Tales of the Crusaders were put forth; and, as Mr. Ballantyne had predicted, the brightness of the Talisman dazzled the eyes of the million as to the defects of the twin-story. Few of these publications had a more enthusiastic greeting; and Scott's literary plans were, as the reader will see reason to infer, considerably modified in consequence of the new burst of applause which attended the brilliant procession of his Saladin and Cœur de Lion.

To return for a moment to our merry conclave at Abbotsford. Constable's vast chapter of embryo schemes was discussed more leisurely on the following Monday morning, when we drove to the crags of Smailholm and the Abbey of Dryburgh, both poet and

publisher talking over the past and the future course of their lives, and agreeing, as far as I could penetrate, that the years to come were likely to be more prosperous than any they had as yet seen. In the evening, too, this being his friend's first visit since the mansion had been completed, Scott (though there were no ladies and few servants) had the hall and library lighted up, that he might show him every thing to the most sparkling advantage. With what serenity did he walk about those splendid apartments, handling books, expounding armour and pictures, and rejoicing in the Babylon which he had built!

If the reader has not recently looked into the original Introduction to the Tales of the Crusaders, it will amuse him to trace in that little extravanza Sir Walter's own embellishment of these colloquies with Constable and Ballantyne. The title is, "Minutes of Sederunt of the Shareholders designing to form a Joint-Stock Company, united for the purpose of Writing and Publishing the Class of Works called the Waverley Novels, held in the Waterloo Tavern, Regent Bridge, Edinburgh, on the 1st of June, 1825." The notion of casting a preface into this form could hardly have occurred in any other year; the humourist had not far to seek for his "palpable hit." The "Gentlemen and others interested in the celebrated publications called the Waverley Novels," had all participated in the general delusions which presented so broad a mark; and their own proper "bubbles" were at the biggest —in other words, near enough the bursting.

As regards Sir Walter himself, it is not possible now to recall the jocularities of this essay without wonder and sadness. His own share in speculations, remote from literature, was not indeed a very heavy one; but how remarkable that a passage like the following should have dropped from his pen, who was just about to see the apparently earth-built pillars of his worldly fortune shattered in ruin, merely because, not contented with being the first author of his age, he had chosen also to be his own printer and his own bookseller!

"In the patriarchal period," we read, "a man is his own weaver, tailor, butcher, shoemaker, and so forth; and, in the age of Stock-companies, as the present may be called, an individual may be said, in one sense, to exercise the same plurality of trades. In fact, a man who has dipt largely into these speculations, may combine his own expenditure with the improvement of his own income, just like the ingenious hydraulic machine, which, by its very waste, raises its own supplies of water. Such a person buys his bread from his own Baking Company, his milk and cheese from his own Dairy Company, takes off a new coat for the benefit of his own Clothing Company, illuminates his house to advance his own Gas Establishment, and drinks an additional bottle of wine for the benefit of the General Wine Importation Company, of which he is himself a member. Every act, which would otherwise be one of mere extravagance, is, to such a person, seasoned with the *odor lucri*, and reconciled to prudence. Even if the price of the article consumed be extravagant, and the quality indifferent, the person, who is in a manner his own customer, is only imposed upon for his own benefit. Nay, if the Joint-stock Company of Undertakers shall unite with the Medical Faculty, as proposed by the late facetious Doctor G——, under the firm of Death and the Doctor, the shareholder might contrive to secure to his heirs a handsome slice of his own death-bed and funeral expenses."

Since I have quoted this Introduction, I may as well give also the passage in which the "Eidolon Chairman" is made to announce the new direction his exertions were about to take, in furtherance of the grand "Joint-stock Adventure," for which Constable had been soliciting his alliance. The paternal shadow thus addresses his mutinous offspring —Cleishbothom, Oldbuck, Clutterbuck, Dryasdust, and the rest:—

"It signifies nothing speaking—I will no longer avail myself of such weak ministers as you—I will discard you —I will unbeget you, as Sir Anthony Absolute says—I will leave you and your whole hacked stock in trade—your caverns and your castles—your modern antiques, and your antiquated moderns—your confusion of times, manners, and circumstances—your properties, as player-folk say of scenery and dresses—the whole of your exhausted expedients, to the fools who choose to deal with them. I will vindicate my own fame with my own right hand, without appealing to such halting assistants,

'Whom I have used for sport, rather than need.'

—I will lay my foundations better than on quicksands—I will rear my structure of better materials than painted cards; in a word, I will write HISTORY!"

"As the confusion began to abate, more than one member of the meeting was seen to touch his forehead significantly, while Captain Clutterbuck humm'd,

'Be by your friends advised,
Too rash, too hasty, dad,
Maugre your bolts and wise head,
The world will think you mad.'

"The world, and you, gentlemen, may think what you please," said the Chairman, elevating his voice; "but I intend to write the most wonderful book which the world ever read—a book in which every incident shall be incredible, yet strictly true—a work recalling recollections with which the ears of this generation once tingled, and which shall be read by our children with an admiration approaching to incredulity. Such shall be the LIFE OF NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE, by the AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY!"*

Sir Walter begun, without delay, what was meant to be a very short preliminary sketch of the French Revolution, prior to the appearance of his hero upon the scene of action. This, he thought, might be done almost *currente calamo;* for his personal recollection of all the great events as they occurred was vivid, and he had not failed to peruse every book of any considerable importance on these subjects as it issued from the press. He apprehended the necessity, on the other hand, of more laborious study in the way of reading than he had for many years had occasion for, before he could enter with advantage upon Buonaparte's military career; and Constable accordingly set about collecting a new library of printed materials, which continued from day to day pouring in upon him, till his little parlour in Castle Street looked more like an auctioneer's premises than an author's. The first wagon delivered itself of about a hundred huge folios of the Moniteur; and London, Paris, Amsterdam, and Brussels, were all laid under contribution to meet the bold demands of his magnificent purveyor; while he himself and his confidential friends embraced every possible means of securing the use of written documents at home and abroad. The rapid accumulation of books and MSS. was at once flattering and alarming; and one of his notes to me, about the middle of June, had these rhymes by way of postscript:—

"When with Poetry dealing
Room enough in a shieling:
Neither cabin nor hovel
Too small for a novel;
Though my back I should rub
On Diogenes' tub,
How my fancy could prance
In a dance of romance!
But my house I must swap
With some Brobdignag chap,
Ere I grapple, God bless me! with Emperor Nap."

In the mean time he advanced with his Introduction; and catching fire as the theme expanded before him, had so soon several chapters in his desk, without having travelled over half the ground assigned for them, that Constable saw it would be in vain to hope for the completion of the work within four tiny duodecimos. They resolved that it should be published, in the first instance, as a separate book, in four volumes, of the same size with the Tales of the Crusaders, but with more pages and more letter-press to each page. Scarcely had this been settled, before it became obvious, that four such volumes, however closely printed, would never suffice; and the number was week after week extended—with corresponding alterations as to the rate of the author's payment. Mr. Constable still considered the appearance of the second edition of the Life of Napoleon in his Miscellany as the great point on which the fortunes of that undertaking

* See Introduction to Waverley Novels.

were to turn; and its commencement was in consequence adjourned; which, however, must have been the case at any rate, as he found, on inquiry, that the stock on hand of the already various editions of the Waverley Novels was much greater than he had calculated; and therefore some interval must be allowed to elapse before, with fairness to the retail trade, he could throw that long series of volumes into any cheaper form.

CHAPTER LXIII.

EXCURSION TO IRELAND—RECEPTION IN DUBLIN—WICKLOW—EDGEWORTHSTOWN—KILLARNEY—CORK—CASTLE BLARNEY, &C.—LETTERS FROM MOORE AND CANNING—LLANGOLLEN—ELLERAY—STORRS—LOWTHER.—1825.

Before the Court of Session rose in July, Sir Walter had made considerable progress in his Sketch of the French Revolution; but it was agreed that he should make his promised excursion to Ireland before any MS. went to the printers. He had seen no more of the sister island than Dunluce and the Giant's Causeway, of which we have his impressions in the Lighthouse Diary of 1814—his curiosity about the scenery and the people was lively—and besides the great object of seeing his son and daughter-in-law under their own roof, and the scarcely inferior pleasure of another meeting with Miss Edgeworth, he looked forward to renewing his acquaintance with several accomplished persons, who had been serviceable to him in his labours upon Swift. But, illustriously as Ireland has contributed to the English Library, he had always been accustomed to hear that almost no books were now published there, and fewer sold than in any other country calling itself civilized; and he had naturally concluded that apathy and indifference prevailed as to literature itself, and of course as to literary men. He had not, therefore, formed the remotest anticipation of the kind of reception which awaited him in Dublin, and indeed throughout the island wherever he traversed it.

On the day after he despatched the following letter, he had the satisfaction of seeing his son gazetted as Captain.

To Walter Scott, Esq., 15th Hussars, 10, Stephen's Green, Dublin.

"Edinburgh, 16th June, 1825.

"My dear Walter,

"I shall wait with some impatience for this night's Gazette. I have written to Coutts to pay the money so soon as you are in possession.

"On Saturday, 11th, I went to Blair-Adam, and had a delicious stroll among the woods. The roe-deer are lying as thick there as in the Highlands, and, I dare say, they must be equally so at Lochore: so you will have some of the high game. They are endeavoring to destroy them, which they find very difficult. It is a pity they do so much mischief to the woods, for otherwise they are the most beautiful objects in nature; and were they at Abbotsford, I could not, I think, have the heart, to make war on them. Two little fawns came into the room at teatime and drank cream. They had the most beautiful dark eyes and little dark muzzles, and were scarce so big as Miss Ferguson's Italian grayhound. The Chief Commissioner offered them to me, but to keep them tame would have been impossible on account of the dogs, and to turn them loose would have been wilfully entailing risk on the plantations which have cost me so much money and trouble. There was then a talk of fattening them for the kitchen, a proposal which would have driven mamma distracted.

"We spent Monday on a visit to Lochore, and in planning the road which is so much wanted. The Chief Commissioner is an excellent manager, and has undertaken to treat with Mr. Wemyss of East Blair, through a part of whose property the line lies, but just at a corner, and where it will be as convenient for his property as Lochore.

"I am glad Jane looks after her own affairs. It is very irksome, to be sure; but then one must do it, or be eaten up by their servants, like Actæon by his hounds. Talking of hounds, I have got a second Maida, but he is not yet arrived. Nimrod is his name.

"I keep my purpose as expressed in my last. I might, perhaps, persuade mamma to come, but she is unhappy in steamboats, bad beds, and all the other inconveniences of travelling. Sir Adam and Lady Ferguson, as I hear, are thinking of stirring towards you. I hope they will allow our visit to be over in the first instance, as it would overtax Jane and you—otherwise I should like to see the merry knight in Ireland, where I suppose he would prove *Ipsis Hybernis Hybernior*, more Irish than the natives.

"I have given Charles his choice between France and Ireland, and shall have his answer in two or three days. Will he be *de trop* if we can pack him up in the little barouche?

"Your commentary on Sir D. Dundas's confused hash of regulations, which, for the matter of principle, might be shortened to a dozen, puts me in mind of old Sir William Erskine's speech to him, when all was in utter confusion at the retreat from before Dunkirk, and Sir William came down to protect the rear. In passing Sir David, the tough old veteran exclaimed, 'Davie, ye donnert idiot, where's a' your *peervoys* (pivots) the day?'

As to your early hours, no man ought to be in bed at seven in summer time. I never am; your four o'clock is rather premature.—Yours, with kindest remembrances to Jane,

WALTER SCOTT."

"P. S.—Yours just received, dateless as the former. I suppose it is a family fault. What I have written will show that the cash matters are *bang-up*. A comparison of the dates will show there has been no voluntary delay on my part; indeed, what motive could I have for leaving money without interest in the hands of a London banker? But we are corresponding at a triangle, when you write to me and I to London. I will write to Jane to scold her for her ladylike fears about our reception; to find you happy will be the principal part of my welcome; for the rest, a slice of plain meat of any kind—a cigar—and a little *potheen*, are worth turtle and Burgundy to my taste. As for poor dear stupid ——, there is only one answer, which the clown in one of Shakspeare's plays says will be a fitting reply to *all* questions—*Oh Lord, sir!!!*"

It did not suit either Lady Scott or her eldest daughter to be of the Irish expedition; Anne Scott and myself accompanied Sir Walter. We left Edinburgh on the 8th of July in a light open carriage, and after spending a few days among our friends in Lanarkshire, we embarked at Glasgow in a steamer for Belfast. Sir Walter kept no diary during this excursion, and the bustle and tumult throughout were such that he found time to write but very few letters. From my own to the ladies left at home, I could easily draw up a pretty exact journal of our proceedings; but I shall content myself with noting a few particulars more immediately connected with the person of Scott—for I am very sensible, on looking over what I set down at the moment, that there was hardly opportunity even for him to draw any conclusions of serious value on the structure and ordinary habits of society in Ireland, to say nothing of the vexed questions of politics and administration; and such features of natural beauty and historical interest as came under his view have been painted over and over again by native writers, with whom hasty observers should not be ambitious of competing.

The steamboat, besides a crowd of passengers of all possible classes, was lumbered with a cargo offensive enough to the eye and the nostrils, but still more disagreeable from the anticipations it could not fail to suggest. Hardly had our carriage been lashed on the deck before it disappeared from our view amidst mountainous packages of old clothes; the cast-off raiment of the Scotch beggars was on its way to where beggary is the staple of life. The captain assured us that he had navigated nearly forty years between the West of Scotland and the sister island, and that his freights from the Clyde were very commonly of this description; pigs and potatoes being the usual return. Sir Walter rather irritated a military passenger (a stout old Highlander,) by asking whether it had never occurred to him that the beautiful checkery of the clan tartans might have originated in a pious wish on the part of the Scottish Gael to imitate the tatters of the paren race. After soothing the veteran into good-humour, by some anecdotes of the Celtic splendours of Au gust, 1822, he remarked that if the Scotch Highlanders were really descended in the main from the Irish blood, it seemed to him the most curious and difficult problem in the world to account for the startling contrasts in so many points of their cha-

racter, temper and demeanour; and entered into some disquisition on this subject, which I am sorry I cannot repeat in detail. The sum of his opinion was, that while courage and generous enthusiasm of spirit, kindness of heart, and great strength and purity of domestic affection, characterised them equally, the destruction in the course of endless feuds, and wars, and rebellions, of the native aristocracy of Ireland, had robbed that people of most of the elements of internal civilisation; and avowed his belief that had the Highlanders been deprived, under similar circumstances, of their own chiefs, they would have sunk, from the natural poverty of their regions, into depths of barbarity not exampled even in the history of Ireland. The old soldier (who had taken an early opportunity of intimating his own near relationship to the chief of his sept) nodded assent, and strutted from our part of the deck with the dignity of a MacTurk.—"But then," Sir Walter continued, (watching the Colonel's retreat,) "but then comes the queerest point of all. How is it that our solemn, proud, dignified Celt, with a soul so alive to what is elevating and even elegant in poetry and feeling, is so supereminently dull as respects all the lighter play of fancy? The Highlander never understands wit or humour—Paddy, despite all his misery and privations, overflows with both. I suppose he is the gayest fellow in the world, except the only worse-used one still, the West India nigger. This is their make-up—but it is to me the saddest feature in the whole story."

A voyage down the Firth of Clyde is enough to make any body happy: no where can the home tourist, at all events, behold, in the course of one day, such a succession and variety of beautiful, romantic, and majestic scenery: on one hand dark mountains and castellated shores—on the other, rich groves and pastures, interspersed with elegant villas and thriving towns, the bright estuary between alive with shipping, and diversified with islands.

It may be supposed how delightfulsuch a voyage was in a fine day of July, with Scott, always as full of glee on any trip as a schoolboy; crammed with all the traditions and legends of every place we passed; and too happy to pour them out for the entertainment of his companions on deck. After dinner, too, he was the charm of the table. A worthy old Bailie of Glasgow, Mr. Robert Tennent, sat by him, and shared fully in the general pleasure; though his particular source of interest and satisfaction was, that he had got into such close quarters with a live Sheriff and Clerk of Session, and this gave him the opportunity of discussing sundry knotty points of police law, as to which our steerage passengers might perhaps have been more curious than most of those admitted to the symposium of the cabin. Sir Walter, however, was as ready for the rogueries of the Broomielaw, as for the misty antiquities of Balclutha, or the discomfiture of the Norsemen at Largs, or Bruce's adventures in Arran. I remember how Mr. Tennent chuckled when he, towards the conclusion of our first bowl of punch, said he was not surprised to find himself gathering much instruction from the Bailie's conversation on his favourite topics, since the most eminent and useful of the police magistrates of London (Colquhoun) had served his apprenticeship in the Town Chamber of Glasgow. The Bailie insisted for a second bowl, and volunteered to be the manufacturer; "for," quoth he (with a sly wink,) "I am reckoned a fair hand, though not equal to *my father, the deacon.*" Scott smiled in acquiescence, and, the ladies having by this time with-drawn, said he was glad to find the celebrated beverage of the city of St. Mungo had not fallen into desuetude. The Bailie extolled the liquor he was brewing, and quoted Sir John Sinclair's Code of Health and Longevity for the case of a gentleman well known to himself, who lived till ninety, and had been drunk upon it every night for half-a-century. But Bailie Tennent was a devout elder of the kirk, and did not tell his story without one or two groans that his doctine should have such an example to plead. Sir Walter said he could only hope that manners were mended in other respects since the days when a popular minister of the last age (one Mr. Thom,) renowned for satirical humour, as well as for highflying zeal, had demolished all his own chances of a Glasgow benefice by preaching before the Town-Council from this text in Hosea:—"Ephraim's drink is sour, and he hath committed whoredom continually." The Bailie's brow darkened (like Nicol Jarvie's when they *misca'd Rab*;) he groaned deeper than before, and said he feared "Tham o' Govan was at heart a ne'erdoweel." He, however, refilled our glasses as he spoke; and Scott, as he tasted his, said, "Weel, weel, Bailie, Ephraim was not so far wrong as to the matter of drink." A gay little Irish Squireen (a keener Protestant even than our "merchant and magistrate") did not seem to have discovered the Great Unkown until about this time, and now began to take a principal share in the conversation. To the bowl of Ephraim he had from the first done all justice. He broke at once into the heart of the debateable land; and after a few fierce tirades against Popery, asked the Highland Colonel, who had replaced the Master of the steamer at the head of the table, to give *the glorious memory.* The prudent Colonel affected not to hear until this hint had been thrice repeated, watching carefully meanwhile the demeanour of a sufficiently mixed company. The general pushing in of glasses, and perhaps some free-masonry symptoms besides—(for we understood that he had often served in Ireland)—had satisfied him that all was right, and he rose and announced the Protestant Shibboleth with a voice that made the lockers and rafters ring again. Bailie Tennent rose with grim alacrity to join in the cheers; and then our Squireen proposed, in his own person, what, he said, always ought to be the second toast among good men and true. This was nothing else than *the heroic memory*, which, from our friend's preliminary speech, we understood to be the memory of *Oliver Cromwell.* Sir Walter winced more shrewdly than his Bailie had done about Ephraim's transgressions, but swallowed his punch, and stood up, glass in hand, like the rest, though an unfortunate fit of coughing prevented his taking part in their huzzas. This feature of Irish loyalism was new to the untravelled Scotch of the party. On a little reflection, however, we thought it not so unnatural. Our little Squireen boasted of being himself descended from a sergeant in Cromwell's army; and he added that "the best in Ireland" had similar pedigrees to be proud of. He took care, however, to inform us that his own great ancestor was a real *jontleman* all over, and behaved as such; "for," said he, "when Oliver gave him his order for the lands, he went to the widow, and tould her he would neither turn out her nor the best-looking of her daughters; so get the best dinner you can, old lady," quoth he, "and parade the whole lot of them, and I'll pick." Which was done, it seems, accordingly; and brobably no conquest ever wanted plenty of such alleviations.

Something in this story suggested to Scott an incident, recorded in some old book of Memoirs, of a French envoy's reception in the tower of some Irish chieftain, during one of the rebellions against Queen Elizabeth; and he narrated it, to the infinite delight of the Protestant Squireen. This comforter of the rebels was a bishop, and his union of civil and religious dignity secured for him all possible respect and attention. The chief (I think the name was O'Donoghue) welcomed him warmly: He was clad in a yellow mantle—("to wit, a dirty blanket," interposes the Squireen)—but this he dropt in the interior, and sat upon it mother-naked in the midst of his family and guests by the fire. The potheen circulated, and was approved by the bishop. When the hour of retiring for the night approached, the hospitable Milesian desired him to look round and select any of his daughters he liked for a bedfellow. The bishop did as he was invited, and the young lady went up stairs, to be dealt with probably by Monseigneur's valet as Peregrine Pickle's beggar-girl was by Tom Pipes. By and by the bishop followed, and next minute his allotted partner tum

bled into the patriarchal circle below in an agony of tears, while the great man was heard *pesting* vociferously in his chamber above. "It turned out," said Sir Walter, "that the most prominent object on his reverence's toilette had been a pot of singularly precious pomatum, recently presented to him by the Pope. This the poor girl was desired by the French attendant, as he withdrew, to make use of in completing the adornment of her person; but an interpreter had been wanting. She took it for butter, and the bannock which she had plastered, both sides over, with this precious unguent, was half-devoured before the ambassador honoured her bower with his presence. Dandyism had prevailed over gallantry, and Princess O'Donoghue was kicked down stairs."

When we got upon deck again after our carousal, we found it raining heavily, and the lady passengers in great misery; which state of things continued till we were within sight of Belfast. We got there about nine in the morning, and I find it set down that we paid four guineas for the conveyance of the carriage, and a guinee a-piece for ourselves; in 1837 I understand the charge for passengers is not more than half-a-crown a-head in the cabin, and sixpence in the steerage—so rapidly has steam-navigation extended in the space of twelve years. Sir Walter told us he well remembered being on board of the first steamer that ever was launched in Britain, in 1812. For some time, that one awkward machine went back and forward between Glasgow and Greenock, and it would have looked like a cockboat beside any one of the hundreds of magnificent steamships that now cover the Firth of Clyde. It is also written in my pocket-book, that the little Orange Squireen was particularly kind and serviceable at our landing—knocking about the swarm of porters that invaded the vessel on anchoring, in a style quite new to us, with slang equally Irish—*e. g.* "Your fingers are all thumbs, I see—put that (portmanteau) in your teeth, you grampus," &c. &c.

The following is part of the first letter I wrote to my wife from Dublin:—

"Belfast is a thriving bustling place, surrounded with smart villas, and built much like a second-rate English town; yet there we saw the use of the imported rags forthwith. One man, apparently happy and gay, returning to his work (a mason seemingly,) for breakfast, with pipe in mouth, had a coat of which I don't believe any three inches together were of the same colour or the same stuff—red, black yellow, green—cloth, velveteen, corduroy, fustian—the complete image of a tattered coverlid originally made on purpose of particularly small patches—no shirt, and almost no breeches;—yet this is the best part of Ireland, and the best population. What shall we see in the South?

"Erin deserves undoubtedly the style of *Green Erin*. We passed through high and low country, rich and poor, but none that was not greener than Scotland ever saw. The husbandry to the north seemed rather careless than bad—I should say *slovenly*, for every thing is cultivated, and the crops are fine, though the appearance is quite spoiled by the bad, or oftener the *no* fences; and, above all, to unaccustomed eyes, by the human wretchedness every where visible even there. Your papa says, however, that he sees all over the North marks of an improving country; that the new houses are all greatly better than the old, &c. He is no doubt right as to the towns, and even villages on the highway, but I can't imagine the *newest* huts of the peasantry to have been preceded by worse even in the days of Malachi with the collar of gold. They are of clay without chimneys, and without any opening for light, except the door and the smoke-hole in the roof. When there is a window, it seldom has even one pane of glass, and I take it the aperture is only a summer luxury, to be closed up with the ready trowel whenever the winter comes. The filth, darkness, and squalor of these dens and their inhabitants, are beyond imagination, even to us who have traversed so often the wildest of our own Highland glens; yet your father swears he has not yet seen one face decidedly careworn and unhappy; on the contrary, an universal good-humour and merriment, and, to us, every sort of civility from the poor people; as yet few beggars. An old man at Dunleer having got some pence from Anne while the carriage stopt, an older woman came forward to sell gooseberries, and we declining these, she added that we might as well give her an alms too then, for she was an old *struggler*. Anne thought she said *smuggler*, and dreamt of potheen, but she meant that she had done her best to resist the 'sea of troubles;' whereas her neighbour, the professed mendicant, had yielded to the stream too easily. The Unknown says he shall recollect the word, which deserves to be classical. We slept at Dundalk, a poor little town by the shore, but with a magnificent Justice-hall and jail—a public building superior, I think, to any in Edinburgh, in the midst of a place despicably dirty and miserable."

When we halted at Drogheda, a retired officer of dragoons, discovering that the party was Sir Walter's, sent in his card, with a polite offer to attend him over the field of the battle of the Boyne, about two miles off, which of course was accepted;—Sir Walter rejoicing the veteran's heart by his vigorous recitation of the famous ballad (*The Crossing of the Water*,) as we proceeded to the ground, and the eager and intelligent curiosity with which he received his explanations of it.

On Thursday the 14th we reached Dublin in time for dinner, and found young Walter and his bride established in one of those large and noble houses in St. Stephen's Green (the most extensive square in Europe,) the founders of which little dreamt that they should ever be let at an easy rate as garrison lodgings. Never can I forget the fond joy and pride with which Sir Walter looked round him, as he sat for the first time at his son's table. I could not but recall Pindar's lines, in which, wishing to paint the gentlest rapture of felicity, he describes an old man with a foaming wine-cup in his hand at his child's wedding-feast.

That very evening arrived a deputation from the Royal Society of Dublin, inviting Sir Walter to a public dinner; and next morning he found on his breakfast-table a letter from the Provost of Trinity College (Dr. Kyle, now Bishop of Cork,) announcing that the University desired to pay him the very high compliment of a degree of Doctor of Laws by *diploma*. The Archbishop of Dublin (the celebrated Dr. Magee,) though surrounded with severe domestic afflictions at the time, was among the earliest of his visitors; another was the Attorney-General (now Lord Chancellor Plunkett;) a third was the Commander of the Forces, Sir George Murray; and a fourth the Chief Remembrancer of Exchequer (the Right Honourable Anthony Blake,) who was the bearer of a message from the Marquis Wellesley, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, offering all sorts of facilities, and inviting him to dine next day at his Excellency's country residence, Malahide Castle. It would be endless to enumerate the distinguished persons who, morning after morning, crowded his *levee* in St. Stephen's Green. The courts of law were not then sitting, and most of the judges were out of town; but all the other great functionaries, and the leading noblemen and gentlemen of the city and its neighbourhood, of whatever sect or party, hastened to tender every conceivable homage and hospitality. But all this was less surprising to the companions of his journey (though, to say truth, we had, no more than himself, counted on such eager enthusiasm among any class of Irish society,) than the demonstrations of respect which, after the first day or two, awaited him, wherever he moved, at the hands of the less elevated orders of the Dublin population. If his carriage was recognised at the door of any public establishment, the street was sure to be crowded before he came out again, so as to make his departure as slow as a procession. When he entered a street, the watchword was passed down both sides like lightning, and the shopkeepers and their wives stood bowing and curtseying all the way down; while the mob and boys huzza'd as at the chariot-wheels of a conqueror. I had certainly been most thoroughly unprepared for finding the common people of Dublin so alive to the claims of any non-military greatness. Sir Robert Peel says, that Sir Walter's reception on the High Street of Edinburgh, in August, 1822, was the first thing that gave him a notion of "the electric shock of a nation's gratitude." I doubt if even that scene surpassed what I myself witnessed when he returned down Dame Street,

after inspecting the Castle of Dublin. Bailie Tennent, who had been in the crowd on that occasion, called afterwards in Stephen's Green to show Sir Walter some promised Return about his Glasgow Police, and observed to me, as he withdrew that "*yon* was owre like worshipping the creature."

I may as well, perhaps, extract from a letter of the 16th, the contemporary note of one day's operations.

"Sir Humphry Davy is here on his way to fish in Connemara—he breakfasted at Walter's this morning; also Hartstonge, who was to show us the lions of St. Patrick's. Peveril was surprised to find the exterior of the cathedral so rudely worked, coarse, and almost shapeless—but the interior is imposing, and even grand. There are some curious old monuments of the Cork family, &c., but one thinks of nothing but Swift there—the whole cathedral is merely his tomb. Your papa hung long over the famous incription,* which is in gilt letters upon black marble; and seemed vexed there was not a ladder at hand that he might have got nearer the bust, (apparently a very fine one,) by Roubilliac, which is placed over it. This was given by the piety of his printer, Faulkener. According to this, Swift had a prodigious double chin; and Peveril remarked that the severity of the whole countenance is much increased by the absence of the wig, which, in the prints, conceals the height and gloom of the brow, the uncommon massiveness and breadth of the temple-bones, and the Herculean style in which the head fits in to the neck behind. Stella's epitaph is on the adjoining pillar—close by. Sir Walter seemed not to have thought of it before, (or to have forgotten, if he had,) but to judge merely from the wording that Swift himself wrote it. She is described as 'Mrs. Hester Johnson, better known to the world by the name of Stella, under which she is celebrated in the writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of this cathedral.' 'This,' said Sir Walter, 'the Dean might say—any one else would have said more,' She died in 1727, Swift in 1745. Just by the entrance to the transept, is his tablet in honour of the servant who behaved so well about the secret of the Drapier's letters.—We then saw St. Sepulcher's Library, a monastic looking place, very like one of the smaller college libraries in Oxford. Here they have the folio Clarendon, with Swift's marginal remarks, mostly in pencil, but still quite legible. 'Very savage as usual upon us poor Scots every where,' quoth the Unknown. We then went into the Deanery, (the one Swift inhabited has been pulled down,) and had a most courteous and elegant reception from the Dean, the Honourable Dr. Ponsonby. He gave us a capital luncheon—the original full-length picture of *the* Dean over the sideboard. The print in the Edinburgh edition is very good—but the complexion is in the picture—black, robust, sanguine—a heavy-lided, stern blue eye. It was interesting to see how completely the *genius loci* has kept his ground. Various little relics reverently hoarded as they should be. They said his memory was as fresh as ever among the common people about—they still sing his ballads, and had heard with great delight that Sir Walter wrote a grand book all about *the great Dane*. The

'Jolly lads of St. Patrick's, St. Kevin's, Donore,'

mustered strong and Stentorian at our exit. They would, like their great-grandfathers and mothers, have torn the Unknown to pieces, had he taken the other tack, and

'Insulted us all by insulting the Dean.'†

"We next saw the Bank—late Parliament House—the Dublin Society's Museum, where papa was enchanted with a perfect skeleton of the gigantic moose-deer, the horns fourteen feet from tip to tip, and high in proportion—and a long train of other fine places and queer things, all as per road-book. Every where throughout this busy day—fine folks within doors and rabble without—a terrible rushing and crushing to see the Baronet: Lord Wellington could not have excited a better rumpus. But the theatre in the evening completed the thing. I never heard such a row. The players might as well have had no tongues. Beatrice (Miss Foote) twice left the stage; and at last Benedick (Abbot, who is the manager) came forward, cunning dog, and asked what was the cause of the tempest. A thousand voices shouted, *Sir Walter Scott!* and the worthy lion being thus bearded and poked, rose, after an hour's torture, and said, with such a kindness and grace of tone and manner, *these* words:—'I am sure the Irish people—(a roar)—I am sure this respectable audience will not suppose that a stranger can be insensible to the kindness of their reception of him; and if I have been too long in saying this, I trust it will be attributed to the right cause—my unwillingness to take to myself honours so distinguished, and which I could not and cannot but feel to be unmerited.' I think these are the very words. The noise continued—a perfect cataract and thunder of roaring; but he would take no hints about going to the stage-box, and the evening closed decently enough. The theatre is very handsome—the dresses and scenery capital—the actors and actresses seemed (but to be sure, this was scarcely a fair specimen) about as bad as in the days of Croker's Familiar Epistles."

On Monday the 18th, to give another extract:

"Young Mr. Maturin breakfasted, and Sir Walter asked a great deal about his late father and the present situation of the family, and promised to go and see the widow. When the young gentleman was gone, Hartstonge told us that Maturin used to compose with a wafer pasted on his forehead, which was the signal that if any of his family entered the *sanctum* they must not speak to him. 'He was never bred in a writer's *chaumer*,' quoth Peveril. Sir Walter observed that it seemed to be a piece of Protestantism in Dublin to drop the saintly titles of the Catholic Church: they call St. Patrick's, Patrick's; and St. Stephen's Green has been Orangeized into Stephen's. He said you might trace the Puritans in the plain *Pooles* (for St. Paul's) of the old English comedians. We then went to the Bank, where the Governor and Directors had begged him to let *themselves* show him every thing in proper style; and he was forced to say, as he came out, 'These people treated me as if I was a Prince of the Blood.' I do believe that, just at this time, the Duke of York might be treated as well—better he could not be. From this to the College hard by. The Provost received Sir W. in a splendid drawing-room, and then carried him through the libraries, halls, &c. amidst a crowd of eager students. He received his diploma in due form, and there followed a superb *dejeuner* in the Provostry. Neither Oxford nor Cambridge could have done the whole thing in better style. Made acquaintance with Dr. Brinkley, Astronomer Royal, and Dr. Macdonnell, Professor of Greek, and all the rest of the leading Professors, who vied with each other in respect and devotion to the Unknown.—19th. I forgot to say that there is one *true* paragraph in the papers. One of the College librarians yesterday told Sir W., fishingly, 'I have been so busy that I have not yet read *your* Redgauntlet.' He answered, very meekly, 'I have not happened to fall in with such a work, Doctor.'"

From Dublin we made an excursion of some days into the county Wicklow, halting for a night at the villa of the Surgeon-General, Mr. Crampton, who struck Sir Walter as being more like Sir Humphrey Davy than any man he had met, not in person only, but in the liveliness and range of his talk, and who kindly did the honours of Lough Breagh and the Dargle; and then for two or three at Old Connaught, Lord Plunkett's seat near Bray. Here there was a large and brilliant party assembled; and from hence, under the guidance of the Attorney-General and his amiable family, we perambulated to all possible advantage the classical resorts of the Devil's Glyn, Rosanna, Kilruddery, and Glendalough, with its seven churches, and *St. Kevin's Bed*—the scene of the fate of Cathleen, celebrated in Moore's ballad—

'By that lake whose gloomy shore
Skylark never warbles o'er,' &c.

"It is," says my letter, "a hole in the sheer surface of the rock, in which two or three people might sit. The difficulty of getting into this place has been exaggerated, as also the danger, for it would only be falling thirty or forty feet into very deep water. Yet I never was more pained than when your papa, in spite of all remonstrances, would make his way to it, crawling along the precipice. He succeeded and got in—the first lame man that ever tried it. After he was gone, Mr. Plunkett told the female guide he was a poet. Cathleen treated this with indignation, as a quiz of Mr. Attorney's. '*Poet!*' said she, 'the devil a bit of him—but an honourable gentleman: he gave me half-a-crown.'"

On the 1st of August we proceeded from Dublin to Edgeworthstown, the party being now reinforced by Captain and Mrs. Scott, and also by the delightful addition of the Surgeon-General, who had long

* The terrible inscription is "Hic depositum est corpus Jonathan Swift, S. T. P. &c., ubi sæva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit."

† See Scott's Swift, (Edit. 1814.) Vol. x. p. 537.

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been an intimate friend of the Edgeworth family, and equally gratified both the novelists by breaking the toils of his great practice to witness their meeting on his native soil. A happy meeting it was: we remained there for several days, making excursions to Loch Oel and other scenes of interest in Longford and the adjoining counties; the gentry everywhere exerting themselves with true Irish zeal to signalize their affectionate pride in their illustrious countrywoman, and their appreciation of her guest; while her brother, Mr. Lovell Edgeworth, had his classical mansion filled every evening with a succession of distinguished friends, the *elite* of Ireland. Here, above all, we had the opportunity of seeing in what universal respect and comfort a gentleman's family may live in that country, and in far from its most favoured district, provided only they live there habitually, and do their duty as the friends and guardians of those among whom Providence has appointed their proper place. Here we found neither mud hovels nor naked peasantry, but snug cottages and smiling faces all about. Here there was a very large school in the village, of which masters and pupils were in a nearly equal proportion Protestants and Roman Catholics, the Protestant squire himself making it a regular part of his daily business to visit the scene of their operations, and strenghten authority and enforce discipline by his personal superintendence. Here, too, we pleased ourselves with recognising some of the sweetest features in Goldsmith's picture of

"Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain;"

and, in particular, we had "the playful children just let loose from school" in perfection. Mr. Edgeworth's paternal heart delighted in letting them make a playground of his lawn; and every evening after dinner we saw leap-frog going on with the highest spirit within fifty yards of the drawing-room windows, while fathers and mothers, and their aged parents also, were grouped about among the trees watching the sport. It is a curious enough coincidence that Oliver Goldsmith and Maria Edgeworth should both have derived their early love and knowledge of Irish character and manners from the same identical district. He received part of his education at this very school of Edgeworthstown; and Pallasmore, (the *locus cui nomen est Pallas* of Johnson's epitaph,) the little hamlet where the author of the Vicar of Wakefield first saw the light, is still, as it was in his time, the property of the Edgeworths.

It may well be imagined with what lively interest Sir Walter surveyed the scenery with which so many of the proudest recollections of Ireland must ever be associated, and how curiously he studied the rural manners it presented to him, in the hope (not disappointed) of being able to trace some of his friend's bright creations to their first hints and germs. On the delight with which he contemplated her position in the midst of her own large and happy domestic circle I need say still less. The reader is aware by this time how deeply he condemned and pitied the conduct and fate of those who, gifted with pre-eminent talents for the instruction and entertainment of their species at large, fancy themselves entitled to neglect those every-day duties and charities of life, from the mere shadowing of which in imaginary pictures the genius of poetry and romance has always reaped its highest and purest, perhaps its only true and immortal honours. In Maria he hailed a sister spirit; one who, at the summit of literary fame, took the same modest, just, and, let me add, *Christian* view of the relative importance of the feelings, the obligations, and the hopes in which we are all equally partakers, and those talents and accomplishments which may seem, to vain and short-sighted eyes, sufficient to constitute their possessors into an order and species apart from the rest of their kind. Such fantastic conceits found no shelter with either of these powerful minds. I was then a young man, and I cannot forget how much I was struck at the time by some words that fell from one of them, when, in the course of a walk in the park at Edgeworthstown, I happened to use some phrase which conveyed (though not perhaps meant to do so) the impression that I suspected Poets and Novelists of being a good deal accustomed to look at life and the world only as materials for art. A soft and pensive shade came over Scott's face as he said—"I fear you have some very young ideas in your head:—are you not too apt to measure things by some reference to literature—to disbelieve that any body can be worth much care who has no knowledge of that sort of thing, or taste for it? God help us! what a poor world this would be if that were the true doctrine! I have read books enough, and observed and conversed with enough of eminent and splendidly cultivated minds, too, in my time, but, I assure you, I have heard higher sentiments from the lips of poor *uneducated* men and women, when exerting the spirit of severe yet gentle heroism under difficulties and afflictions, or speaking their simple thoughts as to circumstances in the lot of friends and neighbours, than I ever yet met with out of the pages of the Bible. We shall never learn to feel and respect our real calling and destiny, unless we have taught ourselves to consider every thing as moonshine, compared with the education of the heart." Maria did not listen to this without some water in her eyes—her tears are always ready when any generous string is touched—(for, as Pope says, "the finest minds, like the finest metals, dissolve the easiest;") but she brushed them gaily aside, and said, "You see how it is—Dean Swift said he had written his books, in order that people might learn to treat him like a great lord. Sir Walter writes his, in order that he may be able to treat his people as a great lord ought to do."

Lest I should forget to mention it, I put down here a rebuke which, later in his life, Sir Walter once gave in my hearing to his daughter Anne. She happened to say of something, I forget what, that she could not abide it—it was *vulgar*. "My love," said her father, "you speak like a very young lady; do you know, after all, the meaning of this word *vulgar?* 'Tis only *common;* nothing that is common, except wickedness, can deserve to be spoken of in a tone of contempt; and when you have lived to my years, you will be disposed to agree with me in thanking God that nothing really worth having or caring about in this world is *uncommon*."

At Edgeworthstown he received the following letter from Mr. Canning:—

To Sir Walter Scott, Bart. &c. &c.

"Come Wood, July 24, 1825.

"My dear Sir,

"A pretty severe indisposition has prevented me from sooner acknowledging your kind letter; and now I fear that I shall not be able to accomplish my visit to Scotland this year, Although I shall be, for the last fortnight of August, at no great distance from the Borders, my time is so limited that I cannot reckon upon getting farther.

"I rejoice to see that my countrymen (for, though I was accidentally born in London, I consider myself an Irishman) have so well known the value of the honour which you are paying to them.

"By the way, if you landed at Liverpool on your return, could you find a better road to the north than through the Lake country? You would find me (from about the 10th of August) and Charles Ellis* at my friend Mr. Bolton's, on the Banks of Windermere, where I can promise you as kind, though not so noisy a welcome, as that which you have just experienced; and where our friend the Professor (who is Admiral of the Lake) would fit out all his flotilla, and fire as many of his guns as are not painted ones, in honour of your arrival.—Yours, my dear sir, very sincerely,

GEO. CANNING."

This invitation was not to be resisted; and the following letter announced a change of the original route to Mr. Morritt.

"*To John B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park, Greta Bridge.*

"Edgeworthstown, Aug. 3, 1825.

"Your kind letter, my dear Morritt, finds me sweltering under the hottest weather I ever experienced, for the

* Now Lord Seaford.

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sake of seeing sights—of itself, you know, the most feverish occupation in the world. Luckily we are free of Dublin, and there is nothing around us but green fields and fine trees, 'barring the high-roads,' which make those who tread on them the most complete *piepoudreux* ever seen; that is, if the old definition of *piepoudres* be authentic, and if not, you may seek another dusty simile for yourself—it cannot exceed the reality. I have with me Lockhart and Anne, Walter and his *cara sposa*, for all whom the hospitality of Edgeworthstown has found ample space and verge enough. Indeed it is impossible to conceive the extent of this virtue in all classes; I don't think even our Scottish hospitality can match that of Ireland. Every thing seems to give way to the desire to accommodate a stranger; and I really believe the story of the Irish harper, who condemned his harp to the flames for want of fire-wood to cook a guest's supper. Their personal kindness to me has been so great, that were it not from the chilling recollection that novelty is easily substituted for merit, I should think, like the booby in Steele's play, that I had been *kept back*, and that there was something more about me than I had ever been led to suspect. As I am L. L. D. of Trinity College, and am qualified as a Catholic seer, by having mounted up into the bed of Saint Kevin, at the celebrated seven churches of Glendalough, I am entitled to prescribe, *ex cathedra*, for all the diseases of Ireland, as being free both of the Catholic and Protestant parties. But the truth is, that Pat, while the doctors were consulting, has been gradually and securely recovering of himself. He is very loath to admit this indeed; there being a strain of hypochondria in his complaints, which will not permit him to believe he's getting better. Nay, he gets even angry when a physician, more blunt than polite, continues to assure him that he is better than he supposes himself; and that much of his present distress consists, partly of the recollection of former indisposition, partly of the severe practice of modern empirics.

"In sober sadness, to talk of the misery of Ireland at this time, is to speak of the illness of a *malade imaginaire*. *Well* she is not, but she is rapidly becoming so. There are all the outward and visible tokens of convalescence. Every thing is mending; the houses that arise are better a hundred-fold than the cabins which are falling; the peasants of the younger class are dressed a great deal better than with the rags which clothe the persons of the more ancient Teagues, which realize the wardrobe of Jenny Sutton, of whom Morris sweetly sings,

> 'One single pin at night let loose
> The robes which veiled her beauty.'

I am sure I have seen with apprehension a single button perform the same feat, and when this mad scare-crow hath girded up his loins to run hastily by the side of the chaise, I have feared it would give way, and that there, as King Lear's fool says, we should be all shamed. But this, which seems once to have generally been the attire of the fair of the Green Isle, probably since the time of King Malachi and the collar of gold, is now fast disappearing, and the habit of the more youthful Pats and Patesses is decent and comely. *Here* they all look well coloured, and well fed, and well contented. And as I see in most places great exertions making to reclaim bogs upon a large scale, and generally to improve ground, I must needs hold that they are in constant employment.

"With all this there is much that remains to be amended; and which time and increase of capital only can amend. The price of labour is far too low, and this naturally reduces the labouring poor beyond their just level in society. The behaviour of the gentry in general to the labourers is systematically harsh, and this arrogance is received with a servile defence which argues any thing excepting affection. This, however, is also in the course of amending. I have heard a great deal of the far-famed Catholic Question from both sides, and I think I see its bearings better than I did; but these are for your ear when we meet—as meet we shall—if no accident prevent it. I return *via* Holyhead, as I wish to show Anne something of England, and you may believe that we shall take Rokeby in our way. To-morrow I go to Killarney, which will occupy most part of the week. About Saturday I shall be back at Dublin to take leave of friends; and then for England, ho! I will, avoiding London, seek a pleasant route to Rokeby. Fate will only allow us to rest there for a day or two, because I have some desire to see Canning, who is to be on the Lakes about that time. *Et finis*. My leave will be exhausted. Anne and Lockhart send kindest compliments to you and the ladies. I am truly rejoiced that Mrs. John Morritt is better. Indeed, I had learned that agreeable intelligence from Lady Louisa Stuart. I found Walter and his wife living happily and rationally, affectionately and prudently. There is great good sense and quietness about all Jane's domestic arrangements, and she plays the leaguer's lady very prettily.—I will write again when I reach Britain, and remain ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

Miss Edgeworth, her sister Harriet, and her brother William, were easily persuaded to join our party for the rest of our Irish travels. We had lingered a week at Edgeworthstown, and were now anxious to make the best of our way towards the Lakes of Killarney; but posting was not to be very rapidly accomplished in those regions by so large a company as had now collected—and we were more agreeably delayed by the hospitalities of Miss Edgeworth's old friends, and several of Sir Walter's new ones, at various mansions on our line of route—of which I must note especially Judge Moore's, at Lamberton, near Maryborough, because Sir Walter pronounced its beneficence to be even beyond the usual Irish scale; for, on reaching our next halting place, which was an indifferent country inn, we discovered that we need be in no alarm as to our dinner at all events, the Judge's people having privately packed up in one of the carriages, ere we started in the morning, a pickled salmon, a most lordly venison pasty, and half-a-dozen bottles of Champagne. But most of these houses seemed, like the judge's, to have been constructed on the principle of the Peri Banou's tent. They seemed all to have room not only for the lion and lionesses, and their respective tails, but for all in the neighbourhood who could be held worthy to inspect them at feeding-time.

It was a succession of festive gaiety wherever we halted; and in the course of our movements we saw many castles, and ruins of all sorts—with more than enough of mountain, wood, lake, and river, to have made any similar progress in any other part of Europe, truly delightful in all respects. But those of the party to whom the South of Ireland was new, had almost continually before them spectacles of abject misery, which robbed these things of more than half their charm. Sir Walter, indeed, with the habitual hopefulness of his temper, persisted that what he saw even in Kerry was better than what books had taught him to expect; and insured, therefore, that improvement, however slow, was going on. But, ever and anon, as we moved deeper into the country, there was a melancholy in his countenance, and, despite himself, in the tone of his voice, which I for one could not mistake. The constant passings and repassings of bands of mounted policemen, armed to the teeth, and having quite the air of highly disciplined soldiers on sharp service; the rueful squalid poverty that crawled by every wayside, and blocked up every village where we had to change horses, with exhibitions of human suffering and degradation, such as it had never entered into our heads to conceive; and, above all, the contrast between these naked clamorous beggars, who seemed to spring out of the ground at every turn like swarms of vermin, and the boundless luxury and merriment surrounding the thinly scattered magnates who condescended to inhabit their ancestral seats, would have been sufficient to poison those landscapes, had Nature dressed them out in the verdure of Arcadia, and art embellished them with all the temples and palaces of old Rome and Athens. It is painful enough even to remember such things; but twelve years can have had but a trifling change in the appearance of a country which, so richly endowed by Providence with every element of wealth and happiness, could, at so advanced a period of European civilisation, sicken the heart of the stranger by such wide-spread manifestations of the wanton and reckless profligacy of human mismanagement, the withering curse of feuds and factions, and the tyrannous selfishness of absenteeism; and I fear it is not likely that any contemporary critic will venture to call my melancholy picture overcharged. A few blessed exceptions—such an aspect of ease and decency, for example, as we met every where on the vast domain of the Duke of Devonshire—served only to make the sad reality of the rule more flagrant and ap-

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palling. Taking his bedroom candle, one night in a village on the Duke's estate, Sir Walter summed up the strain of his discourse by a line of Shakspeare's—

"Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge."

There was, however, abundance of ludicrous incidents to break this gloom; and no traveller ever tasted either the humours or the blunders of Paddy more heartily than did Sir Walter. I find recorded in one letter a very merry morning at Limerick, where, amidst the ringing of all the bells, in honour of the advent, there was ushered in a brother-poet, who must needs pay his personal respects to the author of Marmion. He was a scarecrow figure—attired much in the fashion of the *strugglers*—by name O'Kelly; and he had produced on the spur of the occasion this modest parody of Dryden's famous epigram:—

"Three poets, of three different nations born,
The United Kingdom in this age adorn;
Byron of England, Scott of Scotia's blood,
And Erin's pride—O'Kelly, great and good."

Sir Walter's five shillings were at once forthcoming; and the bard, in order that Miss Edgeworth might display equal generosity, pointed out, in a little volume of his works, (for which, moreover, we had all to subscribe,) this pregnant couplet:—

"Scott, Morgan, Edgeworth, Byron, prop of Greece,
Are characters whose fame not soon will cease."

We were still more amused (though these were real misery in the case) with what befel on our approach to a certain pretty seat, in a different county, where there was a collection of pictures and curiosities, not usually shown to travellers. A gentleman whom we had met in Dublin, had been accompanying us part of the day's journey, and volunteered, being acquainted with the owner, to procure us easy admission. At the entrance of the domain, to which we proceeded under his wing, we were startled by the dolorous apparition of two undertaker's men, in voluminous black scarfs, though there was little or nothing of black about the rest of their habiliments, who sat upon the highway before the gate, with a whiskey-bottle on a deal-table between them. They informed us that the master of the house had died the day before, and that they were to keep watch and ward in this style until the funeral, inviting all Christian passengers to drink a glass to his repose. Our Cicerone left his card for the widow—having previously, no doubt, written on it the names of his two lions. Shortly after we regained our post-house, he received a polite answer from the lady. To the best of my memory, it was in these terms:—

"Mrs. —— presents her kind compliments to Mr. ——, and much regrets that she cannot show the pictures to-day, as Major —— died yesterday evening by apoplexy; which Mrs. —— the more regrets, as it will prevent her having the honour to see Sir Walter Scott and Miss Edgeworth."

Sir Walter said it reminded him of a woman in Fife, who, summing up the misfortunes of a black year in her history, said—"let me see, sirs; first we lost our wee callant—and then Jenny—and then the gudeman himsel died—and then the *coo* died too, poor hizzey; but, to be sure, *her* hide brought me fifteen shillings."

At one country gentleman's table where we dined, though two grand full-length daubs of William and Mary adorned the walls of the room, there was a mixed company—about as many Catholics as Protestants—all apparently on cordial terms, and pledging each other lustily in bumpers of capital claret. About an hour after dinner, however, punch was called for; tumblers and jugs of hot water appeared, and with them two magnums of whisky, the one bearing on its label KING'S, the other QUEEN'S. We did not at first understand these inscriptions; but it was explained, *sotto voce*, that the King's had paid the duty; the Queen's was of contraband origin; and, in the choice of the liquors, we detected a new shibboleth of party. The jolly Protestants to a man stuck to the King's bottle; the equally radiant Papists paid their duty to the Queen's.

Since I have alluded at all to the then grand dispute, I may mention, that, after our tour was concluded, we considered with some wonder that, having partaken liberally of Catholic hospitality, and encountered almost every other class of society, we had not sat at meat with one specimen of the Romish priesthood; whereas, even at Popish tables, we had met dignitaries of the Established Church. This circumstance we set down at the time as amounting pretty nearly to a proof that there were few gentlemen in that order; but we afterwards were willing to suspect that a prejudice of their own had been the source of it. The only incivility, which Sir Walter Scott ultimately discovered himself to have encountered, (for his friends did not allow him to hear of it at the time,) in the course of his Irish peregrination, was the refusal of a Roman Catholic gentleman, named O'Connell, who kept stag-hounds near Killarney, to allow of a hunt on the upper lake, the day he visited that beautiful scenery. This he did, as we were told, because he considered it as a notorious fact, that Sir Walter Scott was an enemy to the Roman Catholic claims for admission to seats in Parliament. He was entirely mistaken, however; for, though no man disapproved of Romanism as a system of faith and practice more sincerely than Sir Walter always did, he had long before this period formed the opinion that no good could come of farther resistance to the claim in question. He on all occasions expressed manfully his belief, that the best thing for Ireland would have been never to relax the strictly *political* enactments of the penal laws, however harsh these might appear. Had they been kept in vigour for another half century, it was his conviction that Popery would have been all but extinguished in Ireland. But he thought that, after admitting Romanists to the elective franchise, it was a vain notion that they could be permanently or advantageously debarred from using that franchise in favour of those of their own persuasion. The greater part of the charming society into which he fell while in Ireland, entertained views and sentiments very likely to confirm these impressions; and it struck me that considerable pains were taken to enforce them. It was felt, probably, that the crisis of decision drew near: and there might be a natural anxiety to secure the suffrage of the great writer of the time. The polished amenity of the Lord-Lieutenant set off his commanding range of thought and dexterous exposition of facts to the most captivating advantage. "The Marquis's talk," says Scott, in a letter of the following year, "gave me the notion of the kind of statesmanship that one might have expected in a Roman Emperor, accustomed to keep the whole world in his view, and to divide his hours between ministers like Mecænas and wits like Horace." The acute logic and brilliant eloquence of Lord Plunkett he ever afterwards talked of with high admiration; nor had he, he said, encountered in society any combination of qualities more remarkable than the deep sagacity and the broad rich humour of Mr. Blake. In Plunkett, Blake, and Crampton, he considered himself as having gained three real friends by this expedition; and I think I may venture to say, that the feeling on their side was warmly reciprocal.

If he had been made aware at the time of the discourtesy of the Romish staghunter at Killarney, he might have been consoled by a letter which reached him that same week from a less bigoted member of the same church—the great poet of Ireland—whom he had never chanced to meet in society but once, and that at an early period of life, shortly after the first publication of the Lay of the Last Minstrel.

To Sir Walter Scott, Bart. &c. &c.

"Sloperton Cottage, Devizes, July 24, 1825.

"My dear Sir Walter,

"I wish most heartily that I had been in my own green land to welcome you. It delights me, however, to see (what I could not have doubted) that the warm hearts of my countrymen have shown that they know how to value you. How I envy those who will have the glory of showing you and Killarney to each other! No

two of nature's productions, I *will* say, were ever more worthy of meeting. If the Kenmares should be your Ciceroni, pray tell them what I say of their Paradise, with my best regards and greetings. I received your kind message, through Newton,* last year, that 'if I did not come and see you, before you died, you would appear to me afterwards.' Be assured that, as I am all for living apparitions, I shall take care and have the start of you, and would have done it this very year, I rather think, only for your Irish movements.

"Present my best regards to your son-in-law, and believe me, my dear Sir Walter (though we have met, I am sorry to say, but once in our lives,)

"Yours, cordially and sincerely,

THOMAS MOORE."

Scott's answer was—

To Thomas Moore, Esq.

"August 5, Somerton, near Templeton (I think.)

"My dear Sir,

"If any thing could have added to the pleasure I must necessarily feel at the warm reception which the Irish nation have honoured me with, or if any thing could abate my own sence that I am no ways worth the coil that has been made about me, it must be the assurance that you partake and approve of the feelings of your kind-hearted countryfolks.

"In Ireland I have met with every thing that was kind, and have seen much which is never to be forgotten. What I have seen has, in general, given me great pleasure; for it appears to me that the adverse circumstances which have so long withered the prosperity of this rich and powerful country are losing their force, and that a gradual but steady spirit of progressive improvement is effectually, though tacitly, counteracting their bad effects. The next twenty-five years will probably be the most important in their results that Ireland ever knew. So prophesies a sharp-sighted Sennachie from the land of mist and snow, aware that, though his opinion may be unfounded, he cannot please your ear better than by presaging the prosperity of Ireland.

"And so, to descend from such high matters, I hope you will consider me as having left my card for you by this visit, although I have not been happy enough to find you at home. You are bound by the ordinary forms of society to return the call, and come to see Scotland. Bring wife and bairns. We have plenty of room, and plenty of oatmeal, and, *entre nous*, a bottle or two of good claret, to which I think you have as little objection as I have. We will talk of poor Byron, who was dear to us both, and regret that such a rose should have fallen from the chaplet of his country so untimely. I very often think of him almost with tears. Surely you, who have the means, should do something for his literary life at least. You might easily avoid tearing open old wounds. Then, returning to our proposed meeting, you know folks call me a Jacobite, and you a Jacobin; so it is quite clear that we agree to a T. Having uttered this vile pun, which is only pardonable because the subject of politics deserves no better, it is high time to conclude.

"I return through England, yet, I am afraid, with little chance of seeing you, which I should wish to do were it but for half an hour. I have come thus far on my way to Killarney, where Hallam is lying with a broken leg. So much for middle-aged gentlemen climbing precipices. I, who have been regularly inducted into the bed of St. Kevin at the Seven Churches, trust I shall bear charmed limbs upon this occasion.—I am very much, dear sir, your obliged and faithful

WALTER SCOTT."

Having crossed the hills from Killarney to Cork, where a repetition of the Dublin reception—corporation honours, deputations of the literary and scientific societies, and so forth—awaited him, he gave a couple of days to she hospitality of this flourishing town, and the beautiful scenery of the Shannon; not forgetting an excursion to the groves of Blarney, among whose shades we had a right mirthful pic-nic. Sir Walter scrambled up to the top of the castle, and kissed, with due faith and devotion, the famous *Blarney stone*, one salute of which is said to emancipate the pilgrim from all future visitations of *mauvaise honte:*

"The stone this is, whoever kisses,
He never misses to grow eloquent—
'Tis he may clamber to a lady's chamber,
Or be a member of Parliament."

* The late amiable and elegant artist, Gilbert Stewart Newton, R. A., had spent part of the autumn of 1824 at Chiefswood.

But the shamefacedness of our young female friends was not exposed to an inspection of the works of art, celebrated by the poetical Dean of Cork as the prime ornaments of the Lady Jefferies's "station,"

"The statues growing that noble place in,
Of heathen goddesses most rare—
Homer, Venus, and Nebuchadnezzar,
All standing naked in the open air."

These had disappeared, and the castle and all its appurtenances were in a state of woful dilapidation and neglect.

From Cork we proceeded to Dublin by Fermoy, Lismore, Cashel, Kilkenny, and Holycross—at all of which places we were bountifully entertained, and assiduously ciceroned—to our old quarters in St. Stephen's green; and after a morning or two spent in taking leave of many kind faces that he was never to see again, Sir Walter and his original fellow-travellers started for Holyhead on the 18th of August. Our progress through North Wales produced nothing worth recording, except perhaps the feeling of delight which every thing in the aspect of the common people, their dress, their houses, their gardens, and their husbandry, could not fail to call up in persons who had just been seeing Ireland for the first time; and a short visit (which was, indeed, the only one he made) to the far-famed "ladies" of Llangollen. They had received some hint that Sir Walter meant to pass their Way; and on stopping at the inn, he received an invitation so pressing to add one more to the long list of the illustrious visiters of their retreat, that it was impossible for him not to comply. We had read histories and descriptions enough of these romantic spinsters, and were prepared to be well amused; but the reality surpassed all expectation.

An extract from a gossipping letter of the following week will perhaps be sufficient for Llangollen.

"Ellesray, August 24.

* * * "We slept on Wednesday evening at Capel Carig, which Sir W. supposes to mean the Chapel of the Crags; a pretty little inn in a most picturesque situation certainly, and as to the matter of toasted cheese, quite exquisite. Next day we advanced through, I verily believe, the most perfect gem of a country eye ever saw, having almost all the wildness of Highland backgrounds, and all the loveliness of rich English landscape nearer us, and streams like the purest and most babbling of our own. At Llangollen your papa was waylaid by the celebrated 'Ladies'—viz. Lady Eleanor Butler and the Honourable Miss Ponsonby, who having been one or both crossed in love, foreswore all dreams of matrimony in the heyday of youth, beauty, and fashion, and selected this charming spot for the repose of their now time-honoured virginity. It was many a day, however, before they could get implicit credit for being the innocent friends they really were, among the people of the neighbourhood; for their elopement from Ireland had been performed under suspicious circumstances; and as Lady Eleanor arrived here in her natural aspect of a pretty girl, while Miss Ponsonby had condescended to accompany her in the garb of a smart footman in buckskin breeches, years and years elapsed ere full justice was done to the character of their romance. We proceeded up the hill, and found every thing about them and their habitation odd and extravagant beyond report. Imagine two women, one apparently 70, the other 65, dressed in heavy blue riding habits, enormous shoes, and men's hats, with their petticoats so tucked up, that at the first glance of them, fussing and tottering about their porch in the agony of expectation, we took them for a couple of hazy or crazy old sailors. On nearer inspection they both wear a world of brooches, rings, &c., and Lady Eleanor positively *orders*—several stars and crosses, and a red ribbon, exactly like a K. C. B. To crown all, they have crop heads, shaggy, rough, bushy, and as white as snow, the one with age alone, the other assisted by a sprinkling of powder. The older lady is almost blind, and every way much decayed; the other, the ci-devant groom, in good preservation. But who could paint the prints, the dogs, the cats, the miniatures, the cram of cabinets, clocks, glass-cases, books, bijouterie, dragon-china, nodding mandarins, and whirligigs of every shape and hue—the whole house outside and in (for we must see every thing to the dressing closets,) *covered* with carved oak, very rich and fine some of it—and the illustrated copies of Sir W.'s poems, and the joking simpering compliments about Waverley, and the anxiety to know

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who MacIvor really was, and the absolute devouring of the poor Unknown, who had to carry off, besides all the rest, one small bit of literal *butter* dug up in a Milesian stone jar lately from the bottom of some Irish bog. Great romance, i. e. absurd innocence of character, one must have looked for; but it was confounding to find this mixed up with such eager curiosity, and enormous knowledge of the tattle and scandal of the world they had so long left. Their tables were piled with newspapers from every corner of the kingdom, and they seemed to have the deaths and marriages of the antipodes at their fingers' ends. Their albums and autographs, from Louis XVIII. and George IV., down to magazine poets and quack-doctors, are a museum. I shall never see the spirit of blue-stockingism again in such perfect incarnation. Peveril won't get over their final kissing match for a week. Yet it is too bad to laugh at these good old girls; they have long been the guardian angels of the village, and are worshipped by man, woman, and child about them."

This letter was written on the banks of Windermere, where we were received with the warmth of old friendship by Mr. Wilson, and one whose grace and gentle goodness could have found no lovelier or fitter home than Elleray, except where she is now.

Mr. Bolton's seat, to which Canning had invited Scott, is situated a couple of miles lower down on the same Lake; and thither Mr. Wilson conducted him next day. A large company had been assembled there in honour of the Minister—it included already Mr. Wordsworth and Mr. Southey. It has not, I suppose, often hapened to a plain English merchant, wholly the architect of his own fortunes, to entertain at one time a party embracing so many illustrious names. He was proud of his guests; they respected him, and honoured and loved each other; and it would have been difficult to say which star in the constellation shone with the brightest or the softest light. There was "high discourse," intermingled with as gay flashings of courtly wit as ever Canning displayed; and a plentiful allowance, on all sides, of those airy transient pleasantries, in which the fancy of poets, however wise and grave, delights to run riot when they are sure not to be misunderstood. There were beautiful and accomplished women to adorn and enjoy this circle. The weather was as Elysian as the scenery. There were brilliant cavalcades through the woods in the mornings, and delicious boatings on the Lake by moon-light; and the last day "the Admiral of the Lake" presided over one of the most splendid regattas that ever enlivened Windermere. Perhaps there were not fewer than fifty barges following in the Professor's radiant procession, when it paused at the point of Storrs to admit into the place of honour the vessel that carried kind and happy Mr. Bolton and his guests. The three bards of the Lakes led the cheers that hailed Scott and Canning; and music and sunshine, flags, streamers, and gay dresses, the merry hum of voices, and the rapid splashing of innumerable oars, made up a dazzling mixture of sensations as the flotilla wound its way among the richly-foliaged islands, and along bays and promontories peopled with enthusiastic spectators.

On at last quitting the festive circle of Storrs, we visited the family of the late Bishop Watson at Calgarth, and Mr. Wordsworth at his charming retreat of Mount Rydal. He accompanied us to Keswick, where we saw Mr. Southey re-established in his unrivalled library. Mr. Wordsworth and his daughter then turned with us, and passing over Kirkstone to Ulswater, conducted us first to his friend Mr. Marshall's elegant villa, near Lyulph's Tower, and on the next day to the noble castle of his life-long friend and patron Lord Lonsdale. The Earl and Countess had their halls filled with another splendid circle of distinguished persons, who, like them, lavished all possible attentions and demonstrations of respect upon Sir Walter. He remained a couple of days, and perambulated, under Wordsworth's guidance, the superb terraces and groves of the "fair domain," which that poet has connected with the noblest monument of his genius. But the temptations of Storrs and Lowther had cost more time than had been calculated upon, and the promised visit to Rokeby was unwillingly abandoned. Sir Walter reached Abbotsford again on the first of September, and said truly that "his tour had been one ovation."

I add two letters on the subject of this Irish expedition:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park, Greta Bridge.

"Abbotsford, Sept. 2, 1825.

"Your letter, my dear Morritt, gave me most sincere pleasure on your account, and also on my own, as it reconciled me to myself for my stupidity in misdirecting my letters to Charlotte and you from Wales. I was sincerely vexed when I found out my *bevue*, but am now well pleased that it happened, since we might otherwise have arrived at Rokeby at a time when we must necessarily have been a little in the way. I wish you joy most sincerely of your nephew's settling in life, in a manner so agreeably to your wishes and views. *Bella gerant alii*—he will have seen enough of the world abroad to qualify him fully to estimate and discharge the duties of an English country-gentleman; and with your example before him, and your advice to resort to, he cannot, with the talents he possesses, fail to fill honourably that most honourable and important rank in society. You will, probably, in due time, think of Parliament for him, where there is a fine sphere for young men of talents at present, all the old political post-horses being, as Sir Pertinax says, dry-foundered.

"I was extremely sorry to find Canning at Windermere looking poorly: but, in a ride, the old man seemed to come alive again. I fear he works himself too hard, under the great error of trying to do too much with his own hand, and to see every thing with his own eyes, whereas the greatest general and the first statesman must, in many cases, be content to use the eyes and fingers of others, and hold themselves contented with the exercise of the greatest care in the choice of implements. His is a valuable life to us just now. I passed a couple of days at Lowther, to make up in some degree to Anne for her disappointment in not getting to Rokeby. I was seduced there by Lady Frederick Bentinck, whom I had long known as a very agreeable person, and who was very kind to Anne. This wore out my proposed leisure; and from Lowther we reached Abbotsford in one day, and now doth the old *bore* feed in the old frank.* I had the great pleasure of leaving Walter and his little wife well, happy, and, as they seem perfectly to understand each other, likely to continue so. His ardour for military affairs continues unabated, and his great scene of activity is the *fifteen acres*—so the Irish denominate the exercising ground, consisting of about fifty acres, in the Phœnix Park, which induced an attorney, writing a challenge to a brother of the trade, to name, as a place of meeting, the *fifteen acres*, adding, with professional accuracy, 'be they more or less.' Here about 3000 men, the garrison of Dublin, are to be seen exercising, ever and anon, in order that Pat may be aware how some 2400 muskets, assisted by the discharge of twenty field-pieces, and the tramp of 500 or 600 horse, sound, in comparison to the thunder of Mr. O'Connell.

"All this travelling and wooing is like to prevent our meeting this season. I hope to make up for it the next. Lady Scott, Anne, and Sophia join Lockhart and me in best wishes to the happy two who are to be soon one. My best respects attend the Miss Morritts, and I ever am, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Abbotsford, October 12, 1825.

"It did not require your kind letter of undeserved remembrance, my dear friend, to remind me that I had been guilty very criminal negligence in our epistolary correspondence. How this has come to pass I really do not know; but it arises out of any source but that of ingratitude to my friends, or thoughtless forgetfulness of my duty to them. On the contrary, I think always most of them to whom I do owe letters, for when my conscience is satisfied on that subject, their perturbed spirits remain at rest, or at least do not haunt me as the injured spirits do the surviving murderers.

"I well intended to have written from Ireland, but, alas! Hell, as some stern old divine says, is paved with good intentions. There was such a whirl of visiting, and laking, and boating, and wondering, and shouting, and laughing, and carousing; so much to be seen and so little time to see it; so much to be heard and only two ears to listen to twenty voices, that, upon the whole, I grew desperate, and gave up all thoughts of doing what was right and proper upon post-days—and so all my epis-

* 2d *King Henry IV.*, Act II. Sc. 3.

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tolary good intentions are gone to Macadamize, I suppose, 'the burning marle' of the infernal regions. I have not the pen of our friend, Maria Edgeworth, who writes all the while she laughs, talks, eats, and drinks, and I believe, though I do not pretend to be so far in the secret, all the time she sleeps too. She has good luck in having a pen which walks at once so unweariedly and so well. I do not, however, quite like her last book on Education, considered as a general work. She should have limited the title to Education in Natural Philosophy, or some such term, for there is no great use in teaching children in general to roof houses or build bridges, which, after all, a carpenter or a mason does a great deal better at 2s. 6d. per day. In a waste country, like some parts of America, it may do very well, or perhaps for a sailor or a traveller, certainly for a civil engineer. But in the ordinary professions of the better-informed orders I have always observed, that a small taste for mechanics tends to encouraging a sort of trifling self-conceit, founded on knowing that which is not worth being known by one who has other matters to employ his mind on, and in short, forms a trumpery gimcrack kind of a character who is a mechanic among gentlemen, and most probably a gentleman among mechanics. You must understand I mean only to challenge the system as making mechanics too much and too general a subject of education, and converting scholars into makers of toys. Men like Watt, or whose genius tends strongly to invent and execute those wonderful combinations which extend in such an incalculable degree the human force and command over the physical world, do not come within ordinary rules; but your ordinary Harry should be kept to his grammar, and your Lucy of most common occurrence will be best employed on her sampler, instead of wasting wood, and cutting their fingers, which I am convinced they did, though their historian says nothing of it.

"Well, but I did not mean to say any thing about Harry and Lucy, whose dialogues are very interesting after all, but about Ireland, which I could prophesy for as well as if I were Thomas the Rhymer. Her natural gifts are so great, that, despite all the disadvantages which have hitherto retarded her progress, she will, I believe, be queen of the trefoil of kingdoms. I never saw a richer country, or, to speak my mind, a finer people; the worst of them is the bitter and envenomed dislike which they have to each other. Their factions have been so long envenomed, and they have such narrow ground to do their battle in, that they are like people fighting with daggers in a hogshead. This, however, is getting better, for as the government temporizes between the parties, and does not throw, as formerly, its whole weight into the Protestant scale, there is more appearance of things settling into concord and good order. The Protestants of the old school, the determined Orangemen, are a very fine race, but dangerous for the quiet of a country; they reminded me of the Spaniards in Mexico, and seemed still to walk among the Catholics with all the pride of the conquerors of the Boyne and the captors of Limerick. Their own belief is completely fixed, that there are enough of men in Down and Antrim to conquer all Ireland again; and when one considers the habitual authority they have exercised, their energetic and military character, and the singular way in which they are banded and united together, they may be right enough for what I know, for they have all one mind and one way of pursuing it. But the Catholic is holding up his head now in a different way from what they did in former days, though still with a touch of the savage about them. It is, after all, a helpless sort of superstition, which with its saints' days, and the influence of its ignorant bigoted priesthood, destroys ambition and industrious exertion. It is rare to see the Catholic rise above the line he is born in. The Protestant part of the country is as highly improved as many parts of England. Education is much more frequent in Ireland than in England. In Kerry, one of the wildest counties, you find peasants who speak Latin. It is not the art of reading, however, but the use which is made of it, that is to be considered. It is much to be wished that the priests themselves were better educated, but the college at Maynooth has been a failure. The students, all men of the lower orders, are educated there in all the bigotry of the Catholic religion, unmitigated by any of the knowledge of the world which they used to acquire in France, Italy, or Spain, from which they returned very often highly accomplished and companionable men. I do not believe either party care a bit for what is called emancipation, only that the Catholics desire it because the Protestants are not willing they should have it, and the Protestants desire to withhold it, because the want of it mortifies the Catholic. The best-informed Catholics said it had no interest for the common people, whose distresses had nothing to do with political emancipation, but that they, the higher order, were interested in it as a point of honour, the withholding of which prevented their throwing their strength into the hands of Government. On the whole, I think Government have given the Catholics so much, that withholding this is just giving them something to grumble about, without its operating to diminish, in a single instance, the extent of Popery.—Then we had beautiful lakes, 'those vast inland seas,' as Spenser terms them, and hills which they call mountains, and dargles and dingles, and most superb ruins of castles and abbeys, and live nuns in strict retreat, not permitted to speak, but who read their breviaries with one eye, and looked at their visiters with the other. Then we had Miss Edgeworth, and the kind-natured clever Harriet, who moved, and thought, and acted for every body's comfort rather than her own; we had Lockhart to say clever things, and Walter, with his whiskers, to overawe obstinate postboys and impudent beggars—and Jane to bless herself that the folks had neither houses, clothes, nor furniture—and Anne to make fun from morning to night—

'And merry folks were we.'

"John Richardson has been looking at a wild domain within five miles of us, and left us in the earnest determination to buy it, having caught a basket of trouts in the space of two hours in the stream he is to call his own. It is a good purchase, I think: he has promised to see me again and carry you up a bottle of whisky, which, if you will but take enough of, will operate as a peace-offering should, and make you forget all my epistolary failures. I beg kind respects to dear Mrs. Agnes and to Mrs. Baillie. Lady Scott and Anne send best respects.—I have but room to say that I am always yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

CHAPTER LXIV.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON IN PROGRESS — VISITS OF MR. MOORE, MRS. COUTTS, ETC. — COMMERCIAL MANIA AND IMPENDING DIFFICULTIES OF 1825.

Without an hour's delay Sir Walter resumed his usual habits of life at Abbotsford—the musing ramble among his own glens, the breezy ride over the moors, the merry spell at the woodman's axe, or the festive chase of Newark, Fernilee, Hangingshaw, or Deloraine; the quiet old-fashioned contentment of the little domestic circle, alternating with the brilliant phantasmagoria of admiring, and sometimes admired, strangers—or the hoisting of the telegraph flag that called laird and bonnet-laird to the burning of the water, or the wassail of the hall. The hours of the closet alone had found a change. The preparation for the Life of Napoleon was a course of such hard reading as had not been called for while "the great magician," in the full sunshine of ease, amused himself, and delighted the world, by unrolling, fold after fold, his endlessly varied panorama of romance. That miracle had to all appearance cost him no effort. Unmoved and serene among the multiplicities of worldly business, and the invasions of half Europe and America, he had gone on tranquilly enjoying rather than exerting his genius, in the production of those masterpieces which have peopled all our fire-sides with inexpensive friends, and rendered the solitary supremacy of Shakespeare, as an all-comprehensive and genial painter of man, no longer a proverb.

He had, while this was the occupation of his few desk-hours, read only for his diversion. How much he read even then, his correspondence may have afforded some notion. Those who observed him the most constantly were never able to understand how he contrived to keep himself so thoroughly up to the stream of contemporary literature of almost all sorts, French and German, as well as English. That a rapid glance might tell him more than another man could gather by a week's poring, may easily be guessed; but the grand secret was his perpetual practice of his own grand maxim, *never to be doing nothing*. He had no "unconsidered trifles" of time. Every moment was turned to account; and thus he had leisure for every thing—except, indeed, the newspapers, which consume so many precious hours nowadays with most men, and of which, during the period of my acquaintance with him, he certainly read less than any other man I ever knew that had any habit of reading at all. I should also except, speaking generally, the reviews

and magazines of the time. Of these he saw few, and of the few he read little.

He had now to apply himself doggedly to the mastering of a huge accumulation of historical materials. He read and noted, and indexed with the pertinacity of some pale compiler in the British Museum; but rose from such employment, not radiant and buoyant, as after he had been feasting himself among the teeming harvests of Fancy, but with an aching brow, and eyes on which the dimness of years had begun to plant some specks, before they were subjected again to that straining over small print and difficult manuscript which had, no doubt, been familiar to them in the early time, when (in Shortreed's phrase) "he was making himself." It was a pleasant sight when one happened to take a passing peep into his den, to see the white head erect, and the smile of conscious inspiration on his lips, while the pen, held boldly and at a commanding distance, glanced steadily and gaily along a fast-blackening page of "The Talisman." It now often made me sorry to catch a glimpse of him, stooping and poring with his spectacles, amidst piles of authorities, a little note-book ready in the left hand, that had always used to be at liberty for patting Maida. To observe this was the more painful, because I had at that time to consult him about some literary proposals, the closing with which would render it necessary for me to abandon my profession and residence in Edinburgh, and with them the hope of being able to relieve him of some part of the minor labours in which he was now involved; an assistance on which he had counted when he undertook this historical task. There were then about me, indeed, cares and anxieties of various sorts that might have thrown a shade even over a brighter vision of his interior. For the circumstance that finally determined me, and reconciled him as to the proposed alteration in my views of life, was the failing health of an infant equally dear to us both. It was, in a word, the opinion of our medical friends, that the short-lived child of many and high hopes, whose name will go down to posterity with one of Sir Walter's most precious works, could hardly survive another northern winter; and we all flattered ourselves with the anticipation that my removal to London at the close of 1825 might pave the way for a happy resumption of the cottage at Chiefswood in the ensuing summer. *Dis aliter visum.*

During the latter months of 1825, while the matter to which I have alluded was yet undecided, I had to make two hurried journeys to London, by which I lost the opportunity of witnessing Sir Walter's reception of several eminent persons with whom he then formed or ratified a friendship;—among others the late admirable Master of the Rolls, Lord Gifford, and his Lady—who spent some days at Abbotsford, and detected nothing of the less agreeable features in its existence, which I have been dwelling upon; Dr. Philpotts, now Bishop of Exeter; and also the brother bard, who had expressed his regret at not being present "when Scott and Killarney were introduced to each other." No more welcome announcement ever reached Scott than Mr. Moore's of his purpose to make out, that same season, his long meditated expedition to Scotland; and the characteristic opening and close of the reply will not, I hope, be thrown away upon my reader, any more than they were on the warm-hearted minstrel of Erin.

To Thomas Moore, Esq., Sloperton Cottage, Devizes.

"Abbotsford, Thursday.

"My dear Sir.—Damn Sir—My dear Moore,

"Few things could give me more pleasure than your realizing the prospect your letter holds out to me. We are at Abbotsford fixtures till 10th November, when my official duty, for I am 'slave to an hour and vassal to a bell,' calls me to Edinburgh. I hope you will give me as much of your time as you can—no one will value it more highly.

"You keep the great north road till you come to the last stage in England, Cornhill, and then take up the Tweed to Kelso. If I knew what day you would be at Kelso, I would come down, and do the honours of Tweedside, by bringing you here, and shewing you any thing that is remarkable by the way; but though I could start at a moment's warning, I should scarce, I fear, have time to receive a note from Newcastle soon enough to admit of my reaching you at Kelso. Drop me a line, however, at all events; and, in coming from Kelso to Melrose and Abbotsford, be sure to keep the southern side of the Tweed, both because it is far the pleasantest route, and because I will come a few miles to take the chance of meeting you. You do not mention whether you have any fellow-travellers. We have plenty of accommodation for any part of your family, or any friend, who may be with you.—Yours, in great joy and expectation,

WALTER SCOTT."

Mr. Moore arrived accordingly—and he remained several days. Though not, I believe, a regular journalizer, he kept a brief diary during his Scotch tour, and he has kindly allowed me the use of it. He fortunately found Sir Walter in an interval of repose—no one with him at Abbotsford, but Lady and Miss Scott—and no company at dinner except the Fergusons and Laidlaw. The two poets had thus the opportunity of a great deal of quiet conversation; and from the hour they met, they seem to have treated each other with a full confidence, the record of which, however touchingly honourable to both, could hardly be made public *in extenso* while one of them survives. The first day they were alone after dinner, and the talk turned chiefly on the recent death of Byron—from which Scott passed unaffectedly to his own literary history. Mr. Moore listened with great interest to details, now no longer new, about the early days of ballad-hunting, Mat Lewis, the Minstrelsy, and the Poems; and "at last," says he, "to my no small surprise, as well as pleasure, he mentioned the novels, without any reserve, as his own. He gave me an account of the original progress of those extraordinary works, the hints supplied for them, the conjectures and mystification to which they had given rise, &c. &c.:" he concluded with saying, "they have been a mine of wealth to me—but I find I fail in them now—I can no longer make them so good as at first." This frankness was met as it should have been by the brother poet; and when he entered Scott's room next morning, "he laid his hand," says Mr. Moore, "with a sort of cordial earnestness on my breast, and said—*Now, my dear Moore, we are friends for life.*" They sallied out for a walk through the plantations, and among other things, the commonness of the poetic talent in these days was alluded to. "Hardly a Magazine is now published," said Moore, "that does not contain verses, which some thirty years ago would have made a reputation." Scott turned with his look of shrewd humour, as if chuckling over his own success, and said, "Ecod, we were in the luck of it to come before these fellows;" but he added, playfully flourishing his stick as he spoke, "we have, like Bobadil, taught them to beat us with our own weapons." "In complete novelty," says Moore, "he seemed to think lay the only chance for a man ambitious of high literary reputation in these days."

Mr. Moore was not less pleased than Washington Irving had been nine years before with Scott's good friend at Kaeside. He says:—"Our walk was to the cottage of Mr. Laidlaw, his bailiff, a gentleman who had been reduced beneath his due level in life, and of whom Scott spoke with the most cordial respect. His intention was, he said, to ask him to come down and dine with us:—the cottage homely, but the man himself, with his broad Scotch dialect, showing all the quiet self-possession of good breeding and good sense."

At Melrose, writes Mr. Moore,—"With the assistance of the sexton, a shrewd, sturdy-mannered original he explained to me all the parts of the ruin; after which we were shown up to a room in the sexton's house, filled with casts done by himself, from the ornaments, heads, &c. of the abbey. Seeing a large niche empty, Scott said, 'Johnny, I'll give you a Virgin and Child to put in that place.' Never did I see a happier face than Johnny's at this news—it was all over smiles. 'But, Johnny,' con-

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tinued Scott, as we went down stairs, 'I'm afraid, if there should be another anti-popish rising, you'll have your house pulled about your ears.' When we had got into the carriage, I said, 'You have made that man most truly happy.'—'Eeod, then,' he replied, 'there are two of us pleased, for I was very much puzzled to know what to do with that Virgin and child; and mama particularly' (meaning Lady Scott) 'will be delighted to get rid of it.' A less natural man would have allowed me to remain under the impression that he had really done a very generous thing."

They called the same morning at Huntly Burn:—"I could not help thinking," (says Moore,) "during this homely visit, how astonished some of those French friends of mine would be, among whom the name of Sir Walter Scott is encircled only with high and romantic associations, to see the quiet, neighbourly manner in which he took his seat beside these good old maids, and the familiar ease with which they treated him in return. No common squire indeed, with but half an idea in his head, could have fallen into the gossip of humdrum country-visit with more unassumed simplicity."

Mr. Moore would have been likely to make the same sort of observation, had he accompanied Sir Walter into any other house in the valley; but he could not be expected to appreciate off-hand the very uncommon intellectual merits of "those old maids" of Huntly Burn—who had enjoyed the inestimable advantage of living from youth to age in the atmosphere of genius, learning, good sense, and high principle.

He was of course delighted at the dinner which followed, when Scott had collected his neighbours to enjoy his guest, with the wit and humour of Sir Adam Ferguson, his picturesque stories of the Peninsula, and his inimitable singing of the old Jacobite ditties. "Nothing," he writes, "could be more hearty and radiant than Scott's enjoyment of them, though his attempts to join in the chorus showed certainly far more of will than of power. He confessed that he hardly knew high from low in music. I told him that Lord Byron, in the same manner, knew nothing of music as an art, but still had a strong feeling of it, and that I had more than once seen the tears come into his eyes as he listened. 'I dare say,' said Scott, 'that Byron's feeling and mine about music might be pretty much the same.' —I was much struck by his description of a scene he had once with Lady —— (the divorced Lady ——) upon her eldest boy, who had been borne before her marriage with Lord ——, asking her why he himself was not Lord —— (the second title.) 'Do you hear that?' she exclaimed wildly to Scott; and then rushing to the pianoforte, played, in a sort of frenzy, some hurried airs, as if to drive away the dark thoughts then in her mind. It struck me that he spoke of this lady as if there had been something more than mere friendship between them. He described her as beautiful and full of character.

"In reference to his own ignorance of musical matters, Scott mentioned that he had been once employed as counsel upon a case where a purchaser of a fiddle had been imposed upon as to its value. He found it necessary, accordingly, to prepare himself by reading all about fiddles and fiddlers that he could find in the Encyclopædia, &c.; and having got the names of Straduarius, Amati, and such like, glibly upon his tongue, he got swimmingly through his cause. Not long after this, dining at ——, he found himself left alone after dinner with the Duke, who had but two subjects he could talk upon—hunting and music. Having exhausted hunting, Scott thought he would bring forward his lately acquired learning in fiddles, upon which his Grace became quite animated, and immediately whispered some orders to the butler, in consequence of which there soon entered into the room about half a dozen tall footmen, each bearing a fiddle-case; and Scott now found his musical knowledge brought to no less trying a test than that of telling, by the tone of each fiddle, as the Duke played it, by what artist it had been made. 'By guessing and management,' he said, 'I got on pretty well till we were, to my great relief, summoned to coffee.'"

In handing to me the pages from which I have taken these scraps, Mr. Moore says,—"I parted from Scott with the feeling that all the world might admire him in his works, but that those only could learn to love him as he deserved who had seen him at Abbotsford. I give you *carte blanche* to say what you please of my sense of his cordial kindness and gentleness; perhaps a not very dignified phrase would express my feeling better than any fine one —it was that he was a *thorough good fellow*." What Scott thought of Moore the reader shall see presently.

The author of Lallah Rookh's Kelso chaise was followed before many days by a more formidable equipage. The much talked-of lady who began life as Miss Harriet Mellon, a comic actress in a provincial troop, and died Duchess of St. Albans, was then making a tour in Scotland as Mrs. Coutts, the enormously wealthy widow of the first English banker of his time. No person of such consequence could, in those days, have thought a Scotch progress complete, unless it included a reception at Abbotsford; but Mrs. Coutts had been previously acquainted with Sir Walter, who, indeed, had some remote connexion with her late husband's family, through the Stuarts of Allanbank, I believe, or perhaps the Swintons of Swinton. He had visited her occasionally in London during Mr. Coutts's *life*, and was very willing to do the honours of Teviotdale in return. But although she was considerate enough not to come on him with all her retinue, leaving four of the seven carriages with which she travelled at Edinburgh, the appearance of only three coaches, each drawn by four horses, was rather trying for poor Lady Scott. They contained Mrs. Coutts, her future lord the Duke of St. Albans, one of his Grace's sisters—a *dame de compagnie* (vulgarly styled a Toady)—a brace of physicians—for it had been considered that one doctor might himself be disabled in the course of an expedition so adventurous—and, besides other menials of every grade, two bed-chamber women for Mrs. Coutts's own person; she requiring to have this article also in duplicate, because, in her widowed condition, she was fearful of ghosts—and there must be one Abigail for the service of the toilette, a second to keep watch by night. With a little puzzling and cramming, all this train found accommodation; but it so happened that there were already in the house several ladies, Scotch and English, of high birth and rank, who felt by no means disposed to assist their host and hostess in making Mrs. Coutts's visit agreeable to her. They had heard a great deal, and they saw something, of the ostentation almost inseparable from wealth so vast as had come into her keeping. They were on the outlook for absurdity and merriment; and I need not observe how effectually women of fashion can contrive to mortify, without doing or saying any thing that shall expose them to the charge of actual incivility.

Sir Walter, during dinner, did every thing in his power to counteract this influence of *the evil eye*, and something to overawe it; but the spirit of mischief had been fairly stirred, and it was easy to see that Mrs. Coutts followed these noble dames to the drawing-room in by no means that complacent mood which was customarily sustained, doubtless, by every blandishment of obsequious flattery, in this mistress of millions. He cut the gentlemen's sederunt short, and soon after joining the ladies, managed to withdraw the youngest, and gayest, and cleverest, who was also the highest in rank (a lovely Marchioness,) into his armorial-hall adjoining. "I said to her," (he told me,) "I want to speak a word with you about Mrs. Coutts. We have known each other a good while, and I know you won't take any thing I can say in ill part. It is, I hear, not uncommon among the fine ladies in London to be very well pleased to accept invitations, and even sometimes to hunt after them, to Mrs. Coutts's grand balls and fetes, and then, if they meet her in any private circle, to practise on her the delicate *manœu-*

vre called *tipping the cold shoulder*. This you agree with me is shabby; but it is nothing new either to you or to me that fine people will do shabbinesses for which beggars might blush, if they once stoop so low as to poke for tickets. I am sure you would not for the world do such a thing; but you must permit me to take the great liberty of saying, that I think the style you have all received my guest Mrs. Coutts in, this evening, is, to a certain extent, a sin of the same order. You were all told a couple of days ago that I had accepted her visit, and that she would arrive today to stay three nights. Now if any of you had not been disposed to be of my party at the same time with her, there was plenty of time for you to have gone away before she came; and as none of you moved, and it was impossible to fancy that any of you would remain out of mere curiosity, I thought I had a perfect right to calculate on your having made up your minds to help me out with her." The beautiful Peeress answered, "I thank you, Sir Walter—you have done me the great honour to speak as if I had been your daughter, and depend upon it you shall be obeyed with heart and good-will." One by one, the other exclusives were seen engaged in a little *tete-a-tete* with her ladyship. Sir Walter was soon satisfied that things had been put into a right train; the Marchioness was requested to sing a particular song, *because* he thought it would please Mrs. Coutts. "Nothing could gratify her more than to please Mrs. Coutts." Mrs. Coutts's brow smoothed, and in the course of half an hour she was as happy and easy as ever she was in her life, rattling away at comical anecdotes of her early theatrical years, and joining in the chorus of Sir Adam's *Laird of Cockpen*. She stayed out her three days*—saw, accompanied by all the circle, Melrose, Dryburgh, and Yarrow—and left Abbotsford delighted with her host, and, to all appearance, with his other guests.

It may be said (for the most benevolent of men had in his lifetime, and still has, some maligners) that he was so anxious about Mrs. Coutts's comfort, because he worshipped wealth. I dare not deny that he set more of his affections, during great part of his life, upon worldly things, wealth among others, than might have become such an intellect. One may conceive a sober grandeur of mind, not incompatible with genius as rich as even his, but infinitely more admirable than any genius, incapable of brooding upon any of the pomps and vanites of this life—or caring about money at all, beyond what is necessary for the easy sustenance of nature. But we must, in judging the most powerful of minds, take into account the influences to which they were exposed in the plastic period; and where imagination is visibly the predominant faculty, allowance must be made very largely indeed. Scott's autobiographical fragment, and the anecdotes annexed to it, have been printed in vain, if they have not conveyed the notion of such a training of the mind, fancy, and character, as could hardly fail to suggest dreams and aspirations very likely, were temptation presented, to take the shape of active external ambition—to prompt a keen pursuit of those resources, without which visions of worldly splendour cannot be realized. But I think the subsequent narrative, with the correspondence embodied in it, must also have satisfied every candid reader that his appetite for wealth was, after all, essentially a vivid yearning for the means of large beneficence. As to his being capable of the silliness—to say nothing of the meanness—of allowing any part of his feelings or demeanour towards others to be affected by their mere possession of wealth, I cannot consider such a suggestion as worthy of much remark. He had a kindness towards Mrs. Coutts, because he knew that, vain and pompous as her displays of equipage and attendance might be, she mainly valued wealth, like himself, as the instrument of doing good. Even of her apparently most fantastic indulgences he remembered, as Pope did when ridiculing the "lavish cost and little skill" of his Timon,

"Yet hence the poor are clothed, the hungry fed;"—

but he interfered, to prevent her being made uncomfortable in his house, neither more nor less than he would have done, had she come there in her original character of a comic actress, and been treated with coldness as such by his Marchionesses and Countesses.

Since I have been led to touch on what many always considered as the weak part of his character—his over respect for worldly things in general,—I must say one word as to the matter of rank, which undoubtedly had infinitely more effect on him than money. In the first place, he was all along courted by the great world—not it by him; and, secondly, pleased as he was with its attentions, he derived infinitely greater pleasure from the trusting and hearty affection of his old equals, and the inferiors whose welfare he so unwearyedly promoted. But, thirdly, he made acute discriminations among the many different orders of claimants who jostle each other for pre-eminence in the curiously complicated system of modern British society. His imagination had been constantly exercised in recalling and embellishing whatever features of the past it was possible to connect with any pleasing ideas, and a historical name was a charm that literally stirred his blood. But not so a mere title. He reverenced the Duke of Buccleuch—but it was not as a Duke, but as the head of his clan, the representative of the old knights of Branxholm. In the Duke of Hamilton he saw not the premier peer of Scotland, but the lineal heir of the heroic old Douglasses; and he had profounder respect for the chief of a Highland Clan, without any title whatever, and with an ill paid rental of two or three thousand a-year, than for the haughtiest magnate in a blue ribbon, whose name did not call up any grand historical reminiscence. I remember once when he had some young Englishmen of high fashion in his house, there arrived a Scotch gentleman of no distinguished appearance, whom he received with a sort of eagerness and *empressement* of reverential courtesy that struck the strangers as quite out of the common. His name was that of a Scotch Earl, however, and no doubt he was that nobleman's son. "Well," said one of the Southrons to me.—"I had never heard that the Earl of ——— was one of your very greatest lords in this country; even a second son of his, booby though he be, seems to be of wonderful consideration." The young English lord heard with some surprise, that the visiter in question was a poor lieutenant on half-pay, heir to a tower about as crazy as Don Quixote's, and noways related (at least according to English notions of relationship (to the Earl of ———. "What, then," he cried, "What *can* Sir Walter mean?" "Why," said I, "his meaning is very clear. This gentleman is the male representative (which the Earl of ——— may possibly be in the female line) of a knight who is celebrated by our old poet Blind Harry, as having signalized himself by the side of Sir William Wallace, and from whom every Scotchman that bears the name of ——— has at least the ambition of being supposed to descend." —Sir Walter's own title come unsought; and that he accepted it, not in the foolish fancy that such a title, or any title, could increase his own personal consequence, but because he thought it fair to embrace the opportunity of securing a certain external distinction to his heirs at Abbotsford, was proved pretty clearly by his subsequently declining the greatly higher, but intransmissible rank of a Privy-Councillor. At the same time, I dare say his ear liked the knightly sound; and undoubtedly he was much pleased with the pleasure his wife took, and gaily acknowledged she took, in being My Lady.

The circumstances of the King's visit in 1822, and others already noted, leave no doubt that imagination enlarged and glorified for him many objects to which it is very difficult for ordinary men in our generation to attach much importance; and perhaps he was more apt to attach importance to such things, during the prosperous course of his own fortunes, than even a liberal consideration of circumstances can altogether excuse. To myself it seems to have

* Sir Walter often quoted the maxim of an old lady in one of Miss Ferrier's novels—that a visit should never exceed three days, "*rest* day—the *drest* day—and the *prest* day."

been so; yet I do not think the severe critics on this part of his story have kept quite sufficiently in mind how easy it is for us all to undervalue any species of temptation to which we have not happened to be exposed. I am aware, too, that there are examples of men of genius, situated to a certain extent like him, who have resisted and repelled the fascinations against which he was not entirely proof; but I have sometimes thought that they did so at the expense of parts of their character nearer the marrow of humanity than those which his weakness in this way tended to endamage; that they mingled, in short, in their virtuous self-denial some grains of sacrifice at the shrine of a cold, unsocial, even sulky species of self-conceit. But this digression has already turned out much longer than I intended.

Mrs. Coutts and her three coaches astonished Abbotsford but a few days after I returned to Chiefswood from one of my rapid journeys to London. While in the metropolis on that occasion, I had heard a great deal more than I understood about the commercial excitement of the time. For several years preceding 1825 the plethora of gold on the one hand, and the wildness of impatient poverty on the other, had been uniting their stimulants upon the blood and brain of the most curious of all concretes, individual or national, "John Bull!" nor had sober "Sister Peg" escaped the infection of disorders which appear to recur, at pretty regular periods, in the sanguine constitution of her brother. They who had accumulated great masses of wealth, dissatisfied with the usual rates of interest under a conscientious government really protective of property, had embarked in the most perilous and fantastic schemes for piling visionary Pelions upon the real Ossa of their moneybags; and unscrupulous dreamers, who had all to gain and nothing to lose, found it easy to borrow, from cash-encumbered neighbours, the means of pushing adventures of their own devising, more extravagant than had been heard of since the days of the South Sea and Mississippi bubbles. Even persons who had extensive and flourishing businesses in their hands, partook the general rage of infatuation. He whose own shop, counting-house, or warehouse, had been sufficient to raise him to a decent and safely-increasing opulence, and was more than sufficient to occupy all his attention, drank in the vain delusion that he was wasting his time and energy on things unworthy of a masculine ambition, and embarked the resources necessary for the purposes of his lawful calling, in speculations worthy of the land-surveyors of El Dorado. It was whispered that *the trade* (so called, *par excellence*) had been bitten with this fever; and persons of any foresight who knew (as I did not at that time know) the infinitely curious links by which booksellers, and printers, and paper-makers (and therefore authors,) are bound together, high and low, town and country, for good and for evil, already began to prophesy that, whenever the general crash, which must come ere long, should arrive, its effects would be felt far and wide among all classes connected with the productions of the press. When it was rumoured that this great bookseller, or printer, had become a principal holder of South American mining shares—that another was the leading director of a railway company—a third of a gas company—while a fourth house had risked about £100,000 in a cast upon the most capricious of all agricultural products, *hops*—it was no wonder that bankers should begin to calculate balances, and pause upon discounts.

Among other hints to the tune of *periculosæ plenum opus aleæ* which reached my ear, were some concerning a splendid bookselling establishment in London, with which I knew the Edinburgh house of Constable to be closely connected in business. Little suspecting the extent to which any mischance of Messrs. Hurst and Robinson must involve Sir Walter's own responsibilities, I transmitted to him the rumours in question as I received them. Before I could have his answer, a legal friend of mine, well known to Scott also, told me that people were talking doubtfully about Constable's own stability. I thought it probable that if Constable fell into any pecuniary embarrassments, Scott might suffer the inconvenience of losing the copy-money of his last novel. Nothing more serious occurred to me. But I thought it my duty to tell him this whisper also; and heard from him, almost by return of post, that, shake who might in London, his friend in Edinburgh was "rooted, as well as branched, like the oak." Knowing his almost painfully accurate habits of business as to matters of trivial moment, I doubted not that he had ample grounds for being quite easy as to any concerns of his own with his publisher; and though I turned northwards with anxiety enough, none of the burden had reference to that subject.

A few days, however, after my arrival at Chiefswood, I received a letter from the legal friend already alluded to—(Mr. William Wright, the eminent barrister of Lincoln's Inn,—who, by the way, was also on habits of great personal familiarity with Constable, and liked *the Czar* exceedingly)—which renewed my apprehensions, or rather, for the first time, gave me any suspicion that there really might be something "rotten in the state of *Muscovy*." Mr. Wright informed me that it was reported in London that Constable's London banker had thrown up his book. This letter reached me about five o'clock, as I was sitting down to dinner; and, about an hour afterwards, I rode over to Abbotsford, to communicate its contents. I found Sir Walter alone over his glass of whisky and water and cigar—at this time, whenever there was no company, "his custom always in the afternoon." I gave him Mr. Wright's letter to read. He did so, and returning it, said, quite with his usual tranquil good-humour of look and voice, "I am much obliged to you for coming over, but you may rely upon it Wright has been hoaxed. I promise you, were the Crafty's book thrown up, there would be a pretty decent scramble among the bankers for the keeping of it. There may have been some little dispute or misunderstanding, which malice and envy have exaggerated in this absurd style; but I shan't allow such nonsense to disturb my *siesta*. Don't you see," he added, lighting another cigar, "that Wright could not have heard of such a transaction the very day it happened? And can you doubt, that if Constable had been informed of it yesterday, this day's post must have brought me intelligence direct from him?" I ventured to suggest that this last point did not seem to me clear; that Constable might not, perhaps, in such a case, be in so great a hurry with his intelligence. "Ah!" said he, "the Crafty and James Ballantyne have been so much connected in business, that Fatsman would be sure to hear of any thing so important; and I like the notion of his hearing it, and not sending me one of his malagrugrous *billetsdoux*. He could as soon keep his eyebrows in their place if you told him there was a fire in his nursery."

Seeing how coolly he treated my news, I went home relieved and gratified. Next morning, as I was rising, behold Petter Mathieson at my door, his horses evidently off a journey, and the Sheriff rubbing his eyes as if the halt had shaken him out of a sound sleep. I made what haste I could to descend, and found him by the side of the brook, looking somewhat worn, but with a serene and satisfied countenance, busied already in helping his little grandson to feed a fleet of ducklings. "You are surprised," he said, "to see me here. The truth is, I was more taken aback with Wright's epistle than I cared *to let on*; and so, as soon as you left me, I ordered the carriage to the door, and never stopped till I got to Polton, where I found Constable putting on his nightcap. I staid an hour with him, and I have now the pleasury to tell you that *all is right*. There was not a word of truth in the story. He is fast as Ben Lomond; and as Mamma and Anne did not know what my errand was, I thought it as well to come and breakfast here, and set Sophia and you at your ease before I went home again."

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We had a merry breakfast, and he chatted gaily afterwards as I escorted him through his woods, leaning on my shoulder all the way, which he seldom as yet did, except with Tom Purdie, unless when he was in a more than commonly happy and affectionate mood. But I confess the impression this incident left on my mind was not a pleasant one. It was then that I first began to harbour a suspicion, that if any thing should befall Constable, Sir Walter would suffer a heavier loss than the non-payment of some one novel. The night journey revealed serious alarm. My wife suggested, as we talked things over, that his alarm had been, not on his own account, but Ballantyne's, who, in case evil came on the great employer of his types, might possibly lose a year's profit on them, which neither she nor I doubted must amount to a large sum—any more than that a misfortune of Ballantyne's would grieve her father as much as one personal to himself. His warm regard for his printer could be no secret; we well knew that James was his confidential critic—his trusted and trustworthy friend from boyhood. Nor was I ignorant that Scott had a share in the property of Ballantyne's Edinburgh Weekly Journal. I hinted, under the year 1820, that a dispute arose about the line to be adopted by that paper in the matter of the Queen's trial, and that Scott employed his authority towards overruling the Editor's disposition to espouse the anti-ministerial side of that unhappy question. He urged every argument in his power, and in vain; for James had a just sense of his own responsibility as editor, and conscientiously differing from Sir Walter's opinion, insisted, with honourable firmness, on maintaining his own until he should be denuded of his office. I happened to be present at one of their conversations on this subject, and in the course of it Scott used language which distinctly implied that he spoke not merely as a friend, but as a joint-proprietor of the Journal. Nor did it seem at all strange that this should be so. But that Sir Walter was and had all along been James's partner in the great printing concern, neither I, nor, I believe, any member of his family, had entertained the slightest suspicion prior to the coming calamities which were now "casting their shadows before."

It is proper to add here that the story about the banker's throwing up the book was, as subsequent revelations attested, groundless. Sir Walter's first guess as to its origin proved correct.

A few days afterwards, Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street sent me a transcript of Lord Byron's Ravenna Diary, with permission for my neighbour also to read it if he pleased. Sir Walter read those extraordinary pages with the liveliest interest, and filled several of the blank leaves and margins with illustrative annotations and anecdotes, some of which have lately been made public, as the rest will doubtless be hereafter. In perusing what Byron had jotted down from day to day in the intervals of regular composition, it very naturally occurred to Sir Walter that the noble poet had done well to avoid troubling himself by any adoption or affectation of plan or order—giving an opinion, a reflection, a reminiscence, serious or comic, or the incidents of the passing hour, just as the spirit moved him,—and seeing what a mass of curious things, such as "after-times would not willingly let die," had been thus rescued from oblivion at a very slight cost of exertion,—he resolved to attempt keeping thenceforth a somewhat similar record. A thick quarto volume, bound in vellum, with a lock and key, was forthwith procured; and Sir Walter began the journal, from which I shall begin, in the next chapter, to draw copiously. The occupation of a few stray minutes in his dressing-room at getting up in the morning, or after he had retired for the night, was found a pleasant variety for him. He also kept the book by him when in his study, and often had recourse to it when any thing puzzled him and called for a halt in the prosecution of what he considered (though posterity will hardly do so) a more important task. It was extremely fortunate that he took up this scheme exactly at the time when he settled seriously to the history of Buonaparte's personal career. The sort of preparation which every chapter of that book now called for has been already alluded to; and—although, when he had fairly read himself up to any one great cycle of transactions, his old spirit roused itself in full energy, and he traced the record with as rapid and glowing a pencil as he had ever wielded—there were minutes enough, and hours, and perhaps days, of weariness, depression, and languor, when (unless this silent confidant had been at hand) even he perhaps might have made no use of his writing-desk.

Even the new resource of journalizing, however, was not sufficient. He soon convinced himself that it would facilitate, not impede, his progress with Napoleon, to have a work of imagination in hand also. The success of the Tales of the Crusaders had been very high; and Constable, well aware that it had been his custom of old to carry on two romances at the same time, was now too happy to encourage him in beginning *Woodstock*, to be taken up whenever the historical MS. should be in advance of the press.

Of the progress both of the Novel and the History, the Journal will afford us fuller and clearer details than I have been able to produce as to any of his preceding works; but before I open that sealed book, I believe it will be satisfactory to the reader that I should present (as briefly as I can) my own view of the melancholy change in Sir Walter's worldly fortunes, to which almost every page of the Diary, during several sad and toilsome years, contains some allusion. So doing, I shall avoid (in some measure at least) the necessity of interrupting, by awkward explanations, the easy tenor of perhaps the most candid Diary that ever man penned.

The early history of Scott's connexion with the Ballantynes has been already given in abundant detail; and I have felt it my duty not to shrink, at whatever pain to my own feelings or those of others, from setting down, plainly and distinctly, my own impressions of the character, manners, and conduct of those two very dissimilar brothers. I find, without surprise, that my representations of them have not proved satisfactory to their surviving relations. That I cannot help—though I sincerely regret having been compelled, in justice to Scott, to become the instrument for opening old wounds in kind bosoms, animated, I doubt not, like my own, by veneration for his memory, and respected by me for combining that feeling with a tender concern for names so intimately connected with his throughout long years of mutual confidence. But I have been entirely mistaken if those to whom I allude, or any others of my readers, have interpreted any expressions of mine as designed to cast the slightest imputation on the moral rectitude of the elder Ballantyne. No suspicion of that nature ever crossed my mind. I believe James to have been, from first to last, a perfectly upright man; that his principles were of a lofty stamp—his feelings pure even to simplicity. His brother John had many amiable as well as amusing qualities, and I am far from wishing to charge even him with any deep or deliberate malversation. Sir Walter's own epithet of "my little picaroon" indicates all that I desired to imply on that score. But John was, from mere giddiness of head and temper, incapable of conducting any serious business advantageously, either for himself or for others; nor dare I hesitate to express my conviction that, from failings of a different sort, honest James was hardly a better manager than the picaroon.

He had received the education, not of a printer but of a solicitor; and he never, to his dying day, had the remotest knowledge or feeling of what the most important business of a master-printer consists in. He had a fine taste for the effect of types—no establishment turned out more beautiful specimens of the art than his; but he appears never to have understood that types need watching as well as setting. If the page looked handsome he was

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satisfied. He had been instructed that on every £50 paid in his men's wages, the master-printer is entitled to an equal sum of gross profit; and beyond this *rule of thumb* calculation, no experience could bring him to penetrate his *mystery*. In a word, James never comprehended that in the greatest and most regularly employed manufactory of this kind, (or indeed of any kind,) the profits are likely to be entirely swallowed up, unless the acting master keeps up a most wakeful scrutiny, from week to week, and from day to day, as to the machinery and the materials. So far was he from doing this, that during several of the busiest and most important years of his connexion with the establishment in the Canongate, he seldom crossed its doors. He sat in his own elbow-chair, in a comfortable library, situated in a different street—not certainly an idle man—quite the reverse, though naturally indolent—but the most negligent and inefficient of master-printers.

He was busy, indeed; and inestimably serviceable to Scott was his labour; but it consisted simply and solely in the correction and revisal of proof-sheets. It is most true, that Sir Walter's hurried and careless method of composition rendered it absolutely necessary that whatever he wrote should be subjected to far more than the usual amount of inspection required at the hands of the printer; and it is equally so, that it would have been extremely difficult to find another man willing and able to bestow such time and care on his proof-sheets as they uniformly received from James. But this was, in fact, not the proper occupation of the man who was at the head of the establishment—who had undertaken the pecuniary management of the concern. In every other great printing-house that I have known any thing about, there are intelligent and well-educated men, called, technically, *readers*, who devote themselves to this species of labour, and who are, I fear, seldom paid in proportion to its importance. Dr. Goldsmith, in his early life, was such a *reader* in the printing-house of Richardson; but the author of Clarissa did not disdain to look after the presses and types himself, or he would never have accumulated the fortune that enabled him to be the liberal employer of *readers* like Goldsmith. I quoted, in a preceding volume,* a letter of Scott's, written when John Ballantyne and Co.'s bookselling house was breaking up, in which he says, "One or other of you will need to be constantly in the printing-office *henceforth:* it is the sheet-anchor." This was *ten* years after that establishment began. Thenceforth James, in compliance with this injunction, occupied, during many hours of every day, a small cabinet on the premises in the Canongate; but whoever visited him there, found him at the same eternal business, that of a literator, not that of a printer. He was either editing his newspaper—and he considered that matter as fondly and proudly as Mr. Pott in Pickwick does his Gazette of Eatanswill—or correcting proof-sheets, or writing critical notes and letters to the Author of Waverley. Shakspeare, Addison, Johnson, and Burke, were at his elbow; but not the ledger. We may thus understand poor John's complaint, in what I may call his dying memorandum, of the "large sums abstracted from the bookselling-house for the use of the printing-office."† Yet that bookselling-house was from the first a hopeless one; whereas, under accurate superintendence, the other ought to have produced the partners a dividend of from £2000 to £3000 a-year, at the very least.

On the other hand, the necessity of providing some remedy for this radical disorder, must very soon have forced itself upon the conviction of all concerned, had not John Ballantyne (who had served a brief apprenticeship in a London banking-house) introduced his fatal enlightenment on the subject of facilitating discounts, and raising cash by means of accommodation-bills. Hence the perplexed *states* and *calendars*—the wilderness and labyrinths of ciphers, through which no eye but that of a professed accountant could have detected any clue; hence the accumulation of bills and counter-bills drawn by both bookselling and printing-house, and gradually so mixed up with other obligations, that John Ballantyne died in utter ignorance of the condition of their affairs. The pecuniary detail of those affairs then devolved upon James; and I fancy it will be only too apparent that he never made even one serious effort to master the formidable balances of figures thus committed to his sole trust—but in which his all was not all that was involved.

I need not recapitulate the history of the connexion between these Ballantyne firms and that of Constable. It was traced as accurately as my means permitted in the preceding volumes, with an eye to the catastrophe. I am willing to believe that kindly feelings had no small share in inducing Constable to uphold the credit of John Ballantyne and Company, in their several successive struggles to avoid the exposure of bankruptcy. He was, with pitiable foibles enough, and grievous faults, and I fear even some black stains of vice in his character, a man of warm, and therefore I hardly doubt, of sympathizing temperament. Vain to excess, proud at the same time, haughty, arrogant, presumptuous, despotic—he had still perhaps a heart. Persons who knew him longer and better than I did, assure me of their conviction that, in spite of many direct professional hinderances and thwartings, the offspring (as *he* viewed matters) partly of Tory jealousy, and partly of poetical caprice—he had, even at an early period of his life, formed a genuine affection for Scott's person, as well as a most profound veneration for his genius. I think it very possible that he began his assistance of the Ballantyne companies mainly under this generous influence—and I also believe that he had, in different ways, a friendly leaning in favour of both James and John themselves. But when he, in his overweening self-sufficiency, thought it involved no mighty hazard to indulge his better feelings, as well as his lordly vanity, in shielding these friends from commercial dishonour, he had estimated but loosely the demands of the career of speculation on which he was himself entering. And by and by when, advancing by one mighty plunge after another in that vast field, he felt in his own person the threatenings of more signal ruin than could have befallen them, this "Napoleon of the press"—still as of old buoyed up as to the ultimate result of his grand operations, by the most fulsome flatteries of imagination—appears to have tossed aside very summarily all scruples about the extent to which he might be entitled to tax their sustaining credit in requital. The Ballantynes, if they had comprehended all the bearings of the case, were not the men to consider grudgingly demands of this nature, founded on service so important; and who can doubt that Scott viewed them from a chivalrous altitude? It is easy to see that the moment the obligations became reciprocal, there arose extreme peril of their coming to be hopelessly complicated. It is equally clear that he ought to have applied on these affairs, as their complication thickened, the acumen which he exerted, and rather prided himself in exerting, on smaller points of worldly business, to the utmost. That he did not, I must always regard as the enigma of his personal history; but various incidents in that history, which I have already narrated, prove incontestably that he has never done so; and I am unable to account for the having been the case, except on the supposition that his confidence in the resources of Constable and the prudence of James Ballantyne was so entire, that he willingly absolved himself from all duty of active and thorough-going superinspection.

It is the extent to which the confusion had gone that constitutes the great puzzle. I have been told that John Ballantyne, in his hey-day, might be heard whistling on his clerk, John Stevenson, (True Jock,) from the *sanctum* behind the shop, with, "Jock, you lubber, fetch ben a sheaf o' stamps." Such things might well enough be believed of that harebrained creature; but how sober, solemn James could have made up his mind, as he

* See *ante*, vol. iii. p. 61.
† See *ante*, vol. v. p. 77.

must have done, to follow much the same wild course whenever any pinch occurred, is to me, I must own, incomprehensible. The books, of course, were kept at the printing-house; and Scott, no doubt, had it in his power to examine them as often as he liked to go there for that purpose. But did he ever descend the Canongate *once* on such an errand? I certainly much question it. I think it very likely that he now and then cast a rapid glance over the details of a week's or a month's operations; but no man who has followed him throughout can dream that he ever grappled with the sum total. During several years it was almost daily my custom to walk home with Sir Walter from the Parliament-House, calling at James's on our way. For the most part I used to amuse myself with a newspaper or proof-sheet in the outer room, while they were closeted in the little cabinet at the corner; and merry were the tones that reached my ear while they remained in colloquy. If I were called in, it was because James, in his ecstasy, must have another to enjoy the dialogue that his friend was improvising—between Meg Dods and Captain MacTurk for example, or Peter Peebles and his counsel.

How shrewdly Scott lectures Terry in May 1825:—"The best business is ruined when it becomes pinched for money, and gets into the circle of discounting bills." "It is easy to make it feasible on paper, but the times of payment arrive to a certainty." "I should not like to see *you* take flight like the ingenious mechanist in Rasselas, only to flutter a few yards, and fall into the lake; this would be a heart-breaking business." "You must be careful that a check shall not throw you on the breakers, and for this there is no remedy but a handsome provision of *the blunt*," &c. &c. Who can read these words—and consider that, at the very hour when they fell from Scott's pen, he was meditating a new purchase of land to the extent of £40,000—and that nevertheless the "certainty of the arrival of times of payment for discounted bills" was within a few months of being realized to his own ruin;—who can read such words, under such a date, and not sigh the only comment, *sic vos non vobis?*

The reader may perhaps remember a page in a former volume, where I described Scott as riding with Johnny Ballantyne and myself round the deserted halls of the ancient family of Riddell, and remarking how much it increased the wonder of their ruin that the late Baronet had "kept day-book and ledger as regularly as any *cheesemonger in the Grassmarket.*" It is, nevertheless, true that Sir Walter kept from first to last as accurate an account of his own *personal* expenditure as Sir John Riddell could have done of his extravagant outlay on agricultural experiments. The instructions he gave his son when first joining the 18th Hussars about the best method of keeping accounts, were copied from his own practice. I could, I believe, place before my reader the sum-total of sixpences that it has cost him to ride through turnpike gates during a period of thirty years. This was, of course, an early habit mechanically adhered to: but how strange that the man who could persist, however mechanically, in noting down every shilling that he actually drew from his purse, should have allowed others to pledge his credit, year after year, upon sheafs of accommodation paper, "the time for paying which up must certainly come," without keeping any efficient watch on their proceedings—without knowing any one Christmas, for how many thousands or rather tens of thousands he was responsible as *a printer in the Canongate!*

This is sufficiently astonishing—and had this been all, the result must sooner or later have been sufficiently uncomfortable; but still, in the absence of a circumstance which Sir Walter, however vigilant, could hardly have been expected to anticipate as within the range of possibility, he would have been in no danger of a "check that must throw him on the breakers"—of finding himself, after his flutterings over The Happy Valley, "in the lake." He could never have foreseen a step which Constable took in the frenzied excitement of his day of pecuniary alarm. Owing to the original habitual irregularities of John Ballantyne, it had been adopted as the regular plan between that person and Constable, that, whenever the latter signed a bill for the purpose of the other's raising money among the bankers, there should, in case of his neglecting to take that bill up before it fell due, be deposited a counter-bill, signed by Ballantyne, on which Constable might, if need were, raise a sum equivalent to that for which he had pledged his credit. I am told that this is a usual enough course of procedure among speculative merchants; and it may be so. But mark the issue. The plan went on under James's management, just as John had begun it. Under his management also, such was the incredible looseness of it, the *counter-bills*, meant only for being sent into the market in the event of the *primary bills* being threatened with dishonour—these instruments of safeguard for Constable against contingent danger were allowed to lie unenquired about in Constable's desk, until they had swelled to a truly monstrous "sheaf of stamps." Constable's hour of distress darkened about him, and he rushed with these to the money-changers. They were nearly all flung into circulation in the course of this maddening period of panic. And by this one circumstance it came to pass, that, supposing Ballantyne and Co. to have, at the day of reckoning, obligations against them, in consequence of bill transactions with Constable, to the extent of £25,000, they were legally responsible for £50,000.

It is not my business to attempt any detailed history of the House of Constable. The sanguine man had, almost at the outset of his career, been "lifted off his feet," in Burn's phrase, by the sudden and unparalleled success of the Edinburgh Review. Scott's poetry and Scott's novels followed; and had he confined himself to those three great and triumphant undertakings, he must have died in possession of a princely fortune. But his "appetite grew with what it fed on," and a long series of less meritorious publications, pushed on, one after the other, in the craziest rapidity, swallowed up the gains which, however vast, he never counted, and therefore always exaggerated to himself. He had with the only person who might have been supposed capable of controlling him in his later years, the authority of age and a quasi-parental relationship to sustain the natural influence of great and commanding talents; his proud temperament and his glowing imagination played into each other's hands; and he scared suspicion, or trampled remonstrance, whenever (which probably was seldom) he failed to infuse the fervour of his own self-confidence. But even his gross imprudence in the management of his own great business would not have been enough to involve him in absolute ruin: had the matter halted there, and had he, suspending, as he meant to do, all minor operations, concentred his energies, in alliance with Scott, upon the new and dazzling adventure of the Cheap Miscellany, I have no doubt the damage of early misreckonings would soon have been altogether obliterated. But what he had been to the Ballantynes, certain other still more audacious "Sheafmen" had been to him. The house of Hurst, Robinson, and Co. had long been his London agents and correspondents; and he had carried on with them the same traffic in bills and counter-bills that the Canongate Company did with him—and upon a still larger scale. They had done what he did not—or at least did not to any very culpable extent: they had carried their adventures out of the line of their own business. It was they, for example, that must needs be embarking such vast sums in a speculation on hops! When ruin threatened them, they availed themselves of Constable's credit without stint or limit—while he, feeling darkly that the net was around him, struggled and splashed for relief, no matter who might suffer, so he escaped! And Sir Walter Scott, sorely as he suffered, was too painfully conscious of the "strong tricks" he had allowed his own imagination to play, not to make merciful allowance for all the apparently monstrous things that I have now been narrating of Constable;

though an offence lay behind which even his charity could not forgive. Of that I need not as yet speak? I have done all that seems to me necessary for enabling the reader to apprehend the nature and extent of the pecuniary difficulties in which Scott was about to be involved, when he commenced his Diary of 1825.

For the rest, his friends, and above all posterity, are not left to consider his fate without consoling reflections. They who knew and loved him, must ever remember that the real nobility of his character could not have exhibited itself to the world at large, had he not been exposed in his later years to the ordeal of adversity. And others as well as they may feel assured, that had not that adversity been preceded by the perpetual spur of pecuniary demands, he who began life with such quick appetites for all its ordinary enjoyments, would never have devoted himself to the rearing of that gigantic monument of genius, labour, and power, which his works now constitute. The imagination which has bequeathed so much to delight and humanize mankind, would have developed few of its miraculous resources, except in the embellishment of his own personal existence. The enchanted spring might have sunk into earth with the rod that bade it gush, and left us no living waters. We cannot understand, but we may nevertheless respect even the strangest caprices of the marvellous combination of faculties to which our debt is so weighty. We should try to picture to ourselves what the actual intellectual life must have been of the author of such a series of romances. We should ask ourselves whether, filling and discharging so soberly and gracefully as he did the common functions of social man, it was not, nevertheless, impossible but that he must have passed most of his life in other worlds than ours; and we ought hardly to think it a grievous circumstance that their bright visions should have left a dazzle sometimes on the eyes which he so gently re-opened upon our prosaic realities. He had, on the whole, a command over the powers of his mind—I mean that he could control and direct his thoughts and reflections with a readiness, firmness, and easy security of sway—beyond what I find it possible to trace in any other *artist's* recorded character and history; but he could not habitually fling them into the region of dreams throughout a long series of years, and yet be expected to find a corresponding satisfaction in bending them to the less agreeable considerations which the circumstances of any human being's practical lot in this world must present in abundance. The training to which he accustomed himself could not leave him as he was when he began. He must pay the penalty, as well as reap the glory of this lifelong abstraction of reverie, this self-abandonment of Fairyland.

This was for him the last year of many things; among others, of Sibyl Grey and *the Abbotsford Hunt*. Towards the close of a hard run on his neighbour Mr. Scott of Gala's ground, he adventured to leap *the Catrail*—that venerable relic of the days of

"Reged wide
And fair Strath-Clyde,"

of which the reader may remember many notices in his early letters to George Ellis. He was severely bruised and shattered; and never afterwards recovered the feeling of confidence without which there can be no pleasure in horsemanship. He often talked of this accident with a somewhat superstitious mournfulness.

CHAPTER LXV.

SIR WALTER'S DIARY BEGUN NOV. 20, 1825—SKETCHES OF VARIOUS FRIENDS—WILLIAM CLERK—CHARLES KIRKPATRICK SHARPE—LORD ABERCROMBIE—THE FIRST EARL OF MINTO—LORD BYRON—HENRY MACKENZIE—CHIEF BARON SHEPHERD—SOLICITOR-GENERAL HOPE—THOMAS MOORE—CHARLES MATHEWS—COUNT DAVIDOFF, ETC. ETC.—SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH—RELIGIOUS OPINIONS AND FEELINGS—VARIOUS ALARMS ABOUT THE HOUSE OF HURST, ROBINSON, AND CO.—"STORM BLOWS OVER"—AND SONG OF BONNY DUNDEE WRITTEN AT CHRISTMAS, 1825.

THE Journal, on which we are about to enter, has on the title-page, "Sir Walter Scott of Abbotsford, Bart., his Gurnal;"—and this foot-note to *Gurnal*, "A hard word, so spelt on the authority of Miss Sophia Scott, now Mrs. Lockhart." This is a little joke, alluding to a note-book kept by his eldest girl during one of the Highland expeditions of earlier days, in which he was accompanied by his wife and children. The *motto* is,—

"As I walked by myself,
I talked to myself,
And thus myself said to me.—*Old Song.*'

These lines are quoted also in his reviewal of Pepys's Diary. That book was published just before he left Edinburgh in July. It was, I believe, the only one he took with him to Ireland; and I never observed him more delighted with any book whatsoever. He had ever afterwards many of its queer turns and phrases on his lips.

The reader cannot expect that any chapter in a Diary of this sort should be printed *in extenso* within a few years of the writer's death. The editor has, for reasons which need not be explained, found it necessary to omit some passages altogether—to abridge others—and very frequently to substitute asterisks or arbitrary initials for names. But wherever omissions or alterations have been made, these were dictated by regard for the feelings of living persons; and, if any passages which have been retained should prove offensive to such feelings, there is no apology to be offered, but that the editor found they could not be struck out, without losing some statement of fact, opinion, or sentiment, which it seemed impossible to sacrifice without injustice to Sir Walter Scott's character and history.

DIARY.

"*Edinburgh—November* 20, 1825.—I HAVE all my life regretted that I did not keep a regular Journal. I have myself recollection of much that was interesting; and I have deprived my family of some curious information by not carrying this resolution into effect. I have bethought me, on seeing lately some volumes of Byron's notes, that he probably had hit upon the right way of keeping such a memorandum-book, by throwing out all pretence to regularity and order, and marking down events just as they occurred to recollection. I will try this plan; and behold I have a handsome locked volume, such as might serve for a lady's Album. *Nota bene*, John Lockhart, and Anne, and I are to raise a Society for the Suppression of Albums. It is a most troublesome shape of mendicity. Sir, your autography—a line of poetry—or a prose sentence!—Among all the sprawling sonnets, and blotted trumpery that dishonours these miscellanies, a man must have a good stomach that can swallow this botheration as a compliment.

"I was in Ireland last summer, and had a most delightful tour,—There is much less of exaggeration about the Irish than might have been suspected. Their poverty is not exaggerated; it is on the extreme verge of human misery; their cottages would scarce serve for pig-sties, even in Scotland—and their rags seem the very refuse of a rag-shop, and are disposed on their bodies with such ingenious variety of wretchedness that you would think nothing but some sort of perverted taste could have assembled so many shreds together. You are constantly fearful that some knot or loop will give, and place the individual before you in all the primitive simplicity of Paradise. Then for their food, they have only potatoes, and too few of them. Yet the men look stout and healthy, the women buxom, and well-coloured.

"Dined with us, being Sunday, Will. Clerk and C. Sharpe. William Clerk is the second son of the celebrated author of 'Naval Tactics.' I have

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known him intimately since our college days; and to my thinking, never met a man of greater powers, or more complete information on all desirable subjects. In youth he had strongly the Edinburgh *pruritus disputandi;* but habits of society have greatly mellowed it, and though still anxious to gain your suffrage to his views, he endeavours rather to conciliate your opinion than conquer it by force. Still there is enough of tenacity of sentiment to prevent, in London society, where all must go slack and easy, W. C. from rising to the very top of the tree as a conversation man: who must not only wind the thread of his argument gracefully, but also know when to let go. But I like the Scotch taste better; there is more matter, more information, above all, more spirit in it. Clerk will, I am afraid, leave the world little more than the report of his powers. He is too indolent to finish any considerable work. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe is another very remarkable man. He was bred for a clergyman, but never took orders. He has infinite wit and a great turn for antiquarian lore, as the publications of Kirkton, &c., bear witness. His drawings are the most fanciful and droll imaginable—a mixture between Hogarth and some of those foreign masters who painted temptations of St. Anthony, and such grotesque subjects. As a poet he has not a very strong touch. Strange that his finger-ends can describe so well what he cannot bring out clearly and firmly in words. If he were to make drawing a resource, it might raise him a large income. But though a lover of antiquities, and, therefore, of expensive trifles, C. K. S. is too aristocratic to use his art to assist his purse. He is a very complete genealogist, and has made many detections in Douglas and other books on pedigree, which our nobles would do well to suppress if they had an opportunity. Strange that a man should be curious after scandal of centuries old! Not but Charles loves it fresh and fresh also, for being very much a fashionable man, he is always master of the reigning report, and he tells the anecdote with such gusto that there is no helping sympathizing with him—a peculiarity of voice adding not a little to the general effect. My idea is, that C. K. S., with his oddities, tastes, satire, and high aristocratic feelings, resembles Horace Walpole—perhaps in his person also, in a general way.—See Miss Aikin's Anecdotes for a description of the author of the Castle of Otranto.—No other company at dinner except my cheerful and good-humoured friend *Missie* Macdonald,* so called in fondness. One bottle of champagne, with the ladies' assistance, two of claret. I observe that both these great connnoisseurs were very nearly, if not quite agreed, that there are *no* absolutely undoubted originals of Queen Mary. But how, then, should we be so very distinctly informed as to her features? What has become of all the originals which suggested these innumerable copies? Surely Mary must have been as unfortunate in this as in other particulars of her life.

"*November* 21, 1825.—I am enamoured of my journal. I wish the zeal may but last. Once more of Ireland. I said their poverty was not exaggerated—neither is their wit—nor their good-humour—nor their whimsical absurdity—nor their courage. *Wit.*—I gave a fellow a shilling on some occasion when sixpence was the fee. 'Remember you owe me sixpence, Pat.' 'May your honour live till I pay you.' There was courtesy as well as art in this, and all the clothes on Pat's back would have been dearly bought by the sum in question.

"*Good-humour.*—There is perpetual kindness in the Irish cabin—butter-milk, potatoes—a stool is offered, or a stone is rolled that your honour may sit down and be out of the smoke, and those who beg every where else seem desirous to exercise free hospitality in their own houses. Their natural disposition is turned to gaiety and happiness; while a Scotchman is thinking about the term-day, or, if easy on that subject, about hell in the next world—while an Englishman is making a little hell in the present, because his muffin is not well roasted—Pat's mind is always turned to fun and ridicule. They are terribly excitable, to be sure, and will murder you on slight suspicion, and find out next day that it was all a mistake, and that it was not yourself they meant to kill at all, at all.

"*Absurdity.*—They were widening the road near Lord Claremont's seat as we passed. A number of cars were drawn up together at a particular point where we also halted, as we understood they were blowing a rock, and the *shot* was expected presently to go off. After waiting two minutes or so, a fellow called out something, and our carriage as a planet, and the cars for satellites, started all forward at once, the Irishmen whooping and the horses galloping. Unable to learn the meaning of this, I was only left to suppose that they had delayed firing the intented *shot* till we should pass, and that we were passing quickly to make the delay as short as possible. No such thing. By dint of making great haste, we got within ten yards of the rock just when the blast took place, throwing dust and gravel on our carriage, and had our postilion brought us a little nearer (it was not for want of hallooing and flogging that he did not,) we should have had a still more serious share of the explosion. The explanation I received from the drivers was, that they had been told by the overseer that as the *mine* had been *so long* in going off, he dared say we would have time to pass it—so we just waited long enough to make the danger imminent. I have only to add, that two or three people got behind the carriage, just for nothing but to see how our honours got past.

"Went to the Oil Gas Committee this morning, of which concern I am President, or Chairman. This brings me into company with a body of active, business-beings, money-making citizens of Edinburgh, chiefly Whigs, by the way, whose sentiments and proceedings amuse me. The stock is rather low in the market.

"Dined with Sir Robert Dund a, where we met Lord and Lady Melville. My little *nieces* (*ex officio*) gave us some pretty music. I do not know and cannot utter a note of music; and complicated harmonies seem to me a babble of confused though pleasing sounds. Yet simple melodies, especially if connected with words and ideas, have as much effect on me as on most people. But then I hate to hear a young person sing without feeling and expression suited to the song. I cannot bear a voice that has no more life in it than a piano-forte or a bugle-horn. There is about all the fine arts a something of soul and spirit, which, like the vital principle in man, defies the research of the most critical anatomist. You feel where it is not, yet you cannot describe what it is you want. Sir Joshua, or some other great painter, was looking at a picture on which much pains had been bestowed—'Why, yes,' he said, in a hesitating manner, 'it is very clever—very well done—can't find fault; but it wants something; it wants—it wants—d—n me—it wants THAT' —throwing his hand over his head, and snapping his fingers. Tom Moore's is the most exquisite warbling I ever heard. Next him, David Macculloch for Scotch songs. The last, when a boy at Dumfries, was much admired by Burns, who used to get him to try over the words which he composed to new melodies. He is brother to Macculloch of Ardwell.

"*November* 22.—*Moore.*—I saw Moore (for the first time, I may say) this season. We had indeed met in public twenty years ago. There is a manly frankness, with perfect ease and good-breeding, about him which is delightful. Not the least touch of the poet or the pedant. A little—very little man. Less, I think, than Lewis, and somewhat like him in person; God knows, not in conversation, for Matt, though a clever fellow, was a bore of the first description. Moreover, he looked always like a schoolboy. Now Moore has none of this insignificance. His countenance is plain, but the expression so very animated, especially in speaking or singing, that it is far more interesting than the finest features could have rendered it.

"I was aware that Byron had often spoken, both

* Miss Macdonald Buchanan of Drummakill.

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in private society and in his Journal, of Moore and myself, in the same breath, and with the same sort of regard; so I was curious to see what there could be in common betwixt us, Moore having lived so much in the gay world, I in the country, and with people of business, and sometimes with politicians; Moore a scholar, I none; he a musician and artist, I without knowledge of a note; he a democrat, I an aristocrat—with many other points of difference; besides his being an Irishman, I a Scotchman, and both tolerably national. Yet there is a point of resemblance, and a strong one. We are both good-humoured fellows, who rather seek to enjoy what is going forward than to maintain our dignity as lions; and we have both seen the world too widely and too well not to contemn in our souls the imaginary consequence of literary people, who walk with their noses in the air, and remind me always of the fellow whom Johnson met in the alehouse, and who called himself '*the great Twalmly—inventor of the flood-gate iron for smoothing linen.*' He also enjoys the *Mot pour rire*, and so do I. It was a pity that nothing save the total destruction of Byron's Memoirs would satisfy his executors. But there was a reason—*Premat Nox alta.* It would be a delightful addition to life, if T. M. had a cottage within two miles of one. We went to the theatre together, and the house being luckily a good one, received T. M. with rapture. I could have hugged them, for it paid back the debt of the kind reception I met with in Ireland.

"Here is matter for a May morning, but much fitter for a November one. The general distress in the city has affected H. and R., Constable's great agents. Should they *go*, it is not likely that Constable can stand, and such an event would lead to great distress and perplexity on the part of J. B. and myself. Thank God I have enough to pay more than 20s. in the pound, taking matters at the very worst. But much inconvenience must be the consequence. I had a lesson in 1814 which should have done good; but success and abundance erased it from my mind. But this is no time for journalizing or moralizing either. Necessity is like a sour-faced cook-maid, and I a turn-spit she has flogged, ere now, till he mounted his wheel. If Woodstock can be out by 25th January, it will do much, and it is possible. Could not write to purpose for thick coming fancies.

'My spinning-wheel is auld and stiff,
The rock o't winna stand, sir;
To keep the temper-pin in tiff,
Employs aft my hand, sir.'

"Went to dine at the Lord Justice-Clerk's, as I thought by invitation, but it was for Tuesday se'ennight. Returned very well pleased, not being exactly in the humour for company, and had a beefsteak. My appetite is surely, excepting as to quantity, that of a farmer, for, eating moderately of any thing, my epicurean pleasure is in the most simple diet. Wine I seldom taste when alone, and use instead a little spirits and water. I have of late diminished the quantity, for fear of a weakness inducive to a diabetes—a disease which broke up my father's health, though one of the most temperate men who ever lived. I smoke a couple of cigars instead, which operates equally as a sedative—

'Just to drive the cold winter away,
And drown the fatigues of the day.'

I smoked a good deal about twenty years ago when at Ashestiel; but coming down one morning to the parlour, I found, as the room was small and confined, that the smell was unpleasant, and laid aside the use of the *Nicotian weed* for many years; but was again led to use it by the example of my son, a hussar officer, and my son-in-law, an Oxford student. I could lay it aside to-morrow; I laugh at the dominion of custom in this and many things.

'We make the giants first, and then—*do not* kill them.'

"*November*, 23.—On comparing notes with Moore, I was confirmed in one or two points which I had always laid down in considering poor Byron. One was, that like Rousseau he was apt to be very suspicious, and a plain downright steadiness of manner was the true mode to maintain his good opinion. Will Rose told me that once, while sitting with Byron, he fixed insensibly his eyes on his feet, one of which, it must be remembered, was deformed. Looking up suddenly, he saw Byron regarding him with a look of concentrated and deep displeasure, which wore off when he observed no consciousness or embarrassment in the countenance of Rose. Murray afterwards explained this, by telling Rose that Lord Byron was very jealous of having this personal imperfection noticed or attended to. In another point, Moore confirmed my previous opinion, namely, that Byron loved mischief-making. Moore had written to him, cautioning him against the project of establishing the paper called the Liberal, in communion with men on whom he said the world had set its mark. Byron showed this to the parties. Shelly wrote a modest and rather affecting expostulation to Moore. These two peculiarities of extreme suspicion and love of mischief are both shades of the malady which certainly tinctured some part of the character of this mighty genius; and without some tendency towards which, genius perhaps cannot exist to great extent. The wheels of a machine to play rapidly must not fit with the utmost exactness, else the attrition diminishes the impetus.

"Another of Byron's peculiarities was the love of mystifying, which, indeed, may be referred to that of mischief. There was no knowing how much or how little to believe of his narratives. Instance:—William Bankes, expostulating with him upon a dedication which he had written in extravagant terms of praise to Cam Hobhouse, Byron told him that Cam had bored him about this dedication till he had said, 'Well, it shall be so, provided you will write it yourself;' and affirmed that Hobhouse did write the high-coloured dedication accordingly. I mentioned this to Murray, having the report from Will Rose, to whom Bankes had mentioned it. Murray, in reply, assured me that the dedication was written by Lord Byron himself, and showed it me in his own hand. I wrote to Rose to mention the thing to Bankes, as it might have made mischief had the story got into the circle. Byron was disposed to think all men of imagination were addicted to mix fiction (or poetry) in their prose. He used to say he dared believe the celebrated courtezan of Venice, about whom Rousseau makes so piquante a story, was, if one could see her, a draggle-tailed wench enough. I believe that he embellished his own amours considerably, and that he was, in many respects, *le fanfaron de vices qu'il n'avait pas.* He loved to be thought woful, mysterious, and gloomy, and sometimes hinted at strange causes. I believe the whole to have been the creation and sport of a wild and powerful fancy. In the same manner he *crammed* people, as it is termed, about duels and the like, which never existed, or were much exaggerated.

"What I liked about Byron, besides his boundless genius, was his generosity of spirit as well as purse, and his utter contempt of all the affectations of literature, from the school-magisterial style to the lackadaisical. His example has formed a sort of upper-house of poetry—but

'There will be many peers
Ere such another Byron.'

"* * * Talking of Abbotsford, it begins to be haunted by too much company of every kind, but especially foreigners. I do not like them. I hate fine waistcoats, and breast-pins upon dirty shirts. I detest the impudence that pays a stranger compliments, and harangues about an author's works in his own house, which is surely ill-breeding. Moreover, they are seldom long of making it evident that they know nothing about what they are talking of, excepting having seen the Lady of the Lake at the opera.

"Dined at St. Catherine's* with the Lord Advo-

* St. Catherine's, the seat of Sir William Rae, Bart., then Lord Advocate, is about three miles from Edinburgh.

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cate, Lord Melville, Lord Justice-Clerk, Sir Archibald Campbell of Succoth, all class companions, and acquainted well for more than forty years. All excepting Lord J. C. were at Fraser's class, High-School. Boyle joined us at college. There are, besides, Sir Adam Ferguson, Colin Mackenzie, James Hope, Dr. James Buchan, Claud Russell, and perhaps two or three more of and about the same period—but

'Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.'

"*November 24th.*—Talking of strangers, London held, some four or five years since, one of those animals who are lions at first, but by transmutation of two seasons become in regular course *bores*—Ugo Foscolo by name, a haunter of Murray's shop and of literary parties. Ugly as a baboon, and intolerably conceited, he spluttered, blustered, and disputed, without even knowing the principles upon which men of sense render a reason, and screamed all the while like a pig with a knife in his throat. Another such an animalaccio is a brute of a Marquis de ***, who lately inflicted two days on us at Abbotsford. These gentry never know what to make of themselves in the forenoon, but sit tormenting the women to play at proverbs and such trash.

"*Foreigner of a different caste.* There was lately at Abbotsford, and is here for education just now, a young Count Davidoff, with his tutor, Mr. Collyer. He is nephew of the famous Orlows. It is quite surprising how much sense and sound thinking this youth has at the early age of sixteen, without the least self-conceit or forwardness. On the contrary, he seems kind, modest, and ingenuous. To questions which I asked about the state of Russia, he answered with the precision and accuracy of twice his years. I should be sorry the saying were verified in him—

'So wise so young, they say, do ne'er live long.'

I saw also at Abbotsford two Frenchmen whom I liked, friends of Miss Dumergue. One, called Le Noir, is the author of a tragedy which he had the grace never to quote, and which I, though poked by some malicious persons, had *not* the grace even to hint at. They were disposed at first to be complimentary, but I convinced them it was not the custom here, and they took it well, and were agreeable.

"A little bilious this morning, for the first time these six months. It cannot be the London matters which stick on my stomach, for that is mending, and may have good effects on myself and others.

"Dined with Robert Cockburn. Company, Lord Melville and family; Sir John and Lady Hope; Lord and Lady R. Kerr, and so forth. Combination of colliers general, and coals up to double price; the men will not work *although*, or rather *because* they can make from thirty to forty shillings per week. Lord R. Kerr told us he had a letter from Lord Forbes (son of Earl Granard, Ireland,) that he was asleep in his house at Castle Forbes, when awakened by a sense of suffocation which deprived him of the power of stirring a limb, yet left him the consciousness that the house was on fire. At this moment, and while his apartment was in flames, his large dog jumped on the bed, seized his shirt, and dragged him to the stair-case, where the fresh air restored his powers of existence and of escape. This is very different from most cases of preservation of life by the canine race, when the animal generally jumps into the water, in which element he has force and skill. That of fire is as hostile to him as to mankind.

"*November 25.*—Read Jeffrey's neat and well-intended address to the mechanics upon their combinations. Will it do good? Umph. It takes only the hand of a Lilliputian to light a fire, but would require the diuretic powers of Gulliver to extinguish it. The Whigs will live and die in the heresy that the world is ruled by little pamphlets and speeches, and that if you can sufficiently demonstrate that a line of conduct is most consistent with men's interest, you have therefore and thereby demonstrated that they will at length, after a few speeches on the subject, adopt it of course. In this case we should have no need of laws or churches, for I am sure there is no difficulty, in proving that moral, regular, and steady habits conduce to men's best interest, and that vice is not sin merely but folly. But of these men each has passions and prejudices, the gratification of which he prefers, not only to the general weal, but to that of himself as an individual. Under the action of these wayward impulses a man drinks to-day though he is sure of starving to-morrow. He murders to-morrow, though he is sure to be hanged on Wednesday; and people are so slow to believe that which makes against their own predominant passions, that mechanics will combine to raise the price for one week, though they destroy the manufacture for ever. The best remedy seems to be the probable supply of labourers from other trades. Jeffrey proposes each mechanic shall learn some other trade than his own, and so have two strings to his bow. He does not consider the length of a double apprenticeship. To make a man a good weaver and a good tailor would require as much time as the patriarch served for his two wives. Each mechanic has, indeed, a second trade, for he can dig and do rustic work. Perhaps the best reason for breaking up the association will prove to be the expenditure of the money which they have been simple enough to levy from the industrious for the support of the idle. How much provision for the sick and the aged, the widow and the orphan, has been expended in the attempt to get wages which the manufacturer cannot afford them, at any possible chance of selling his commodity!

"I had a bad fall last night coming home. There were unfinished houses at the east end of Atholl Crescent, and as I was on foot, I crossed the street to avoid the materials which lay about; but, deceived by the moon-light, I slipped ankle-deep into a sea of mud (honest earth and water, thank God,) and fell on my hands. Never was there such a representative of *Wall* in Pyramus and Thisbe—I was absolutely rough-cast. Luckily Lady S. had retired when I came home; so I enjoyed my tub of water without either remonstrance or condolences. Cockburn's hospitality will get the benefit and renown of my down-fall, and yet has no claim to it. In future, though, I must take my coach at night—a control on one's freedom, but it must be submitted to. I found a letter from Cadell, giving a cheering account of things in London. Their correspondent is getting into his strength. Three days ago I would have been contented to buy this *consola*, as Judy says,* dearer than by a dozen falls in the mud.

N. B. Within eight weeks after recording this graceful act of submission, I found I was unable to keep a carriage at all.

"Mrs. Coutts, with the Duke of St. Albans and Lady Charlotte Beauclerk, called to take leave of us. When at Abbotsford, his suit throve but coldly. She made me, I believe, her confidant in sincerity. She had refused him twice, and decidedly: he was merely on the footing of friendship. I urged it was akin to love. She allowed she might marry the Duke, only she had at present not the least intention that way. Is this frank admission more favourable for the Duke than an absolute protestation against the possibility of such a marriage? I think not. It is the fashion to attend Mrs. Coutt's parties, and to abuse her. I have always found her a kind, friendly woman, without either affectation or insolence in the display of her wealth; most willing to do good, if the means be shown to her. She can be very entertaining, too, as she speaks without scruple of her stage life. So much wealth can hardly be enjoyed without some ostentation. But what then? If the Duke marries her, he ensures an immense fortune;

* *King Richard III.* Act III., scene 1.

* This alludes to a strange old woman, keeper of a public-house among the Wicklow mountains, who, among a world of oddities, cut short every word ending in *tion*, by the omission of the termination. *Consola* for consolation—*bothera* for botheration, &c. &c. Lord Plunkett had taken care to parade Judy and all her peculiarities.

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if she marries him, she has the first rank. If he marries a woman older than himself by twenty years, she marries a man younger in wit by twenty degrees. I do not think he will dilapidate her fortune—he seems good and gentle: I do not think that she will abuse his softness—of disposition, shall I say, or of head? The disparity of ages concerns no one but themselves; so they have my consent to marry, if they can get each other's. Just as this is written, enter my Lord of St. Albans and Lady Charlotte, to beg I would recommend a book of sermons to Mrs. Coutts. Much obliged for her good opinion: recommended Logan's—one poet should always speak for another. The mission, I suppose, was a little display on the part of good Mrs. Coutts of authority over her high aristocratic suitor. I did not suspect her of turning *dervotee*, and retract my consent as given above, unless she remains 'burly, brisk, and jolly.' Dined quiet with wife and daughter. Robert Cadell looked in in the evening on business.

"I here register my purpose to practise economics. I have little temptation to do otherwise. Abbotsford is all that I can make it, and too large for the property; so I resolve—

"No more building;

"No purchases of land, till times are quite safe:

"No buying books or expensive trifles—I mean to any extent; and

"Clearing off encumbrances, with the returns of this year's labour;

'Which resolutions, with health and my habits of industry, will make me 'sleep in spite of thunder.'

"After all, it is hard that the vagabond stock-jobbing Jews should, for their own purposes, make such a shake of credit as now exists in London, and menace the credit of men trading on sure funds like Hurst and Robinson. It is just like a set of pickpockets, who raise a *mob*, in which honest folks are knocked down and plundered, that they may pillage safely in the midst of the confusion they have excited.

"*November* 26.—The Court met late, and sat till *one;* detained from that hour till four o'clock, being engaged in the perplexed affairs of Mr. James Stewart of Brugh. This young gentleman is heir to a property of better than £1000 a-year in Orkney. His mother married very young, and was wife, mother, and widow, in the course of the first year. Being unfortunately under the direction of a careless agent, she was unlucky enough to embarrass her affairs. I was asked to accept the situation of one of the son's curators; and trust to clear out his affairs and hers—at least I will not fail for want of application. I have lent her £580 on a second (and therefore doubtful) security over her house in Newington, bought for £1000, and on which £600 is already secured. I have no connexion with the family except that of compassion, and may not be rewarded even by thanks when the young man comes of age. I have known my father often so treated by those whom he had laboured to serve. But if we do not run some hazard in our attempts to do good, where is the merit of them?—So I will bring through my Orkney laird if I can. Dined at home quiet with Lady S. and Anne.

I was obliged to give this up in consequence of my own misfortunes.

"*November* 28.—People make me the oddest requests. It is not unusual for an Oxonian or Cantab, who has outrun his allowance, and of whom I know nothing, to apply to me for the loan of £20, £50, or £100. A captain of the Danish naval service writes to me, that being in distress for a sum of money by which he might transport himself to Columbia to offer his services in assisting to free that province, he had dreamed I generously made him a present of it. I can tell him his dream by contraries. I begin to find, like Joseph Surface, that too good a character is inconvenient. I don't know what I have done to gain so much credit for generosity, but I suspect I owe it to being supposed, as Puff says, one of 'those whom Heaven has blessed with affluence.' Not too much of that neither, my dear petitioners, though I may thank myself that your ideas are not correct.

"Dined at Melville Castle, whither I went through a snow-storm. I was glad to find myself once more in a place connected with many happy days. Met Sir R. Dundas and my old friend George, now Lord Abercromby, with his lady and a beautiful girl his daughter. He is what he always was, the best-humoured man living; and our meetings, now more rare than formerly, are seasoned with many a recollection of old frolics and old friends.—I am entertained to see him just the same he has always been, never yielding up his own opinion in fact, and yet in words acquiescing in all that could be said against it. George was always like a willow—he never offered resistance to the breath of argument, but never moved from his rooted opinion, blow as it listed.—Exaggeration might make these peculiarities highly dramatic: Conceive a man who always seems to be acquiescing in your sentiments, yet never changes his own, and this with a sort of *bonhommie* which shows there is not a particle of deceit intended. He is only desirous to spare you the trouble of contradiction.

"*November* 29.—Dined at Justice-Clerk's—the President—Captain Smollett of Bonhill,—our new Commander-in-Chief, Hon. Sir Robert O'Callaghan, brother to Earl of Lismore, a fine soldierlike man, with orders and badges;—also his younger brother, an agreeable man, whom I met at Lowther Castle this season. He composes his own music and sings his own poetry—has much humour, enhanced by a strong touch of national dialect, which is always a rich sauce to an Irishman's good things. Dandyish, but not offensively; and seems to have a warm feeling for the credit of his country—rather inconsistent with the trifling and selfish quietude of a mere man of society.

"*November* 30.—I am come to the time when 'those that look out of the windows shall be darkened.' I must now wear spectacles constantly in reading and writing, though till this winter I have made a shift by using only their occasional assistance. Although my health cannot be better, I feel my lameness becomes sometimes painful, and often inconvenient. Walking on the pavement or causeway gives me trouble, and I am glad when I have accomplished my return on foot from the Parliament House to Castle Street, though I can (taking a competent time, as old *Brazie* said on another occasion) walk five or six miles in the country with pleasure. Well, such things must come, and be received with cheerful submission. My early lameness considered, it was impossible for a man to have been stronger or more active than I have been, and that for twenty or thirty years. Seams will slit, and elbows will out, quoth the tailor; and as I was fifty-four 15th August last, my mental vestments are none of the newest. Then Walter, Charles, and Lockhart are as active and handsome young fellows as you can see; and while they enjoy strength and activity I can hardly be said to want it. I have perhaps all my life set an undue value on these gifts. Yet it does appear to me that high and independent feelings are naturally, though not uniformly or inseparably, connected with bodily advantages. Strong men are usually good-humoured, and active men often display the same elasticity of minds as of body. These superiorities, indeed, are often misused. But, even for these things, God shall call us to judgment.

"Some months since, I joined with other literary folks in subscribing a petition for a pension to Mrs. Grant of Laggan, which we thought was a tribute merited by her as an authoress; and, in my opinion, much more by the firmness and elasticity of mind with which she had borne a succession of great domestic calamities. Unhappily there was only about £100 open on the pension list, and this the ministers assigned in equal portions to Mrs. G—— and a distressed lady, grand-daughter of a forfeited Scottish nobleman. Mrs. G——, proud

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as a Highland-woman, vain as a poetess, and absurd as a blue-stocking, has taken this partition in *malam partem*, and written to Lord Melville about her merits, and that her friends do not consider her claims as being fairly canvassed; with something like a demand that her petition be submitted to the King. This is not the way to make her *plack a bawbee*, and Lord M., a little *miffed* in turn, sends the whole correspondence to me to know whether Mrs. G—— will accept the £50 or not. Now, hating to deal with ladies when they are in an unreasonable humour, I have got the good-humoured Man of Feeling to find out the lady's mind, and I take on myself the task of making her peace with Lord M. There is no great doubt how it will end, for your scornful dog will always eat your dirty pudding. After all, the poor lady is greatly to be pitied; —her sole remaining daughter deep and far gone in a decline.

"Dined with my cousin, Robert Rutherford, being the first invitation since my uncle's death, and our cousin Lieutenant-Colonel Russell* of Ashestiel, with his sister Anne—the former newly returned from India—a fine gallant fellow, and distinguished as a cavalry officer. He came over land from India, and has observed a good deal. Knight Marischal not well, so unable to attend the convocation of kith and kin.

"*December* 1*st*.—Colonel Russell told me that the European Government had discovered an ingenious mode of diminishing the number of burnings of widows. It seems the Shaster positively enjoins that the pile shall be so constructed that, if the victim should repent even at the moment when it is set on fire, she may still have the means of saving herself. The Brahmins soon found it was necessary to assist the resolution of the sufferers, by means of a little pit into which they contrive to let the poor widow sink, so as to prevent her reaping any benefit from a late repentance. But the Government has brought them back to the regard of this law, and only permit the burning to go on when the pile is constructed with full opportunity of a *locus penitentiæ*. Yet the widow is so degraded if she dare to survive, that the number of burnings is still great. The quantity of female children destroyed by the Rajapout tribes, Colonel R. describes as very great indeed. They are strangled by the mother. The principle is the aristocratic pride of these high castes, who breed up no more daughters than they can reasonably hope to find matches for in their own rank. Singular how artificial systems of feeling can be made to overcome that love of offspring which seems instinctive in the females, not of the human race only, but of the lower animals. This is the reverse of our system of increasing game by shooting the old cock birds. It is a system would aid Malthus rarely.

"I think this journal will suit me well; if I can wax myself into an idea that it is purely voluntary, it may go on—*nulla dies sine lineâ*. But never a being hated task-work as I hate it, from my infancy upwards, and yet I have done a great deal in my day. It is not that I am idle in my nature neither. But propose to me to do one thing, and it is inconceivable the desire I have to do something else—not that it is more easy or more pleasant, but just because it is escaping from an imposed task. I cannot trace this love of contradiction to any distinct source, but it has haunted me all my life. I could almost suppose it was mechanical, and that the imposition of a piece of duty-labour operated on me like the mace of a bad billiard-player, which gives an impulse to the ball indeed, but sends it off at a tangent different from the course designed. Now, if I expend such eccentric movements on this journal, it will be turning a wretched propensity to some tolerable account. If I had thus employed the hours and half hours which I have whiled away in putting off something that must needs be done at last, my conscience! I should have had a journal with a witness. Sophia and Lockhart came to Edinburgh to-day and dined with us, meeting Hector Macdonald Buchanan, his Lady, and Missie, James Skene and his Lady, Lockhart's friend Cay, &c. They are lucky to be able to assemble so many real friends, whose good wishes I am sure will follow them in their new undertaking.

"*December* 2.—Rather a blank day for the *Gurnal*. Sophia dined with us alone, Lockhart being gone to the west to bid farewell to his father and brothers. Evening spent in talking with Sophia on their future prospects. God bless her, poor girl, she never gave me a moment's reason to complain of her. But, O my God, that poor delicate child, so clever, so animated, yet holding by this earth with so fearfully slight a tenure. Never out of his mother's thoughts, almost never out of his father's arms when he has a single moment to give to any thing. *Deus providebit*.

"*December* 3.—T. S. called last night to excuse himself from dining with Lockhart's friends to-day. I really fear he is near an actual stand-still. He has been extremely improvident. When I first knew him he had an excellent estate, and now he is deprived, I fear, of the whole reversion of the price, and this from no vice or extreme, except a wasteful mode of buying pictures and other costly trifles at high prices, and selling them again for nothing, besides extravagant housekeeping and profuse hospitality. An excellent disposition, with a considerable fund of acquired knowledge, would have rendered him an agreeable companion, had he not affected singularity, and rendered himself accordingly singularly affected. He was very near being a poet, but a miss is as good as a mile. I knew him first, many years ago, when he was desirous of my acquaintance, but he was too poetical for me, or I was not poetical enough for him, so that we continued only ordinary acquaintance, with good-will on either side, which T. S. really deserves, as a more friendly, generous creature never lived. Lockhart hopes to get something done for him, being sincerely attached to him, but says he has no hopes till he is utterly ruined. That point I fear is not far distant, but what Lockhart can do for him *then* I cannot guess. His last effort failed, owing to a curious reason. T. S. had made some translations, which he does extremely well, for give him ideas, and he never wants choice of good words, and Lockhart had got Constable to offer some sort of terms for them. T. S. has always, though possessing a beautiful power of handwriting, had some whim or other about imitating that of some other person, and has written for months in the imitation of one or other of his friends. At present he has renounced this amusement, and chooses to write with a brush upon large cartridge paper, somewhat in the Chinese fashion—so when his work, which was only to extend to one or two volumes, arrived on the shoulders of two porters, in immense bales, our jolly bibliopole backed out of the treaty, and would have nothing more to do with T. S. He is a creature that is, or would be thought, of imagination all compact, and is influenced by strange whims. But he is a kind, harmless, friendly soul, and I fear has been cruelly plundered of money, which he now wants sadly.

"Dined with Lockhart's friends, about fifty in number, who gave him a parting entertainment. John Hope, Solicitor-General, in the chair, and Robert Dundas, croupier. The company most highly respectable, and any man might be proud of such an indication of the interest they take in his progress in life. Tory principles rather too violently upheld by some speakers. I came home about ten; the party sat late.

"*December* 5*th*.—This morning Lockhart and Sophia left us early, and without leave-taking; when I rose at eight o'clock they were *gone*. This was very right. I hate red eyes and blowing of noses. *Agere et pati Romanum est*. Of all schools commend me to the Stoics. We cannot indeed overcome our affections, nor ought we if we could, but we may repress them within due bounds, and avoid

* Now Major-General Sir James Russell, K. C. B.

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coaxing them to make fools of those who should be their masters. I have lost some of the comforts to which I chiefly looked for enjoyment. Well, I must make the more of such as remain—God bless them. And so 'I will unto my holy work again,'* which at present is the description of that worshipful triumvirate, Danton, Robespierre, and Marat.

"I cannot conceive what possesses me, over every person besides, to mislay papers. I received a letter Saturday at e'en, inclosing a bill for £750; *no deaf nuts*. Well, I read it, and note the contents; and this day, as if it had been a wind bill in the literal sense of the words, I search every where, and lose three hours of my morning—turn over all my confusion in the writing-desk—break open one or two letters, lest I should have inclosed the sweet and easily convertible document in them—send for a joiner, and disorganize my scrutoire, lest it should have fallen aside by mistake. I find it at last—the place where, is of little consequence; but this trick must be amended.

"Dined at the Royal Society Club, where, as usual, was a pleasant meeting—from twenty to twenty-five. It is a very good institution; we pay two guineas only for six dinners in the year, present or absent. Dine at five, or rather half-past five, at the Royal Hotel, where we have an excellent dinner, with soups, fish, &c., and all in good order; port and sherry till half-past seven, then coffee, and we go to the Society. This preface of a good dinner, to be paid for whether you partake or not, brings out many a philosopher who might not otherwise have attended. Harry Mackenzie, now in his eighty-second or third year, read part of an Essay on Dreams. Supped at Dr. Russell's usual party, which shall serve for one while.

"*December 6th.*—A rare thing this literature, or love of fame or notoriety which accompanies it. Here is Mr. Henry Mackenzie on the very brink of human dissolution, as actively anxious about it as if the curtain must not soon be closed on that and every thing else.† He calls me his literary confessor; and I am sure I am glad to return the kindnesses which he showed me long since in George Square. No man is less known from his writings; you would suppose a retired, modest, somewhat affected man, with a white handkerchief, and a sigh ready for every sentiment. No such thing; H. M. is alert as a contracting tailor's needle in every sort of business—a politician and a sportsman—shoots and fishes in a sort even to this day—and is the life of company with anecdotes and fun. Sometimes his daughter tells me he is in low spirits at home, but really I never see any thing of it in society.

"There is a maxim almost universal in Scotland, which I should like much to see controlled. Every youth, of every temper and almost every description of character, is sent either to study for the bar, or to a writer's office as an apprentice. The Scottish seem to conceive Themis the most powerful of goddesses. Is a lad stupid, the law will sharpen him; is he mercurial, the law will make him sedate; has he an estate, he may get a sheriffdom; is he poor, the richest lawyers have emerged from poverty; is he a Tory, he may become a depute-advocate; is he a Whig, he may with far better hope expect to become, in reputation at least, that rising counsel Mr. ——, when in fact he only rises at tavern dinners. Upon some such wild views, advocates and writers multiply till there is no life for them, and men give up the chase, hopeless and exhausted, and go into the army at five-and-twenty, instead of eighteen, with a turn for expense, perhaps—almost certainly for profligacy, and with a heart embittered against the loving parents or friends who compelled them to lose six or seven years in dusting the rails of the stair with their black gowns, or scribbling nonsense for twopence a page all day, and laying out twice their earnings at night in whisky-punch. Here is T. L. now. Four or five years ago, from certain indications, I assured his friends he would never be a writer. Good-natured lad, too, when Bacchus is out of the question; but at other times so pugnacious, that it was wished he could only be properly placed where fighting was to be a part of his duty, regulated by time and place, and paid for accordingly. Well, time and instruction have been thrown away, and now, after fighting two regular boxing-matches and a duel with pistols in the course of one week, he tells them roundly *he will be no* writer, which common sense might have told them before. He has now perhaps acquired habits of insubordination, unfitting him for the army, where he might have been tamed at an earlier period. He is too old for the navy, and so he must go to India, a guinea-pig on board a China-man, with what hope or view it is melancholy to guess. His elder brother did all man could to get his friends to consent to his going into the army in time. The lad has good-humour, courage, and most gentleman-like feelings, but he is incurably dissipated, I fear; so goes to die in a foreign land. Thank God, I let Walter take his own way; and I trust he will be a useful, honoured soldier, being, for his time, high in the service; whereas at home he would probably have been a wine-bibbing, moor-fowl shooting, fox-hunting Fife squire—living at Lochore without either aim or end—and well if he were no worse. Dined at home with Lady S. and Anne. Wrote in the evening.

"*December 7th.*—Teind day—at home of course. Wrote answers to one or two letters which have been lying on my desk like snakes, hissing at me for my dilatoriness. Received a letter from Sir W. Knighton, mentioning that the King acquiesced in my proposal that Constable's Miscellany should be dedicated to him. Enjoined, however, not to make this public, till the draft of dedication shall be approved. This letter tarried so long, I thought some one had insinuated the proposal was *infra dig.* I don't think so. The purpose is to bring all the standard works, both in sciences and the liberal arts, within the reach of the lower classes, and enable them thus to use with advantage the education which is given them at every hand. To make boys learn to read, and then place no good books within their reach, is to give men an appetite, and leave nothing in the pantry save unwholsome and poisonous food, which, depend upon it, they will eat rather than starve. Sir William, it seems, has been in Germany.

"Mighty dark this morning: it is past ten, and I am using my lamp. The vast number of houses built beneath us to the north certainly renders our street darker during the days in which frost or haze prevents the smoke from rising. After all, it may be my older eyes. I remember two years ago, when Lord Hermand began to fail somewhat in his limbs, he observed that Lord Succoth came to Court at a more early hour than usual, whereas it was he himself who took longer time to walk the usual distance betwixt his house and the Parliament Square. I suspect old gentlemen often make these mistakes.

"Dined quiet with Lady S—— and Anne. Anne is practising Scots songs, which I take as a kind compliment to my own taste, as hers leads her chiefly to foreign music. I think the good girl sees that I want and must miss her sister's peculiar talent in singing the airs of our native country, which, imperfect as my musical ear is, make, and always have made the most pleasing impression on me. And so if she puts a constraint on herself for my sake, I can only say, in requital, God bless her.

"I have much to comfort me in the present aspect of my family. My eldest son, independent in fortune, united to an affectionate wife—and of good hopes in his profession;—my second, with a good deal of talent, and in the way, I trust, of cultivating it to good purpose. Anne, an honest, downright, good Scots lass, in whom I could only wish to correct a spirit of satire; and Lockhart is Lockhart, to whom I can most willingly confide the happiness of the daughter who chose him, and whom he has chosen. But my dear wife, the partner of early cares and successes is, I fear, frail in health—though

* *King Richard III.* Act III, Scene 7.

† Mr. Mackenzie had been consulting Sir Walter about collecting his own juvenile poetry.

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I trust and pray she may see me out. Indeed, if this troublesome complaint goes on—it bodes no long existence. My brother was affected with the same weakness, which, before he was fifty, brought on mortal symptoms. The poor Major had been rather a free liver. But my father, the most abstemious of men, save when the duties of hospitality required him to be very moderately free with his bottle, and that was very seldom, had the same weakness of the powers of retention which now annoys me, and he, I think, was not above seventy when cut off. Square the odds, and good-night Sir Walter about sixty.—I care not, if I leave my name unstained, and my family properly settled—*Sat est vixisse.*

"*December* 8.—Talking of the *vixisse*, it may not be impertinent to notice that Knox, a young poet of considerable talent, died here a week or two since. His father was a respectable yeoman, and he himself, succeeding to good farms under the Duke of Buccleuch, became too soon his own master, and plunged into dissipation and ruin. His talent then showed itself in a fine strain of pensive poetry, called, I think, 'The Lonely Hearth,'* far superior to that of Michael Bruce, whose *consumption*, by the way, has been the *life* of his verses. But poetry, nay good poetry, is a drug in the present day. I am a wretched patron—I cannot go about with a subscription-paper, like a pocket-pistol, and draw unawares on some honest country-gentleman, who has as much alarm as if I had used the phrase 'stand and deliver,' and parts with his money with a grimace, indicating some suspicion that the crown-piece thus levied goes ultimately into the collector's own pocket. This I see daily done; and I have seen such collectors, when they have exhausted papa and mamma, continue their trade among the misses, and conjure out of their pockets their little funds which should carry them to a play or an assembly. It is well people will go through this—it does some good, I suppose, and they have great merit who can sacrifice their pride so far as to attempt it in this way. For my part I am a bad promoter of subscriptions; but I wished to do what I could for this lad, whose talent I really admired; and I am not addicted to admire heaven-born poets, or poetry that is reckoned very good *considering*. I had him, Knox, at Abbotsford, about ten years ago, but found him unfit for that sort of society. I tried to help him, but there were temptations he could never resist. He scrambled on writing for the booksellers and magazines, and living like the Otways, and Savages, and Chattertons of former days, though I do not know that he was in extreme want. His connexion with me terminated in begging a subscription, or a guinea, now and then. His last works were spiritual hymns, and which he wrote very well. In his own line of society he was said to exhibit infinite humour; but all his works are grave and pensive, a style, perhaps, like Master Stephen's melancholy, affected for the nonce.

"Mrs. Grant intimates that she will take her pudding—her pension, I mean (see 30th November), and is contrite, as Henry Mackenzie vouches. I am glad the stout old girl is not foreclosed, faith. Cabbing a pension in these times is like hunting a pig with a soap'd tail, monstrous apt to slip through your fingers.

"*December* 9.—Yesterday I read and wrote the whole day and evening. To-day I shall not be so happy. Having Gas-Light Company to attend at two, I must be brief in journalizing.

"The gay world has been kept in hot water lately by the impudent publication of the celebrated Harriet Wilson—who, punk from earliest possibility, I suppose, has lived with half the gay world at hack and manger, and now obliges such as will not pay hush-money with a history of whatever she knows or can invent about them. She must have been assisted in the style, spelling, and diction, though the attempt at wit is very poor, that at pathos sickening. But there is some good retailing of conversations, in which the style of the speakers, so far as known to me, is exactly imitated, and some things told, as said by individuals of each other, which will sound unpleasantly in each other's ears. I admire the address of Lord A——, himself very sorrily handled from time to time. Some one asked him if H. W. had been pretty correct on the whole. 'Why, faith,' he replied, 'I believe so'—when, raising his eyes, he saw Q—— D ——, whom the little jilt had treated atrociously—'what concerns the present company always excepted, you know,' added Lord A——, with infinite presence of mind. As he was in *pari casu* with Q. D., no more could be said. After all, H. W. beats Con Philips, Anne Bellamy, and all former demireps, out and out. I think I supped once in her company, more than twenty years since, at Mat Lewis's in Argyle Street, where the company, as the Duke says to Lucio, chanced to be 'fairer than honest.'† She was far from beautiful, if it be the same *chiffonne*, but a smart saucy girl, with good eyes and dark hair, and the manners of a wild schoolboy. I am glad this accidental meeting has escaped her memory—or, perhaps, is not accurately recorded in mine—for, being a sort of French falconer, who hawk at all they see, I might have had a distinction which I am far from desiring.

"Dined at Sir John Hay's—a large party. In the morning a meeting of Oil Gas Committee. The concern hangs a little;

> 'It may do weel, for ought it's done yet,
> But only—it's no just begun yet.'†

"*December* 10.—A stormy and rainy day. Walk it from the Court through the rain. I don't dislike this. Egad, I rather like it; for no man that ever stepped on heather has less dread than I of the catch cold; and I seem to regain, in buffeting with the wind, a little of the high spirit with which, in younger days, I used to enjoy a Tam-o'-Shanter ride through darkness, wind, and rain, the boughs groaning and cracking over my head, the good horse free to the road and impatient for home, and feeling the weather as little as I did.

> 'The storm around might roar and rustle,
> We did na mind the storm a whistle.'

"Answered two letters—one answer to a schoolboy, who writes himself Captain of Giggleswick School (a most imposing title), entreating the youngster not to commence editor of a magazine to be entitled the Yorkshire Muffin, I think, at seventeen years old—second, to a soldier of the 79th, showing why I cannot oblige him by getting his discharge, and exhorting him rather to bear with the wickedness and profanity of the service, than take the very precarious step of desertion. This is the old receipt of Durandarte—*Patience, cousin, and shuffle the cards*; and I suppose the correspondents will think I have been too busy in offering my counsel where I was asked for assistance.

"A third rogue writes to tell me—rather of the latest, if the matter was of consequence—that he approves of the first three volumes of the Heart of Mid-Lothian, but totally condemns the fourth. Doubtless he thinks his opinion worth the sevenpence sterling which his letter costs. However, an author should be reasonably well pleased when three-fourths of his work are acceptable to the reader. The knave demands of me, in a postscript, to get back the sword of Sir William Wallace from England, where it was carried from Dumbarton Castle. I am not Master-General of the Ordnance, that I know. It was wrong, however, to take away that and Mons Meg. If I go to London this spring, I will renew my negotiation with the Great Duke for recovery of Mons Meg.

"There is nothing more awful than to attempt to cast a glance among the clouds and mists which

* William Knox died 12th November. He had published "Songs of Israel, 1824;" "A Visit to Dublin, 1824;" "The Harp of Zion, 1825," &c.; besides the "Lonely Hearth." His publisher (Mr. Anderson, junior, of Edinburgh) remembers that Sir Walter occasionally wrote to Knox, and sent him money; L. 10 at a time.

* *Measure for Measure*, Act IV., Scene 3.
† Burns's *Dedication to Gavin Hamilton.*

hide the broken extremity of the celebrated bridge of Mirza.* Yet, when every day brings us nigher that termination, one would almost think our views should become clearer. Alas! it is not so: there is a curtain to be withdrawn, a veil to be rent, before we shall see things as they really are. There are few, I trust, who disbelieve the existence of a God; nay, I doubt if at all times, and in all moods, any single individual ever adopted that hideous creed, though some have professed it. With the belief of a Deity, that of the immortality of the soul and of the state of future rewards and punishments is indissolubly linked. More we are not to know; but neither are we prohibited from all attempts, however vain, to pierce the solemn sacred gloom. The expressions used in Scripture are doubtless metaphorical, for penal fires and heavenly melody are only applicable to beings endowed with corporeal senses; and at least till the period of the resurrection, the spirits of men, whether entering into the perfection of the just, or committed to the regions of punishment, are not connected with bodies. Neither is it to be supposed that the glorified bodies which shall arise in the last day will be capable of the same gross indulgences with which ours are now solaced. That the idea of Mahomet's paradise is inconsistent with the purity of our heavenly religion will be readily granted; and see Mark xii. 25. Harmony is obviously chosen as the least corporeal of all gratifications of the sense, and as the type of love, unity, and a state of peace and perfect happiness. But they have a poor idea of the Deity, and the rewards which are destined for the just made perfect, who can only adopt the literal sense of an eternal concert—a never-ending birthday ode. I rather suppose this should be understood as some commission from the Highest, some duty to discharge with the applause of a satisfied conscience. That the Deity, who himself must be supposed to feel love and affection for the beings he has called into existence, should delegate a portion of those powers, I for one cannot conceive altogether so wrong a conjecture. We would then find reality in Milton's sublime machinery of the guardian saints or genii of kingdoms. Nay, we would approach to the Catholic idea of the employment of saints, though without approaching the absurdity of saint-worship, which degrades their religion. There would be, we must suppose, in these employments, difficulties to overcome, and exertions to be made, for all which the celestial beings employed would have certain appropriate powers. I cannot help owning that a life of active benevolence is more consistent with my ideas than an eternity of music. But it is all speculation, and it is impossible to guess what we shall do, unless we could ascertain the equally difficult previous question, what we are to be. But there is a God, and a just God—a judgment and a future life—and all who own so much let them act according to the faith that is in them. I would not of course limit the range of my genii to this confined earth. There is the universe with all its endless extent of worlds.

"Company at home—Sir Adam Ferguson and his Lady; Colonel and Miss Russell; Count Davidoff, and Mr. Collyer. By the by, I observe that all men whose names are obviously derived from some mechanical trade, endeavour to disguise and antiquate, as it were, their names, by spelling them after some quaint manner or other. Thus we have Collyer, Smythe, Tailleure; as much as to say, my ancestor was indeed a mechanic, but it was a world of time ago, when the word was spelled very unlike the modern usage.—Then we had young Whitebank and Will Allan the artist, a very agreeable, simple-mannered, and pleasant man.

"*December* 11.—A touch of the *morbus eruditorum*, to which I am as little subject as most folks, and have it less now than when young. It is a tremor of the head, the pulsation of which becomes painfully sensible—a disposition to causeless alarm—much lassitude—and decay of vigour and activity of intellect. The reins feel weary and painful, and the mind is apt to receive and encourage gloomy apprehensions. Fighting with this fiend is not always the best way to conquer him. I have found exercise and the open air better than reasoning. But such weather as is now without doors does not encourage *la petite guerre*, so we must give him battle in form, by letting both mind and body know that, supposing one the House of Commons and the other the House of Peers, my will is sovereign over both. There is a fine description of this species of mental weakness in the fine play of Beaumont and Fletcher, called the *Lover's Progress*, where the man, warned that his death is approaching, works himself into an agony of fear, and calls for assistance, though there is no apparent danger. The apparition of the innkeeper's ghost, in the same play, hovers between the ludicrous and the terrible; and to me the touches of the former quality which it contains, seem to augment the effect of the latter—they seem to give reality to the supernatural, as being a circumstance with which an inventor would hardly have garnished his story.

"*December* 12.—Hogg came to breakfast this morning, and brought for his companion the Galashiels bard, David Thomson,† as to a meeting of *huz Tividale poets*. The honest grunter opines with a delightful *naiveté* that *Muir's* verses are far owre sweet—answered by Thomson that Moore's ear or notes, I forget which, were finely strung. 'They are far owre finely strung,' replied he of the Forest, 'for mine are just right.' It reminded me of Queen Bess, when questioning Melville sharply and closely whether Mary was taller than her, and extracting an answer in the affirmative, she replied, 'Then your Queen is too tall, for I am just the proper height.'

"Was engaged the whole day with Sheriff Court processes. There is something sickening in seeing poor devils drawn into great expenses about trifles by interested attorneys. But too cheap access to litigation has its evils on the other hand, for the proneness of the lower class to gratify spite and revenge in this way would be a dreadful evil were they able to endure the expense. Very few cases come before the Sheriff Court of Selkirkshire that ought to come any where. Wretched wranglings about a few pounds, begun in spleen, and carried on from obstinacy, and at length, from fear of the conclusion to the banquet of ill-humour, 'D—n—n of expenses.'† I try to check it as well as I can; 'but so 'twill be when I am gone.'

"*December* 12.—Dined at home, and spent the evening in writing—Anne and Lady Scott at the theatre to see Mathews—a very clever man my friend Mathews; but it is tiresome to be funny for a whole evening, so I was content and stupid at home.

"An odd optical delusion has amused me these two last nights. I have been of late, for the first time, condemned to the constant use of spectacles. Now, when I have laid them aside to step into a room dimly lighted, out of the strong light which I use for writing, I have seen, or seemed to see, through the rims of the same spectacles which I have left behind me. At first the impression was so lively that I put my hands to my eyes, believing I had the actual spectacles on at the moment. But what I saw was only the eidolon or image of said useful servants. This fortifies some of Dr. Hibbert's positions about spectral appearances.

"*December* 13.—Letter from Lady Stafford—kind and friendly after the wont of Banzu-Mohr-archat.‡ This is wrong spelled I know. Her countenance is something for Sophia, whose company

* Spectator, No. 159.

* See ante, vol. v. p. 226.

† Burns's *Address to the Unco Guid.*

‡ *Banamhorar-Chat*, i. e. the Great Lady of the Cat, is the Gaelic title of the Countess-Duchess of Sutherland. The County of Sutherland itself is in that dialect *Cattey*, and in the English name of the neighbouring one, *Caithness*, we have another trace of the early settlement of the *Clan Chattan*; whose chiefs bear the cognizance of a Wild Cat.

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should be, as ladies are said to choose their liquor —little and good. To be acquainted with persons of mere *ton* is a nuisance and a scrape—to be known to persons of real fashion and fortune is in London a very great advantage. In London second-rate fashion is like false jewels.

"Went to the yearly court of the Edinburgh Assurance Company, to which I am one of those graceful and useless appendages, called Directors Extraordinary—an extraordinary director I should prove had they elected me an ordinary one. There were there moneyers and great oneyers,* men of metal—counters and discounters—sharp, grim, prudential faces—eyes weak with ciphering by lamplight—men who say to gold Be thou paper, and to paper Be thou turned into fine gold. Many a bustling, sharp-faced, keen-eyed writer too—some perhaps speculating with their clients' property. My reverend seigniors had expected a motion for printing their contract, which I as a piece of light artillery, was brought down and got into battery to oppose. I should certainly have done this on the general ground, that while each person could at any time obtain sight of the contract at a call on the directors or managers, it would be absurd to print it for the use of the company—and that exposing it to the eyes of the world at large was in all respects unnecessary, and might teach novel companies to avail themselves of our rules and calculations—if false, for the purpose of exposing our errors—if correct, for the purpose of improving their own schemes on our model. But my eloquence was not required, no one renewing the motion under question; so off I came, my ears still ringing with the sounds of thousands and tens of thousands, and my eyes dazzled with the golden gleam offered by so many capitalists.

"Walked home with the Solicitor†—decidedly the most hopeful young man of his time; high connexions, great talent, spirited ambition, a ready elocution, with a good voice and dignified manners, prompt and steady courage, vigilant and constant assiduity, popularity with the young men, and the good opinion of the old, will, if I mistake not, carry him as high as any man who has arisen here since the days of old Hal Dundas.‡ He is hot though, and rather hasty: this should be amended. They who would play at single-stick must bear with pleasure a rap over the knuckles. Dined quietly with Lady Scott and Anne.

"*December* 14.—Affairs very bad again in the money-market in London. It must come here, and I have far too many engagements not to feel it. To end the matter at once, I intend to borrow £10,000, with which my son's marriage-contract allows me to charge my estate. This will enable us to dispense in a great measure with bank assistance, and sleep in spite of thunder. I do not know why it is—this business makes me a little bilious, or rather the want of exercise during the Session, and this late change of the weather to too much heat. But the sun and moon shall dance on the green ere carelessness or hope of gain, or facility of getting cash, shall make me go too deep again, were it but for the disquiet of the thing.

"*December* 15.—Dined at home with family. I am determined not to stand mine host to all Scotland and England as I have done. This shall be a saving, as it must be a borrowing year. We heard from Sophia; they are got safe to town; but as Johnnie had a little bag of meal with him, to make his porridge on the road, the whole inn-yard assembled to see the operation. Junor, his maid, was of opinion that England was an 'awfu' country to make parritch in.' God bless the poor baby, and restore his perfect health!

"*December* 16.—T. S. and his friend Robert Wilson came—the former at four, as usual—the latter at three, as appointed. Robert Wilson frankly said that T. S.'s case was quite desperate, that he was insolvent, and that any attempt to save him at present would be just so much cash thrown away. God knows, at this moment I have none to throw away uselessly. For poor S., there was a melancholy mixture of pathos and affectation in his statement, which really affected me; while it told me that it would be useless to help him to money on such very empty plans. I endeavoured to persuade him to make a virtue of necessity, resign all to his creditors, and begin the world on a new leaf. I offered him Chiefswood for a temporary retirement. Lady Scott thinks I was wrong, and nobody could less desire such a neighbour, all his affectations being *caviare* to me. But then the wife and children! Went again to the Solicitor on a wrong night, being asked for to-morrow. Lady Scott undertakes to keep my engagements recorded in future. 'Sed quis custodiet ipsam custodem?'

"*December* 17.—Dined with the Solicitor—Lord Chief-Baron—Sir William Boothby nephew of old Sir Brook, the dandy poet, &c. Annoyed with anxious presentiments, which the night's post must dispel or confirm.

"*December* 18.—Poor T. S. called again yesterday. Through his incoherent, miserable tale, I could see that he had exhausted each access to credit, and yet fondly imagines that, bereft of all his accustomed indulgences, he can work with a literary zeal unknown to his happier days. I hope he may labour enough to gain the mere support of his family. For myself, if things go badly in London, the magic wand of the Unknown will be shivered in his grasp. He must then, faith, be termed the Too-well-known. The feast of fancy will be over with the feeling of independence. He shall no longer have the delight of waking in the morning with bright ideas in his mind, hasten to commit them to paper, and count them monthly, as the means of planting such scaurs, and purchasing such wastes; replacing dreams of fiction by other prospective visions of walks by

> 'Fountain heads, and pathless groves;
> Places which pale passion loves.'

This cannot be; but I may work substantial husbandry, *i. e.* write history, and such concerns. They will not be received with the same enthusiasm; at least I much doubt, the general knowledge that an author must write for his bread, at least for improving his pittance, degrades him and his productions in the public eye. He falls into the second-rate rank of estimation:

> 'While the harness sore galls, and the spurs his side goad,
> The high-mettled racer's a hack on the road.

It is a bitter thought; but if tears start at it, let them flow. My heart clings to the place I have created. There is scarce a tree on it that does not owe its being to me.

"What a life mine has been!—half educated, almost wholly neglected, or left to myself; stuffing my head with most nonsensical trash, and undervalued by most of my companions for a time; getting forward, and held a bold and clever fellow, contrary to the opinion of all who thought me a mere dreamer; broken-hearted for two years; my heart handsomely pieced again; but the crack will remain till my dying day. Rich and poor four or five times; once on the verge of ruin, yet opened a new source of wealth almost overflowing. Now to be broken in my pitch of pride, and nearly winged (unless good news should come,) because London chooses to be in an uproar, and in the tumult of bulls and bears, a poor inoffensive lion like myself is pushed to the wall. But what is to be the end of it? God knows; and so ends the catechism.

"Nobody in the end can lose a penny by me—that is one comfort. Men will think pride has had a fall. Let them indulge their own pride in thinking that my fall will make them higher, or seem so at least.

* See *1st King Henry IV.* Act II. Scene I.

† John Hope Esq. (now Dean of the Faculty of Advocates) was at this time Solicitor-General for Scotland.

‡ Henry Dundas, the first Viscount Melville, first appeared in Parliament as Lord Advocate of Scotland.

I have the satisfaction to recollect that my prosperity has been of advantage to many, and to hope that some at least will forgive my transient wealth on account of the innocence of my intentions, and, my real wish to do good to the poor. Sad hearts, too, at Darnick, and in the cottages of Abbotsford. I have half resolved never to see the place again. How could I tread my hall with such a diminished crest? How live a poor indebted man, where I was one the wealthy—the honoured? I was to have gone there on Saturday in joy and prosperity to receive my friends. My dogs will wait for me in vain. It is foolish—but the thoughts of parting from these dumb creatures have moved me more than any of the painful reflections I have put down. Poor things, I must get them kind masters! There my be yet those who, loving me, may love my dog, because it has been mine. I must end these gloomy forebodings, or I shall lose the tone of mind with which men should meet distress. I feel my dogs' feet on my knees. I hear them whining and seeking me every where. This is nonsense, but it is what they would do could they know how things may be. An odd thought strikes me—When I die, will the journal of these days be taken out of the ebony cabinet at Abbotsford, and read with wonder, that the well-seeming Baronet should ever have experienced the risk of such a hitch? Or will it be found in some obscure lodging-house, where the decayed son of Chivalry had hung up his scutcheon, and where one or two old friends will look grave and whisper to each other, 'Poor gentleman'—'a well-meaning man'—'nobody's enemy but his own'—'thought his parts would never wear out'—'family poorly left'—'pity he took that foolish title.' Who can answer this question?

"Poor Will Laidlaw—poor Tom Purdie—such news will wring your hearts, and many a poor fellow besides to whom my prosperity was daily bread.

"Ballantyne behaves like himself, and sinks the prospect of his own ruin in contemplating mine. I tried to enrich him indeed, and now all, all is in the balance. He will have the Journal still—that is a comfort, for sure they cannot find a better editor. *They*—alas, who will *they* be—the *unbekannten obern** who may have to dispose of my all as they will? Some hard-eyed banker—some of these men of millions whom I described.

"I have endeavoured to give vent to thoughts naturally so painful, by writing these notes—partly to keep them at bay by busying myself with the history of the French Convention. I thank God I can do both with reasonable composure. I wonder how Anne will bear such an affliction. She is passionate, but stout-hearted and courageous in important matters, though irritable in trifles. I am glad Lockhart and his wife are gone. Why? I cannot tell—but I *am* pleased to be left to my own regrets, without being melted by condolences, though of the most sincere and affectionate kind.

"Oddly enough, it happened mine honest friend Hector Macdonald came in before dinner, to ask a copy of my seal of arms, with a sly kindliness of intimation that it was for some agreeable purpose. *Half-past eight.* I closed this book under the impression of impending ruin. I open it an hour after (thanks be to God) with the strong hope that matters will be got over safely and honourably, in a mercantile sense. Cadell came at eight to communicate a letter from Hurst and Robinson, intimating they had stood the storm.

"I shall always think the better of Cadell for this—not merely because his feet are beautiful on the mountains who brings good tidings, but because he showed feeling—deep feeling, poor fellow. He, who I thought had no more than his numeration-table, and who, if he had his whole counting-house full of sensibility, had yet his wife and children to bestow it upon—I will not forget this, if all keeps right. I love the virtues of rough-and-round men—The others' are apt to escape in salt rheum, sal-volatile and a white pocket-handkerchief.

* *Unbekannten obern*—unknown rulers.

"*December* 19.—Ballantyne here before breakfast. He looks on last night's news with confidence. Constable came in and sat an hour. The old gentleman is firm as a rock. He talks of going to London next week. But I must go to work.

"*December* 20.—Dined at Lord Chief-Baron's. Lord Justice-Clerk, Lord-President, Captain Scarlett, a gentlemanlike young man, the son of the great Counsellor,* and a friend of my son Walter, Lady Charlotte Hope and other womankind, R. Dundas of Arniston, and his pleasant and good-humoured little wife, whose quick, intelligent look pleases me more, though her face be plain, than a hundred mechanical beauties. I like Ch. Ba. Shepherd very much—as much, I think, as any man I have learned to know of late years. There is a neatness and precision, a closeness and truth in the tone of his conversation, which shows what a lawyer he must have been. Perfect good-humour and *naiveté* of manner, with a little warmth of temper on suitable occasions. His great deafness alone prevented him from being Lord Chief-Justice. I never saw a man so patient under such a malady. He loves society, and converses excellently; yet is often obliged, in a mixed company particularly, to lay aside his trumpet, retire into himself, and withdraw from the talk. He does this with an expression of patience in his countenance which touches one much. Constable's license for the dedication is come, which will make him happy.†

"*December* 21*st*.—Dined with James Ballantyne, and met R. Cadell, and my old friend Mathews, the comedian, with his son, now grown up a clever lad, who makes songs in the style of James Smith or Colman, and sings them with spirit. There have been odd associations attending my two last meetings with Mathews. The last time I saw him before yesterday evening he dined with me in company with poor Sir Alexander Boswell, who was killed within a week.‡ I never saw Sir Alexander more. The time before was in 1815, when John Scott of Gala and I were returning from France, and passed through London, when we brought Mathews down as far as Leamington. Poor Byron lunched, or rather made an early dinner with us at Long's, and a most brilliant day we had of it. I never saw Byron so full of fun, frolic, wit, and whim: he was as playful as a kitten. Well, I never saw him again.§ So this man of mirth, with his merry meetings, has brought me no luck. I like better that he should throw in his talent of mimicry and humour into the present current tone of the company, than that he should be required to give this, that, and t'other *bit* selected from his public recitations. They are good, certainly—excellent; but then you *must* laugh, and that is always severe to me. When I do laugh in sincerity, the joke must be or seem unpremeditated. I could not help thinking, in the midst of the glee, what gloom had lately been over the minds of three of the company. What a strange scene if the surge of conversation could suddenly ebb like the tide, and show us the state of people's real minds!

'No eyes the rocks discover
Which lurk beneath the deep.'

Life could not be endured, were it seen in reality. Things keep mending in London.

"*December* 22.—I wrote six of my close pages yesterday, which is about twenty-four pages in print. What is more, I think it comes off twangingly. The story is so very interesting in itself, that there is no fear of the book answering.‖ Superficial it must be,

* Mr. Scarlett, now Lord Abinger.

† The Dedication of Constable's Miscellany was penned by Sir Walter:—"To his Majesty King George IV., the most generous Patron even of the most humble attempts towards the advantage of his subjects: This Miscellany, designed to extend useful knowledge and elegant literature, by placing works of standard merit within the attainment of every class of Readers, is most humbly inscribed by His Majesty's dutiful and devoted subject—Archibald Constable."

‡ See *ante* Vol. v., pp. 153-4.

§ See *ante* Vol. iii., pp. 386-9, 393.

‖ Life of Napoleon.

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but I do not care for the charge. Better a superficial book which brings well and strikingly together the known and acknowledged facts, than a dull boring narrative, pausing to see farther into a millstone at every moment than the nature of the millstone admits. Nothing is so tiresome as walking through some beautiful scene with a *minute philosopher*, a botanist, or pebble-gatherer, who is eternally calling your attention from the grand features of the natural picture to look at grasses and chucky-stones. Yet, in their way, they give useful information; and so does the minute historian. Gad, I think that will look well in the preface. My bile is quite gone; I really believe it arose from mere anxiety. What a wonderful connexion between the mind and body!

"The air of *Bonnie Dundee* running in my head to-day, I wrote a few verses to it before dinner, taking the key-note from the story of Clavers leaving the Scottish Convention of Estates in 1688-9.* I wonder if they are good. Ah, poor Will Erskine! thou couldst and wouldst have told me. I must consult J. B., who is as honest as W. E. But then, though he has good taste too, there is a little of *Big Bow-wow* about it. Can't say what made me take a frisk so uncommon of late years as to write verses of free-will. I suppose the same impulse which makes birds sing when the storm has blown over.

"Dined at Lord Minto's. There were Lord and Lady Ruthven, William Clerk, and Thomas Thomson—a right choice party. There was also my very old friend Mrs. Erydone, the relict of the traveller, and daughter of Principal Robertson, and really worthy of such a connexion—Lady Minto, who is also peculiarly agreeable—and her sister, Mrs. Admiral Adam, in the evening.

"*December* 23.—Lord Minto's father, the first Earl, was a man among a thousand. I knew him very, very intimately in the beginning of the century, and, which was very agreeable, was much at his house on very easy terms. He loved the Muses, and worshipped them in secret, and used to read some of his poetry, which was but middling. With the mildest manners, he was very tenacious of his opinions, although he changed them twice in the crises of politics. He was the early friend of Fox, and made a figure towards the end of the American war, or during the struggles betwixt Fox and Pitt. Then came the Revolution, and he joined the Anti-Gallican party so keenly, that he declared against Addington's peace with France, and was for a time, I believe, a Wyndhamite. He was reconciled to the Whigs on the Fox and Grenville coalition; but I have heard that Fox, contrary to his wont, retained such personal feelings as made him object to Sir Gilbert Elliott's having a seat in the cabinet; so he was sent Governor-General to India—a better thing, I take it, for his fortune. He died shortly after his return,† on his way down to his native country. He was a most pleasing and amiable man. I was very sorry for his death, though I do not know how we should have met, for a contested election in Roxburghshire had placed some coldness betwixt the present Lord and me. I was certainly anxious for Sir Alexander Don, both as friend of my most kind friend Charles Duke of Buccleuch, and on political accounts; and those thwartings are what men in public life do not like to endure. After a cessation of friendship for some years, we have now come about again. We never had the slightest personal dispute or disagreement. But politics are the blowpipe beneath whose influence the best cemented friendships diffuse; and ours, after all, was only a very familiar acquaintance.

"It is very odd that the common people about Minto and the neighbourhood will not believe at this hour that the first Earl is dead. They think he had done something in India which he could not answer for—that the house was rebuilt on a scale unusually large to give him a suite of secret apartments, and that he often walks about the woods and crags of Minto at night, with a white nightcap, and long white beard. The circumstance of his having died on the road down to Scotland is the sole foundation of this absurd legend, which shows how willing the public are to gull themselves when they can find no one else to take the trouble. I have seen people who could read, write, and cipher, shrug their shoulders and look mysterious when this subject was mentioned. One very absurd addition was made on occasion of a great ball at Minto House, which it was said was given to draw all people away from the grounds, that the concealed Earl might have leisure for his exercise. This was on the principle in the German play,* where, to hide their conspiracy, the associates join in a chorus song.

"We dined at home; Mr. Davidoff and his tutor kept an engagement with us to dinner notwithstanding the death of the Emperor Alexander. They went to the play with the womankind; I staid at home to write.

"*December* 24.—Wrote to Walter and Jane, and gave the former an account of how things had been in the money market. Constable has a new scheme of publishing the works of the Author of Waverley in a superior style, at £1 1s. volume. He says he will answer for making £20,000 of this, and liberally offered me any share of the profits. I have no great claim to any, as I have only to contribute the notes, which are light work; yet a few thousands coming in will be a good thing—besides the printing office. Constable, though valetudinary, and cross with his partner, is certainly as good a pilot in these rough seas as ever man put faith in. His rally has put me in mind of the old song—

> 'The tailor raised and shook his duds,
> He gar'd the Bills flee aff in cluds,
> And they that staid gat fearfu' thuds—
> The tailor proved a man, O.'

"We are for Abbotsford to-day, with a light heart.

"*December* 25—*Abbotsford.*—Arrived here last night at seven. Our halls are silent compared to last year, but let us be thankful—*Barbarus has segetes? Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia.* There shall be no lack of wisdom. But come—*il faut cultiver notre jardin.*† Let us see, I shall write out the Bonnets of Bonnie Dundee. I will sketch a preface to La Rochejacquelin for Constable's Miscellany, and try about a specimen of notes for the Waverley novels. Together with letters and by-business, it will be a good day's work.

> 'I make a vow,
> And keep it true.'

I will accept no invitation for dinner, save one to Newton-Don, and Mertoun to-morrow, instead of Christmas-day. On this day of general devotion I have a particular call for gratitude!!"

CHAPTER LXVI.

CONSTABLE IN LONDON—EXTRACT FROM JAMES BALLANTYNE'S MEMORANDUM — SCOTT'S DIARY RESUMED— PROGRESS OF WOODSTOCK— REVIEW OF PEPYS'S DIARY—SKENE—SCROPE—MATHEWS, &c.—COMMERCIAL ALARMS RENEWED AT INTERVALS—CATASTROPHE OF THE THREE HOUSES OF HURST AND ROBINSON, CONSTABLE, AND BALLANTYNE.—JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1826.

It was not till nearly three weeks after Sir Walter penned the last-quoted paragraph of his Diary, that Mr. Constable made his appearance in London. I saw him immediately. Having deferred his journey imprudently, he had performed it very rapidly; and this exertion, with mental excitement, had brought on a sharp access of gout, which confined him for a couple of days to his hotel in the Adelphi—*reluctantem draconem.* A more impatient spirit never boiled in a feverish frame. It was then that I, for the first time, saw full swing given to the tyrannical temper of *the Czar.* He looked, spoke, and

* See Scott's Poetical Works, Vol. xii. pp. 194-7.
† Gilbert, Earl of Minto, died in June, 1814.

* See Canning's "German Play," in the Anti-jacobin.
† See *Candide.*

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gesticulated like some hoary despot, accustomed to nothing but the complete indulgence of every wish and whim, against whose sovereign authority his most trusted satraps and tributaries had suddenly revolted—open rebellion in twenty provinces; confusion in the capital; treason in the palace. I will not repeat his haughty ravings of scorn and wrath. I listened to these with wonder and commiseration; nor were such feelings mitigated when, having exhausted his violence of vituperation against many persons of whom I had never before heard him speak but as able and trusted friends, he cooled down sufficiently to answer my question as to the practical business on which the note announcing his arrival in town had signified his urgent desire to take my advice. Constable told me that he had already seen one of the Hurst and Robinson firm, and that the storm which had seemed to be "blown over" had, he was satisfied, only been lulled for a moment to burst out in redoubled fury. If they went, however, he must follow. He had determined to support them through the coming gale as he had done through the last; and he had the means to do so effectually, provided Sir Walter Scott would stand by him heartily and boldly.

The first and most obvious step was to make large sales of copyrights; and it was not surprising that Constable should have formed most extravagant notions of the marketable value of the property of this nature in his possession. Every bookseller is very apt to do so. A manuscript is submitted to him; he inspects it with coldness and suspicion; with hesitation offers a sum for it; obtains it, and sends it to be printed. He has hardly courage to look at the sheets as they are thrown off; but the book is at last laid on his counter, and he from that moment regards it with an eye of parental fondness. It is *his*; he considers it in that light quite as much as does the author, and is likely to be at least as sorely provoked by any thing in the shape of hostile criticism. If this be the usual working of self-love or self-interest in such cases, what wonder that the man* who had at his disposal (to say nothing of innumerable minor properties) the copyrights of the Encyclopædia Britannica, with its Supplement, a moiety of the Edinburgh Review, nearly all Scott's Poetry, the Waverley Novels, and the advancing Life of Napoleon—who had made, besides, sundry contracts for novels by Scott, as yet unwritten—and who seriously viewed his plan of the new Miscellany as in itself the sure foundation of a gigantic fortune—what wonder that the sanguine Constable should have laid to his soul the flattering unction that he had only to display such resources in some quarter totally above the momentary pressure of *the trade*, and command an advance of capital adequate to relieve him and all his allies from these unfortunate difficulties about a few paltry "sheafs" of stamped paper? To be brief, he requested me to accompany him, as soon as he could get into his carriage, to the Bank of England, and support him (as a confidential friend of the *Author of Waverley*) in his application for a loan of from £100,000 to £200,000 on the security of the copyrights in his possession. It is needless to say that, without distinct instructions from Sir Walter, I could not take upon me to interfere in such a business as this. Constable, when I refused, became livid with rage. After a long silence, he stamped on the ground, and swore that he could and would do alone. I left him in stern indignation.

There was another scene of the same kind a day or two afterwards, when his object was to get me to back his application to Sir Walter to borrow £20,000 in Edinburgh, and transmit it to him in London. I promised nothing but to acquaint Scott immediately with his request, and him with Scott's answer. Sir Walter had, ere the message reached him, been made awane that his advances had already been continued in the absence of all ground for rational hope.

It is no business of mine to detail Constable's subsequent proceedings on this his last visit to London. Every where he found distrust. The metropolitan bankers had enough on their hands at a time when, as Mr. Huskisson afterwards confessed in Parliament, the Bank of England itself had been on the verge of a stoppage, without embarrassing themselves with new securities of the uncertain and precarious nature of literary property. The great bookselling houses were all either labouring themselves, or watching with fear and trembling the daily aggravated symptons of distress among their friends and connexions. Constable lingered on, fluctuating between wild hope and savage despair, until, I seriously believe, he at last hovered on the brink of insanity. When he returned to Edinburgh, it was to confront creditors whom he knew he could not pay.

Before that day came, I had necessarily been informed of the nature of Scott's connexion with commercial speculations; but I had not been prepared for the amount to which Constable's ruin must involve him, until the final blow was struck.

I believe I have how said enough by way of preface to Sir Walter's Diary from Christmas 1825, to the latter part of January 1826, when my darkest anticipations were more than realized. But before I return to this Diary, it my be well to transcribe the very short passage of James Ballantyne's deathbed memorandum which refers to this painful period. Mr. Ballantyne says, in that most candid paper:—

"I need not here enlarge upon the unfortunate facility which, at the period of universal confidence and indulgence our and other houses received from the banks. Suffice it to say that all our appearances of prosperity, as well as those of Constable, and Hurst and Robinson, were merely shadows, and that from the moment the bankers exhibited symptoms of doubt, it might have been easy to discover what must be the ultimate result. During weeks, and even months, however, our house was kept in a state of very painful suspense. The other two, I have no doubt, saw the coming events more clearly. I must here say, that it was one of Sir Walter's weaknesses to shrink too much from looking evil in the face, and that he was apt to carry a great deal too far—'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' I do not think it was more than three weeks before the catastrophe that he became fully convinced it was impending—if indeed his feelings ever reached the length of conviction at all. Thus, at the last, his fortitude was very severely tried indeed."

DIARY.

"*Abbotsford, December* 26, 1825.—My God! what poor creatures we are! After all my fair proposals yesterday, I was seized with a most violent pain in the right kidney and parts adjacent, which forced me instantly to go to bed and send for Clarkson.* He came, enquired, and pronounced the complaint to be gravel augmented by bile. I was in great agony till about two o'clock, but awoke with the pain gone. I got up, had a fire in my dressing-closet, and had Dalgliesh to shave me—two trifles, which I only mention, because they are contrary to my hardy and independent personal habits. But although a man cannot be a hero to his valet, his valet in sickness becomes of great use to him. I cannot expect that the first will be the last visit of this cruel complaint; but shall we receive good at the hand of God, and not receive evil?

"*December 27th.*—Slept twelve hours at a stretch, being much exhausted. Totally without pain to day, but uncomfortable from the effects of calomel, which, with me at least, is like the assistance of an auxiliary army, just one degree more tolerable than

* On seeing the passage in the text. Mr. Constable's surviving partner writes as follows:—"No better illustration of this buoyant idea of the value of literary property is to be found than in the now well ascertained fact of Constable himself, in 1811, overestimating his partner, Mr Hunter, *out* of the concern at the Cross to the tune of some £10,000 or £12,000—a blow from which the firm never recovered.—R. C."

* James Clarkson, Esq., Surgeon, Melrose, son to Scott's old friend Dr. Clarkson of Belkirk.

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the enemy it chases away. Calomel contemplations are not worth recording. I wrote an introduction and a few notes to the Memoirs of Madame La Rochejacquelin,* being all that I was equal to. Sir Adam Ferguson came over and tried to marry my verses to the tune of Bonnie Dundee. They seem well adapted to each other. Dined with Lady S—— and Anne. Worked at Pepys in the evening, with the purpose of review for Quarterly.† Notwithstanding the depressing effects of the calomel, I feel the pleasure of being alone and uninterrupted. Few men, leading a quiet life, and without any strong or highly varied change of circumstances, have seen more variety of society than I—few have enjoyed it more, or been *bored*, as it is called, less by the company of tiresome people. I have rarely, if ever, found any one, out of whom I could not extract amusement or edification; and were I obliged to account for hints afforded on such occasions, I should make an ample deduction from my narrative powers. Still, however, from the earliest time I can remember, I preferred the pleasure of being alone to wishing for visiters, and have often taken a bannock and a bit of cheese to the wood or hill, to avoid dining with company. As I grew from boyhood to manhood I saw this would not do; and that to gain a place in men's esteem I must mix and bustle with them. Pride, and an exaltation of spirits often supplied the real pleasure which others seem to feel in society; yet mine certainly upon many occasions was real. Still, if the question was, eternal company, without the power of retiring within yourself, or solitary confinement for life, I should say, 'Turnkey, Lock the cell!' My life, though not without its fist of waking and strong exertion, has been a sort of dream, spent in

'Chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy.'

I have worn a wishing-cap, the power of which has been to divert present griefs by a touch of the wand of imagination, and gild over the future by prospects more fair than can be realized. Somewhere it is said that this castle-building—this wielding of the unreal trowel, is fatal to exertions in actual life. I cannot tell, I have not found it so. I cannot, indeed, say like Madame Genlis, that in the imaginary scenes in which I have acted a part I ever prepared myself for any thing which actually befell me; but I have certainly fashioned out much that made the present hour pass pleasantly away, and much that has enabled me to contribute to the amusement of the public. Since I was five years old I cannot remember the time when I had not some ideal part to play for my own solitary amusement.

"*December* 28.—Somehow I think the attack on Christmas-Day has been of a critical kind; and having gone off so well, may be productive rather of health than continued indisposition. If one is to get a renewal of health in his fifty-fourth year, he must look to pay fine for it. Last night George Thomson came to see how I was, poor fellow. He has talent, is well informed, and has an excellent heart; but there is great eccentricity about him. I wish to God I saw him provided in a country kirk. That, with a rational wife, would, I think, bring him to a steady temper; at present he is between the tyning and the winning. If I could get him to set to any hard study, he would do something clever.

"*How to make a critic.*—A sly rogue, sheltering himself under the generic name of Mr. Campbell, requested of me, through the penny-post, the loan of £50 for two years, having an impulse, as he said, to make this demand. As I felt no corresponding impulse, I begged to decline a demand which might have been as reasonably made by any Campbell on earth; and another impulse has determined the man of fifty pounds to send me anonymous abuse of my works, and temper, and selfish disposition. The severity of the joke lies in 14d. for postage, to avoid which, his next epistle shall go back to the clerks of the Post-Office, as not for Sir W—S—. How the severe rogue would be disappointed, if he knew I never looked at more than the first and last lines of his satirical effusion! When I first saw that a literary profession was to be my fate, I endeavoured by all efforts of stoicism to divest myself of that irritable degree of sensibility—or, to speak plainly, of vanity—which makes the poetical race miserable and ridiculous. The anxiety of a poet for praise and for compliments I have always endeavoured to keep down.

"*December* 29.—Base feelings this same calomel gives one—mean, poor, and abject—a *wretch*, as Will Rose says.

'Fie fie on silly coward man,
That he should be the slave o't.'*

Then it makes one "wofully dogged and snappish," as Dr. Rutt the Quaker says in his *Gurnal*.—Must go to Woodstock, yet am vexed by that humour of contradiction which makes me incline to do any thing else in preference. Commenced preface for the new edition of my Novels. The City of Cork send my freedom in a silver box.

"*December* 31.—Took a good sharp walk the first time since my illness, and found myself the better in health and spirits. Being Hogmanay, there dined with us Colonel Russell and his sisters, Sir Adam Ferguson and Lady, Colonel Ferguson, with Mary and Margaret: an auld-world party, who made themselves happy in the auld fashion. I felt so tired about eleven that I was forced to steal to bed.

"*January* 1, 1826.—A year has passed,—another has commenced. These divisions of time influence our feelings as they recur. Yet there is nothing in it; for every day in the year closes a twelvemonth as well as the 31st December. The latter is only the solemn pause, as when a guide, showing a wild and mountainous road, calls on a party to look back at the scenes which they have just passed. To me this new year opens sadly. There are these troublesome pecuniary difficulties, which, however, I think this week should end. There is the absence of all my children, Anne excepted, from our little family festival. There is, besides, that ugly report of the 15th Hussars going to India. Walter, I suppose, will have some step in view, and will go, and I fear Jane will not dissuade him. A hard frosty day—cold, but dry and pleasant under foot. Walked into the plantations with Anne and Anne Russell. A thought strikes me, alluding to this period of the year. People say that the whole human frame in all its parts and divisions is gradually in the act of decaying and renewing. What a curious time-piece it would be that could indicate to us the moment this gradual and insensible change had so completely taken place, that no atom was left of the original person who had existed at a certain period, but there existed in his stead another person having the same thewes and sinews; the same face and lineaments; the same consciousness; a new ship built on an old plank; a pair of transmigrated stockings like those of Sir John Cutler, all green, without one thread of the original black silk left! Singular—to be at once another and the same!

"*January* 2.—Weather clearing up in Edinburgh once more, and all will, I believe, do well. I am pressed to get on with Woodstock, and must try. I wish I could open a good vein of interest which would breathe freely. I must take my old way and write myself into good-humour with my task. It is only when I dally with what I am about, look back, and aside, instead of keeping my eyes straight forward, that I feel those cold sinkings of the heart. All men, I suppose, do so less or more. They are like the sensation of a sailor when the ship is cleared for action, and all are at their places—gloomy enough; but the first broadside puts all to rights. Dined at Huntly Burn with the Fergusons *en masse*.

"*January* 3.—Promises a fair day, and I think the progress of my labours will afford me a little

* Burns.

* See Constable's Miscellany, vol. v.
† See the Quarterly Review for January 1826,—or Scott's Miscellaneous Prose, vol. xx.

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exercise. Walked with Colonel Russell from eleven till two, the first good day's exercise I have had since coming here. We went through all the Terrace, the Roman Planting,* over by the Stiel and Haxellcleuch, and so by the Rhymer's Glen to Chiefswood, which gave my heart a twinge, so disconsolate it seemed. Yet all is for the best. When I returned, signed a bond for £10,000, which will disencumber me of all pressing claims;† when I get forwards Woodstock and Nap. there will be £12,000 and upwards, and I hope to add £3000 against this time next year, or the devil must hold the dice. J. B. writes me seriously on the carelessness of my style. I did not think I had been more careless than usual; but I daresay he is right. I will be more cautious.

"*January* 4.—Despatched the deed executed yesterday. Mr. and Mrs. Skene, my excellent friends, came to us from Edinburgh. Skene, distinguished for his attainments as a draughtsman and for his highly gentlemanlike feelings and character, is Laird of Rubislaw, near Aberdeen. Having had an elder brother, his education was somewhat neglected in early life, against which disadvantage he made a most gallant fight, exerting himself much to obtain those accomplishments which he has since possessed. Admirable in all exercises, there entered a good deal of the cavalier into his early character. Of late he has given himself much to the study of antiquities. His wife, a most excellent person, was tenderly fond of Sophia. They bring so much old-fashioned kindness and good-humour with them, besides the recollections of other times, that they must be always welcome guests. Letter from Mr. Scrope,‡ announcing a visit.

January 5.—Got the desired accommodation which will put J. B. quite straight, but am a little anxious still about Constable. He has immense stock, to be sure, and most valuable, but he may have sacrifices to make to convert a large proportion of it into ready money. The accounts from London are most disastrous. Many wealthy persons totally ruined, and many, many more have been obliged to purchase their safety at a price they will feel all their lives. I do not hear things have been so bad in Edinburgh; and J. B.'s business has been transacted by the banks with liberality.

"Colonel Russell told us last night that the last of the Moguls, a descendant of Kubla-Khan, though having no more power than his effigies at the back of a set of playing-cards, refused to meet Lord Hastings, because the Governor-General would not agree to remain standing in his presence. Pretty spell for the blood of Timur in these degenerate days!

"Much alarmed. I had walked till twelve with Skene and Russell, and then sat down to my work. To my horror and surprise I could neither write nor spell, but put down one word for another, and wrote nonsense. I was much overpowered at the same time, and could not conceive the reason. I fell asleep, however, in my chair, and slept for two hours. On my waking my head was clearer, and I began to recollect that last night I had taken the anodyne left for the purpose by Clarkson, and, being disturbed in the course of the night, I had not slept it off. Obliged to give up writing to-day—read Pepys instead.

"*January* 6.—This seems to be a feeding storm, coming on by little and little. Wrought all day, and dined quiet. My disorder is wearing off, and the quiet society of the Skenes suits my present humour. I really thought I was in for some very bad illness. Curious expression of an Indian-born boy just come from Bengal, a son of my cousin George Swinton. The child saw a hare run across the fields, and exclaimed, 'See, there is a little tiger!'

"*January* 7—*Sunday*.—Knight a young artist, son of the performer, came to do a picture of me at the request of Terry. This is very far from being agreeable, as I submitted to that state of constraint last year to Newton, at request of Lockhart; to Leslie, at request of my American friend;* to Wilkie, for his picture of the King's arrival at Holyrood House; and some one besides. I am as tired of the operation as old Maida, who had been so often sketched that he got up and walked off with signs of loathing whenever he saw an artist unfurl his paper and handle his brushes. But this young man is civil and modest; and I have agreed he shall be in the room while I work, and take the best likeness he can, without compelling me into the fixed attitude and yawning fatigues of an actual sitting. I think, if he has talent, he may do more my way than in the customary mode; at least I can't have the hang-dog look which the unfortunate Theseus has who is doomed to sit for what seems an eternity.†

"I wrought till two o'clock—indeed till I was almost nervous with correcting and scribbling. I then walked, or rather was dragged through the snow by Tom Purdie, while Skene accompanied. What a blessing there is in a fellow like Tom, whom no familiarity can spoil, whom you may scold and praise and joke with, knowing the quality of the man is unalterable in his love and reverence to his master. Use an ordinary servant in the same way, and he will be your master in a month. We should thank God for the snow as well as summer flowers. This brushing exercise has put all my nerves into tone again, which were really jarred with fatigue until my very back-bone seemed breaking. This comes of trying to do too much. J. B.'s news are as good as possible.—Prudence, prudence, and all will do excellently.

January 8.—Frost and snow still. Write to excuse myself from attending the funeral of my aunt Mrs. Curle, which takes place to-morrow at Kelso. She was a woman of the old Sandy-Knowe breed, with the strong sense, high principle, and indifferent temper which belonged to my father's family. She lived with great credit on a moderate income, and I believe gave away a great deal of it.‡

"*January* 9.—Mathews the comedian and his son come to spend a day at Abbotsford.—Mr. Scrope also comes out.

"*January* 10.—Bodily health, the mainspring of the microcosm, seems quite restored. No more flushing or nervous fits, but the sound mind in the sound body. What poor things does a fever-fit or an overflowing of bile make of the master of creation. The snow begins to fall thick this morning—

> 'The landlord then aloud did say,
> As how he wished they would go away.'

To have our friends shut up here would be rather too much of a good thing.—The day cleared up and was very pleasant. Had a good walk and looked at the curling. Mr. Mathews made himself very amusing in the evening. He has the good-nature to show his accomplishments without pressing and without the appearance of feeling pain. On the contrary, I dare say he enjoys the pleasure he communicates.

"*January* 11.—I got proof-sheets, in which it seems I have repeated a whole passage of history which had been told before. James is in an awful

* This plantation now covers the remains of an old Roman road from the Great Camp on the Eildon hills (the *Trimontium* of the annalists) to the ford below Scott's house.

† When settling his estate on his eldest son, Sir Walter had retained the power of burdening it with £10,000 for behoof of his younger children: he now raised the sum for the assistance of the struggling firms.

‡ William Scrope, Esq., of Lincolnshire—the representative of the Lords Scrope of Bolton (to whose peerage he is, I believe, entitled,) was at this period much in Scotland, being a zealous angler and deerstalker. He had a lease of Lord Somerville's pavilion opposite Melrose, and lived on terms of affectionate intimacy with Sir Walter Scott. There occurs in a subsequent entry an allusion to Mr. Scrope's eminence as an amateur artist.

* Sir Walter omits the name of his friend, Mr. Ticknor of Boston, who possesses Mr. Leslie's portrait.

† —— sedet, æternumque sedebit
Infelix Theseus —— Virgil.

‡ In a letter to this date, to his sister-in-law, Mr. Thomas Scott, Sir Walter says—"Poor aunt Curle died like a Roman, or rather like one of the Sandy-Knowe bairns, the most stoical race I ever knew. She turned every one out of the room, and drew her last breath alone. So did my uncle Captain Robert Scott, and several others of that family."

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stew, and I cannot blame him; but then he should consider the *hyoscyamus* which I was taking, and the anxious botheration about the money-market. However, as Chaucer says—

'There is na workeman
That can bothe worken wel and hastilie,
This must be done at leasure parfaitly.'

"*January* 12.—Mathews last night gave us a very perfect imitation of old Cumberland, who carried the poetic jealousy and irritability farther than any man I ever saw. He was a great flatterer, too, the old rogue. Will Erskine used to admire him. I think he wanted originality. A very high-bred man in point of manners in society. Upon the whole, the days pass pleasantly enough—work till one or two, then an hour or two hours' walk in the snow, then lighter work, or reading. Late dinner, and singing, or chat, in the evening. Mathews has really all the will, as well as the talent, to be amusing. He confirms my idea of ventriloquism (which is an absurd word), as being merely the art of imitating sounds at a greater or less distance, assisted by some little points of trick to influence the imagination of the audience—the vulgar idea of a peculiar organization (beyond fineness of ear and of utterance) is nonsense.

"*January* 13.—Our party are about to disperse—

'Like youthful steers unyoked, east, north, and south.'

I am not sorry, being one of those whom too much mirth always inclines to sadness. The missing so many of my own family, together with the serious inconveniences to which I have been exposed, give me at present a desire to be alone. The Skenes return to Edinburgh, so does Mr. Scrope—*item*, the little artist; Mathews to Newcastle; his son to Liverpool. So *exeunt omnes*.

"Mathews assures me that Sheridan was generally very dull in society, and sate sullen and silent, swallowing glass after glass, rather a hinderance than a help. But there was a time when he broke out with a resumption of what had been going on, done with great force, and generally attacking some person in the company, or some opinion which he had expressed. I never saw Sheridan but in large parties. He had a Bardolph countenance, with heavy features, but his eye possessed the most distinguished brilliancy. Mathews says it is very simple in Tom Moore to admire how Sheridan came by the means of paying the price of Drury-Lane Theatre, when all the world knows he never paid it at all; and that Lacy, who sold it, was reduced to want by his breach of faith.

"*January* 14.—An odd mysterious letter from Constable, who has gone post to London. It strikes me to be that sort of letter which I have seen men write when they are desirous that their disagreeable intelligence should be rather apprehended than expressed. I thought he had been in London a fortnight ago, disposing of property to meet this exigence, and so I think he should. Well, I must have patience. But these terrors and frights are truly annoying. Luckily the funny people are gone, and I shall not have the task of grinning when I am serious enough.

"A letter from J. B., mentioning Constable's journey, but without expressing much apprehension. He knows C. well, and saw him before his departure, and makes no doubt of his being able easily to extricate whatever may be entangled. I will not therefore make myself uneasy. I can help doing so surely, if I will. At least, I have given up cigars since the year began, and have now no wish to return to the habit, as it is called. I see no reason why one should not, with God's assistance, shun noxious thoughts, which foretell evil and cannot remedy it.

"*January* 15.—Like yesterday, a hard frost. Thermometer at 10; water in my dressing-room frozen to flint; yet I had a fine walk yesterday, the sun dancing delightfully on "grim Nature's visage hoar."* Were it not the plague of being dragged along by another person, I should like such weather as well as summer, but having Tom Purdie to do this office reconciles me to it. *I cannot cleik with John*, as old Mrs. Mure used to say. I mean, that an ordinary menial servant thus hooked to your side reminds me of the twin bodies mentioned by Pitscottie, being two trunks on the same waist and legs. One died before the other, and remained a dead burden on the back of its companion. Such is the close union with a person whom you cannot well converse with, and whose presence is yet indispensable to your getting on. An actual companion, whether humble or your equal, is still worse. But Tom Purdie is just the thing, kneaded up between the friend and servant, as well as Uncle Toby's bowling-green between sand and clay. You are certain he is proud as well as patient under his burden, and you are under no more constraint than with a pony. I must ride him to-day if the weather holds up. Mean-time, I will correct that curious fellow Pepys' Diary. I mean the article I have made of it for the Quarterly.

"*Edinburgh*, *January* 16.—Came through cold roads to as cold news. Hurst and Robinson have suffered a bill to come back upon Constable, which I suppose infers the ruin of both houses. We shall soon see. Dined with the Skenes.

"*January* 17.—James Ballantyne this morning, good honest fellow, with a visage as black as the crook. He hopes no salvation; has indeed taken measures to stop. It is hard, after having fought such a battle. Have apologized for not attending the Royal Society Club, who have a *gaudeamus* on this day, and seemed to count much on my being the person. My old acquaintance, Miss Elizabeth Clerk, sister of Willie, died suddenly. I cannot choose but wish it had been Sir W. S., and yet the feeling is unmanly. I have Anne, my wife, and Charles to look after.. I felt rather sneaking as I came home from the Parliament-House—felt as if I were liable *monstrari digito* in no very pleasant way. But this must be borne *cum cæteris*; and, thank God, however uncomfortable, I do not feel despondent. I have seen Cadell, Ballantyne, and Hogarth; all advise me to execute a trust of my property for payment of my obligations; so does John Gibson,* and so I resolve to do. My wife and daughter are gloomy, but yet patient.

"*January* 18.—He that sleeps too long in the morning, let him borrow the pillow of a debtor. So says the Spaniard, and so say I. I had of course an indifferent night of it. I wish these two days were over; but the worst *is over*. The Bank of Scotland has behaved very well; expressing a resolution to serve Constable's house and me to the uttermost; but as no one can say to what extent Hurst and Robinson's failure may go, borrowing would but linger it out.

"*January* 19.—During yesterday I received formal visits from my friends Skene and Colin Mackenzie (who, I am glad to see, looks well), with every offer of service. The Royal Bank also sent Sir John Hope and Sir Henry Jardine to offer to offer to comply with my wishes. The Advocate came on the same errand. But I gave all the same answer—that my intention was to put the whole into the hands of a trustee, and to be contented with the event, and that all I had to ask was time to do so, and to extricate my affairs. I was assured of every accommodation in this way. From all quarters I have had the same kindness.—Letters from Constable and Robinson have arrived. The last persist in saying they will pay all and every body. They say, moreover, in a postscript, that had Constable been in town ten days sooner, all would have been well. I feel quite composed and determined to labour. There is no remedy. I *guess*

* Burns's *Vision*.

* Mr. John Gibson, junior, W. S.,—Mr. James Jollie, W. S.,—and Mr. Alexander Monypenny, W. S., were the three gentlemen who ultimately agreed to take charge, as trustees, of Sir Walter Scott's affairs; and certainly no gentlemen ever acquitted themselves of such an office in a manner more honourable to themselves or more satisfactory to a client and his creditors.

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(as Mathews makes his Yankees say) that we shall not be troubled with visiters, and I *calculate* that I will not go out at all; so what can I do better than labour? Even yesterday I went about making notes on Waverley, according to Constable's plan. It will do good one day. To-day, when I lock this volume, I go to Woodstock. Heigho!—Knight came to stare at me to complete his portrait. He must have read a tragic page comparative to what he saw at Abbotsford.—We dined of course at home, and before and after dinner I finished about twenty printed pages of Woodstock, but to what effect others must judge. A painful scene after dinner, and another after supper, endeavouring to convince these poor dear creatures that they must not look for miracles, but consider the misfortune as certain, and only to be lessened by patience and labour.

"*January* 20.—Indifferent night—very bilious, which may be want of exercise. *Mais, pourtant, cultivons notre jardin.* The public favour is my only lottery. I have long enjoyed the foremost prize, and something in my breast tells me my evil genius will not overwhelm me if I stand by myself. Why should I not? I have no enemies—many attached friends. The popular ascendency which I have maintained is of the kind which is rather improved by frequent appearances. In fact, critics may say what they will, but '*hain* your reputation, and *tyne** your reputation,' is a true proverb.

"Sir William Forbes† called, the same kind, honest, friend as ever, with all offers of assistance, &c. &c. &c. All anxious to serve me, and careless about their own risk of loss. And these are the cold, hard, money-making men whose questions and control I apprehended. Lord Chief Commissioner Adam also came to see me, and the meeting, though pleasing, was melancholy. It was the first time we had met since the *break up* of his hopes in the death of his eldest son on his return from India, where he was Chief in Council and highly esteemed.‡ The Commissioner is not a very early friend of mine, for I scarce knew him till his settlement in Scotland with his present office. But I have since lived much with him, and taken kindly to him as one of the most pleasant, kind-hearted, benevolent men I have ever known. It is high treason among the Tories to express regard for him, or respect for the Jury Court in which he presides. I was against that experiment as much as any one. But it is an experiment, and the establishment (which the fools will not perceive) is the only thing which I see likely to give some prospects of ambition to our bar, which has been otherwise so much diminished. As for the Chief Commissioner, I dare say he does what all other people of consequence do in elections and so forth. But he is the personal friend of the King, and the decided enemy of whatever strikes at the constitutional rights of the Monarch; besides I love him for the various changes which he has endured through life, and which have been so great as to make him entitled to be regarded in one point of view as the most fortunate—in the other, the most unfortunate man in the world. He has gained and lost two fortunes by the same good luck and the same rash confidence, of which one raised, and the other now threatens, my *peculium*. And his quiet, honourable, and generous submission under circumstances more painful than mine,—for the loss of world's wealth was to him aggravated by the death of his youngest and darling son in the West Indies,—furnished me at the time and now with a noble example. So Tory and Whig may go be d——d together, as names that have disturbed old Scotland, and torn asunder the most kindly feelings since the first day they were invented. Yes, d—n them, they are spells to rouse all our angry passions, and I dare say, notwithstanding the opinion of my private and calm moments, I will open on the cry again as soon as something occurs to claim my words. Even yet, God knows, I would fight in honourable contest with word or blow for my political opinions; but I cannot permit that strife to mix its waters with my daily meal, those waters of bitterness which poison all mutual love and confidence betwixt the well-disposed on either side, and prevent them, if need were, from making mutual concessions and balancing the constitution against the ultras of both parties. The good man seems something broken by these afflictions.

"*January* 21.—Susannah in Tristram Shandy thinks death is best met in bed. I am sure trouble and vexation are not. The watches of the night press wearily when disturbed by fruitless regrets and disagreeable anticipations. But let it pass.

> 'Well, Goodman Time, or blunt, or keen,
> Move thou quick, or take thy leisure.
> Longest day will have its e'en,
> Weariest life but treads a measure.'

I have seen Cadell, who is very much downcast for the risk of their copy-rights being thrown away by a hasty sale. I suggested that if they went very cheap, some means might be fallen on to purchase them in. I fear the split betwixt Constable and Cadell will render impossible what might otherwise be hopeful enough. It is the Italian race-horses, I think, which, instead of riders, have spurs tied to their sides, so as to prick them into a constant gallop. Cadell tells me their gross profit was sometimes L.10,000 a-year, but much swallowed up with expenses, and his partner's draughts which came to L.4000 yearly. What there is to show for this, God knows. Constable's apparent expenses were very much within bounds.

"Colin Mackenzie entered, and with his usual kindness engages to use his influence to recommend some moderate proceeding to Constable's creditors, such as may permit him to go on and turn that species of property to account which no man alive can manage so well as he.

"Followed Mr. Gibson with a most melancholy tale. Things are much worse with Constable than I apprehended. Naked we entered the world, and naked we leave it—blessed be the name of the Lord!

"*January* 22.—I feel neither dishonoured nor broken down by the bad—now really bad news I have received. I have walked my last on the domains I have planted—sate the last time in the halls I have built. But death would have taken them from me if misfortune had spared them. My poor people whom I loved so well!—There is just another die to turn up against me in this run of ill-luck; *i. e.*—If I should break my magic wand in the fall from this elephant, and lose my popularity with my fortune. Then Woodstock and Bony may both go to the paper-maker, and I may take to smoking cigars and drinking grog, or turn devotee, and intoxicate the brain another way. In prospect of absolute ruin, I wonder if they would let me leave the Court of Sessions. I would like methinks to go abroad,

> 'And lay my bones far from the *Tweed*.'

But I find my eyes moistening, and that will not do. I will not yield without a fight for it. It is odd, when I set myself to work *doggedly*, as Dr. Johnson would say, I am exactly the same man that I ever was—neither low-spirited nor *distrait*. In prosperous times I have sometimes felt my fancy and powers of language flag, but adversity is to me at least a tonic and bracer; the fountain is awakened from its inmost recesses, as if the spirit of affliction had troubled it in his passage.

"Poor Mr. Pole the harper sent to offer me L.500 or L.600, probably his all.* There is much good in the world, after all. But I will involve no friend, either rich or poor. My own right hand shall do it—

* To *hain* any thing is, Anglice, to deal very carefully, penuriously about it—*tyne*, to lose. Scott often used to say, "hain a pen and tyne a pen;" which is nearer the proverb alluded to.

† The late Sir William Forbes, Bart., succeeded his father (the biographer of Beattie) as chief of the head private banking-house in Edinburgh. Scott's amiable friend died 24th October, 1829.

‡ John Adam, Esq. died on shipboard, on his passage homewards from Calcutta, 4th June 1825.

* Mr. Pole had long attended Sir Walter Scott's daughters as teacher of the harp. To the end, Scott always spoke of his conduct on this occasion as the most affecting circumstance that accompanied his disasters.

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else will I be *done* in the slang language, and *undone* in common parlance.

"I am glad that, beyond my own family, who are, excepting Lady S., young and able to bear sorrow, of which this is the first taste to some of them, most of the hearts are past aching which would have once been inconsolable on this occasion. I do not mean that many will not seriously regret, and some perhaps lament my misfortunes. But my dear mother, my almost sister, Christy Rutherford, poor Will Erskine; those would have been mourners indeed.

"Well—exertion—exertion. O, Invention, rouse thyself! May man be kind! May God be propitious! The worst is, I never quite know when I am right or wrong; and Ballantyne, who does know in some degree, will fear to tell me. Lockhart would be worth gold just now, but he too might be too diffident to speak broad out. All my hope is in the continued indulgence of the public. I have a funeral-letter to the burial of the Chevalier Yelin, a foreigner of learning and talent, who has died at the Royal Hotel. He wished to be introduced to me, and was to have read a paper before the Royal Society when this introduction was to have taken place. I was not at the Society that evening, and the poor gentleman was taken ill at the meeting and unable to proceed. He went to his bed and never rose again; and now his funeral will be the first public place I shall appear at. He dead, and I ruined.—This is what you call a meeting.

"*January* 23.—Slept ill, not having been abroad these eight days—*splendida bilis*. Then a dead sleep in the morning, and when the awakening comes, a strong feeling how well I could dispense with it for once and for ever. This passes away, however, as better and more dutiful thoughts arise in my mind. I know not if my imagination has flagged; probably it has; but at least my powers of labour have not diminished during the last melancholy week. On Monday and Tuesday my exertions were suspended. Since Wednesday inclusive I have written thirty-eight of my close manuscript pages, of which seventy make a volume of the usual Novel size.

"Wrote till twelve A. M., finishing half of what I call a good day's work—ten pages of print or rather twelve. Then walked in the Prince's Street pleasure-grounds with good Samaritan James Skene, the only one among my numerous friends who can properly be termed *amicus curarum mearum*, others being too busy or too gay, and several being estranged by habit.

"The walks have been conducted on the whole with much taste, though Skene has undergone much criticism, the usual reward of public exertions, on account of his plans. It is singular to walk close beneath the grim old castle, and think what scenes it must have seen, and how many generations of threescore and ten have risen and past away. It is a place to cure one of too much sensation over earthly subjects of mutation. My wife and girl's tongues are chatting in a lively manner in the drawing-room. It does me good to hear them.

"*January* 24.—Constable came yesterday and saw me for half an hour. He seemed irritable, but kept his temper under command. Was a little shocked when I intimated that I was disposed to regard the present works in progress as my own. I think I saw two things:—1. That he is desirous to return into the management of his own affairs without Cadell, if he can. 2. That he relies on my connexion as the way of helping him out of the slough. Indeed he said he was ruined utterly without my countenance. I certainly will befriend him if I can, but Constable without Cadell is like getting the clock without the pendulum:—the one having the ingenuity, the other the caution of the business. I will see my way before making any bargain, and I will help them, I am sure, if I can, without endangering my last cast for freedom.—Worked out my task yesterday.—My kind friend Mrs. Coutts has got the cadetship for Pringle Shortreed, in which I was peculiarly interested.

"I went to the Court for the first time to-day, and, like the man with the large nose, thought every body was thinking of me and my mishaps. Many were, undoubtedly; and all rather regrettingly, some obviously affected. It is singular to see the difference of men's manner whilst they strive to be kind or civil in their way of addressing me. Some smiled as they wished me good day, as if to say, 'Think nothing about it, my lad; it is quite out of our thoughts.' Others greeted me with the affected gravity which one sees and despises at a funeral. The best-bred,—all, I believe, meaning equally well—just shook hands and went on.—A foolish puff in the papers, calling on men and gods to assist a popular author, who having choused the public of many thousands, had not the sense to keep wealth when he had it.—If I am hard pressed, and measures used against me, I must use all means of legal defence, and subscribe myself bankrupt in a petition for sequestration. It is the course one should, at any rate, have advised a client to take. But for this I would, in a Court of Honour, deserve to lose my spurs. No, if they permit me, I will be their vassal for life, and dig in the mine of my imagination to find diamonds (or what may sell for such) to make good my engagements, not to enrich myself. And this from no reluctance to be called the Insolvent, which I probably am, but because I will not put out of the power of my creditors the resources, mental or literary, which yet remain to me. Went to the funeral of Chevalier Yelin, the literary foreigner mentioned on 22d. How many and how various are the ways of affliction. Here is this poor man dying at a distance from home, his proud heart broken, his wife and family anxiously expecting letters, and doomed only to learn they have lost a husband and father for ever. He lies buried on the Calton Hill, near learned and scientific dust—the graves of David Hume and John Playfair being side by side.

"*January* 25.—Anne is ill this morning. May God help us! If it should prove serious, as I have known it in such cases, where am I to find courage or comfort? A thought has struck me—Can we do nothing for creditors with the goblin drama, called the Fortunes of Devorgoil? Could it not be added to Woodstock as a fourth volume? Terry refused a gift of it, but he was quite and entirely wrong; it is not good, but it may be made so. Poor Will Erskine liked it much.

"*January* 26.—Spoke to J. B. last night about Devorgoil, who does not seem to relish the proposal, alleging the comparative failure of Halidon Hill. Ay, says Self-Conceit, but he has not read it—and when he does, it is the sort of wild fanciful work betwixt heaven and earth, which men of solid parts do not estimate. Pepys thought Shakspeare's Midsummer-Night's Dream the most silly play he had ever seen, and Pepys was probably judging on the same grounds with J. B., though presumptuous enough to form conclusions against a very different work from any of mine. How if I send it to Lockhart by and by?

"Gibson comes with a joyful face, announcing all the creditors had unanimously agreed to a private trust. This is handsome and confidential, and must warm my best efforts to get them out of the scrape. I will not doubt—to doubt is to lose. Sir William Forbes took the chair, and behaved, as he has ever done, with the generosity of ancient faith and early friendship. That House is more deeply concerned than most. In what scenes have Sir William and I not borne share together—desperate and almost bloody affrays, rivalries, deep drinking matches, and finally, with the kindest feelings on both sides, somewhat separated by his retiring much within the bosom of his family, and I moving little beyond mine. It is fated our planets should cross, though, and that at the periods most interesting for me. Down—down—a hundred thoughts.

"I hope to sleep better to-night. If I do not I

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shall get ill, and then I cannot keep my engagements. Is it not odd? I can command my eyes to be awake when toil and weariness sit on my eyelids, but to draw the curtain of oblivion is beyond my power. I remember some of the wild Buccaneers, in their impiety, succeeded pretty well by shutting hatches and burning brimstone and assafœtida to make a tolerable imitation of *hell*—but the pirates' *heaven* was a wretched affair. It is one of the worst things about this system of ours, that it is a hundred times more easy to inflict pain than to create pleasure.

"*January* 27*th*.—Slept better and less bilious, owing doubtless to the fatigue of the preceding night, and the more comfortable news. Wrote to Laidlaw, directing him to make all preparations for reduction. The Celtic Society present me with the most splendid broadsword I ever saw; a beautiful piece of art, and a most noble weapon. Honourable Mr. Steuart, (second son of the Earl of Moray,) General Graham Stirling, and MacDougal, attended as a committee to present it. This was very kind of my friends the Celts, with whom I have had so many merry meetings. It will be a rare legacy to Walter—for myself, good lack! it is like Lady Dowager Don's prize in a lottery of hardware; she—a venerable lady who always wore a haunch-hoop, silk negligé, and triple ruffles at the elbow—having the luck to gain a pair of silver spurs and a whip to correspond.

"*January* 28*th*.—These last four or five days I have wrought little; to-day I set on the steam and ply my paddles.

"*January* 29.—The proofs came so thick in yesterday that much was not done. But I began to be hard at work to-day. I must not *gurnalize* much.

"Mr. Jollie, who is to be my trustee, in conjunction with Gibson, came to see me;—a pleasant and good-humoured man, and has high reputation as a man of business. I told him, and I will keep my word, that he would at least have no trouble by my interfering and thwarting their management, which is not the unfrequent case of trusters and trustees.

"Constable's business seems unintelligible. No man thought the house worth less than £150,000. Constable told me, when he was making his will, that he was worth £80,000. Great profits on almost all the adventures. No bad speculations—yet neither stock nor debt to show. Constable might have eaten up his share; but Cadell was very frugal. No doubt trading almost entirely on accommodation is dreadfully expensive.

"*January* 30.—I laboured fairly yesterday. The stream rose fast—if clearly, is another question; but there is bulk for it, at least—about thirty printed pages.

'And now again, boys, to the oar.'

"*January* 31.—There being nothing in the roll this morning, I stay at home from the Court, and add another day's perfect labour to Woodstock, which is worth five days of snatched intervals, when the current of thought and invention is broken in upon, and the mind shaken and diverted from its purpose by a succession of petty interruptions. I have now no pecuniary provisions to embarrass me, and I think, now the shock of the discovery is past and over, I am much better off on the whole. I feel as if I had shaken off from my shoulders a great mass of garments, rich indeed, but always more a burden than a comfort. I shall be free of an hundred petty public duties imposed on me as a man of consideration—of the expense of a great hospitality—and what is botter, of the great waste of time connected with it. I have known in my day all kinds of society, and can pretty well estimate how much or how little one loses by retiring from all but that which is very intimate. I sleep and eat, and work as I was wont; and if I could see those about me as indifferent to the loss of rank as I am, I should be completely happy. As it is. Time must salve that sore, and to Time I trust it.

"Since the 14th of this month no guest has broken bread in my house, save G. H. Gordon* one morning at breakfast. This happened never before since I had a house of my own. But I have played Abou Hassan long enough; and if the Caliph comes I would turn him back again.

"*February* 1.—A most generous letter (though not more so than I expected) from Walter and Jane, offering to interpose with their fortune, &c. God Almighty forbid!—that were too unnatural in me to accept, though dutiful and affectionate in them to offer. They talk of India still. With my damaged fortune I cannot help them to remain by exchange, and so forth. God send what is for the best. Attended the Court, and saw J. B. and Cadell as I returned. Both very gloomy. Came home to work, &c., about two.

"*Feb*. 2.—An odd visit this morning from Miss —— of ——, whose law-suit with a Methodist parson of the name of ——, made some noise. The worthy divine had in the basest manner interfered to prevent this lady's marriage by two anonymous letters, in which he contrived to refer the lover, to whom they were addressed, for farther corroboration to *himself*. The whole imposition makes the subject of a little pamphlet. The lady ventured for redress into the thicket of English law—lost one suit—gained another, with £300 damages, and was ruined. The appearance and person of Miss —— are prepossessing. She is about thirty years old, a brunette, with regular and pleasing features, marked with melancholy—an enthusiast in literature, and probably in religion. She had been at Abbotsford to see me, and made her way to me here, in the vain hope, that she could get her story worked up into a novel; and certainly the thing is capable of interesting situations. It throws a curious light upon the aristocratic or rather hieratic influence exercised by the Methodist preachers within the *connexion*, as it is called. Admirable food this would be for the Quarterly, or any other reviewers, who might desire to feed fat their grudge against these sectarians. But there are two reasons against such a publication. First, it could do the poor sufferer no good. 2dly, It might hurt the Methodistic connexion very much, which I for one would not like to injure. They have their faults, and are peculiarly liable to those of hypocrisy, and spiritual ambition, and priestcraft. On the other hand, they do infinite good, carrying religion into classes in society where it would scarce be found to penetrate, did it rely merely upon proof of its doctrines, upon calm reason, and upon rational argument. The Methodists add a powerful appeal to the feelings and passions; and though I believe this is often exaggerated into absolute enthusiasm, yet I consider upon the whole they do much to keep alive a sense of religion, and the practice of morality necessarily connected with it. It is much to the discredit of the Methodist clergy, that when this calumniator was actually convicted of guilt morally worse than many men are hanged for, they only degraded him from the *first* to the *second* class of preachers. If they believed him innocent, they did too much—if guilty, far too little.

"*February* 3.—This is the first time since my troubles that I felt at awaking—

'I had drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep.'

I made not the slightest pause, nor dreamed a single dream, nor even changed my side. This is a blessing to be grateful for. There is to be a meeting of the creditors to-day, but I care not for the issue. If they drag me into the Court, *obtorto collo*, instead of going into this scheme of arrangement, they will do themselves a great injury, and perhaps eventually do me good, though it would give me much pain. James Ballantyne is severely critical on what he calls imitations of Mrs. Radcliffe in Woodstock.

* Mr. Gordon (of whom more in the sequel) was at this time Scott's amanuensis: he copied, that is to say, the MS. for press.

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Many will think with him—yet I am of opinion he is quite wrong, or as friend J. F.* says *wrong*. In the first place, am I to look on the mere fact of another author having treated a subject happily, as a bird looks on a potato-bogle which scares it away from a field, otherwise as free to its depredations as any where else? In 2d place, I have taken a wide difference; my object is not to excite fear of supernatural things in my reader, but to show the effect of such fear upon the agents in the story—one a man of sense and firmness—one a man unhinged by remorse—one a stupid unenquiring clown—one a learned and worthy, but superstitious divine. In 3d place, the book turns on this hinge, and cannot want it. But I will try to insinuate the refutation of Aldiboronti's exception into the prefatory matter. —From the 19th January to the 2d February inclusive, is exactly fifteen days, during which time, with the intervention of some days' idleness, to let imagination brood on the task a little, I have written a volume. I think, for a bet, I could have done it in ten days. Then I must have had no Court of Session to take me up hours every morning, and dissipate my attention and powers of working for the rest of the day. A volume, at cheapest, is worth L.1000. This is working at the rate of L.24,000 a-year; but then we must not bake buns faster than people have appetite to eat them. They are not essential to the market like potatoes.

"John Gibson came to tell me in the evening that a meeting to-day had approved of the proposed trust. I know not why, but the news gives me little concern. I heard it as a party indifferent. I remember hearing that Mandrin† testified some horror when he found himself bound alive on the wheel, and saw the executioner approach with a bar of iron to break his limbs. After the second and third blow, he fell a-laughing, and being asked the reason by his confessor, said he laughed at his own folly, which had anticipated increased agony at every blow, when it was obvious that the *first* must have jarred and confounded the system of the nerves so much as to render the succeeding blows of little consequence. I suppose it is so with the moral feeling; at least I could not bring myself to be anxious whether these matters were settled one way or other.

"*February* 4.—Wrote to Mr. Laidlaw to come to town upon Monday, and see the trustees. To farm or not to farm, that is the question. With our careless habits, it were best, I think, to risk as little as possible. Lady Scott will not exceed with ready money in her hand; but calculating on the produce of a farm is different, and neither she nor I are capable of that minute economy. Two cows should be all we should keep. But I find Lady S. inclines much for the four. If she had her youthful activity, and could manage things, it would be well, and would amuse her. But I fear it is too late for work.

"Wrote only two pages (of manuscript) and a half to-day. As the boatswain said, one can't dance always *nouther*. But, were we sure of the quality of the stuff, what opportunities for labour does this same system of retreat afford us! I am convinced that in three years I could do more than in the last ten, but for the mine being, I fear, exhausted. Give me my popularity (*an awful postulate!*), and all my present difficulties shall be a joke in four years; and it is *not* lost yet, at least.

"*February* 5.—Rose after a sound sleep, and here am I without bile or any thing to perturb my inward man. It is just about three weeks since so great a change took place in my relations in society, and already I am indifferent to it. But I have been always told my feelings of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, enjoyment and privation, are much colder than those of other people.

'I think the Romans call it stoicism.'

"Missie was in the drawing-room, and overheard William Clerk and me laughing excessively at some foolery or other in the back-room, to her no small surprise, which she did not keep to herself. But do people suppose that he was less sorry for his poor sister or I for my lost fortune? If I have a very strong passion in the world, it is *pride*, and that never hinged upon world's gear, which was always with me—Light come, light go.

"*February* 6.—Letters received yesterday from Lord Montagu, John Morritt, and Mrs. Hughes, kind and dear friends all, with solicitous enquiries. But it is very tiresome to tell my story over again, and I really hope I have few more friends intimate enough to ask me for it. I dread letter-writing, and envy the old hermit of Prague, who never saw pen or ink. What then? one must write; it is a part of the law we live on. Talking of writing, I finished my six pages, neat and handsome, yesterday. N. B. At night I fell asleep, and the oil dropped from the lamp upon my manuscript. Will this extreme unction make it go smoothly down with the public?

'Thus idly we profane the sacred time
By silly prose, light jest, and lighter rhyme.'

I have a song to write, too, and I am not thinking of it. I trust it will come upon me at once—a sort of catch it should be.* I walked out, feeling a little overwrought.

"*February* 7.—My old friend Sir Peter Murray called to offer his own assistance, Lord Justice-Clerk's, and Abercromby's, to negotiate for me a seat upon the Bench [of the Court of Session] instead of my sheriffdom and clerkship. I explained to him the use which I could make of my pen was not, I thought, consistent with that situation; and that, besides, I had neglected the law too long to permit me to think of it: but this was kindly and honourably done. I can see people think me much worse off than I think myself. They may be right; but I will not be beat till I have tried a rally, and a bold one.

"*February* 8.—Slept ill, and rather bilious in the morning. Many of the Bench now are my juniors. I will not seek *ex eleemosynâ* a place which, had I turned my studies that way, I might have aspired to long ago *ex meritis*. My pen should do much better for me than the odd L.1000 a-year. If it fails, I will lean on what they leave me. Another chance might be, if it fails, in the patronage which might, after a year or two, place me in Exchequer. But I do not count on this unless, indeed, the Duke of Buccleuch, when he comes of age, should choose to make play. Got to my work again, and wrote easier than the two last days.

"Mr. Laidlaw came in from Abbotsford, and dined with us. We spent the evening in laying down plans for the farm, and deciding whom we should keep and whom dismiss among the people. This we did on the true negro-driving principle of self-interest—the only principle I know which *never* swerves from its objects. We chose all the active, young, and powerful men, turning old age and infirmity adrift. I cannot help this, for a guinea cannot do the work of five; but I will contrive to make it easier to the sufferers.

"*February* 9.—A stormy morning, lowering and blustering like our fortunes. *Mea virtute me involvo.* But I must say to the muse of fiction as the Earl of Pembroke said to the ejected nuns of Wilton:—'Go spin, you jades, go spin!' Perhaps she has no tow on her *rock*. When I was at Kilkenny last year we went to see a nunnery, but could not converse with the sisters because they were in *strict retreat*. I was delighted with the red-nosed Padre, who show-

* I believe J. F. stands for James Ferrier, Esq.—one of Sir Walter's brethren of the Clerk's table—the father of his esteemed and admired friend the authoress of "Marriage," "The Inheritance," &c. &c.

† "Authentic Memoirs of the remarkable Life and surprising Exploits of Mandrin, Captain-General of the French Smugglers, who for the space of nine months resolutely stood in defiance of the whole Army of France, &c. 8vo. Lond. 1755." *Abbotsford Library*—See *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xxv.—*Note, Waverley Novels*, vol. v.

* See "Glee for King Charles," *Waverley Novels*, vol. v.

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ed us the place with a sort of proud, unctuous humiliation, and apparent dereliction of the world, that had to me the air of a complete Tartuffe; a strong, sanguine, square-shouldered son of the Church, whom a Protestant would be apt to warrant against any sufferings he was like to sustain by privation. My purpose, however, just now was to talk of the *strict retreat*, which did not prevent the nuns from walking in their little garden, peeping at us, and allowing us to peep at them. Well, now *we* are in *strict retreat*; and if we had been so last year, instead of gallivanting to Ireland, this affair might not have befallen—if literary labour could have prevented it. But who could have suspected Constable's timbers to have been rotten from the beginning?

"Visited the Exhibition on my way home from the Court. The new rooms are most splendid, and several good pictures. The Institution has subsisted but five years, and it is astonishing how much superior the worst of the present collection are to the teaboard-looking things which first appeared. John Thomson, of Duddingstone, has far the finest picture in the Exhibition, of a large size—subject *Dunluce*, a ruinous castle of the Antrim family, near the Giant's Causeway, with one of those terrible seas and skies which only Thomson can paint. Found Scrope there, improving a picture of his own, an Italian scene in Calabria. He is, I think, one of the very best amateur painters I ever saw—Sir George Beaumont scarcely excepted.

"I would not write to-day after I came home. I will not say could not, for it is not true; but I was lazy; felt the desire *far niente*, which is the sign of one's mind being at ease. I read *The English in Italy*, which is a clever book. Byron used to kick and frisk more contemptuously against the literary gravity and slang than any one I ever knew who had climbed so high. Then, it is true, I never knew any one climb so high—and before you despise the eminence, carrying people along with you as convinced that you are not playing the fox and the grapes, you must be at the top. Moore told me some delightful stories of him. * * * * * *† He wrote from impulse, never from effort; and therefore I have always reckoned Burns and Byron the most genuine poetical geniuses of my time, and half a century before me. We have many men of high poetical talent, but none, I think, of that ever-gushing and perennial fountain of natural waters.

"Mr. Laidlaw dined with us. Says Mr. Gibson told him he would dispose of my affairs, were it any but Sir W. S. No doubt, so should I. I am well-nigh doing so at any rate. But *fortuna juvante!* much may be achieved. At worst, the prospect is not very discouraging to one who wants little. Methinks I have been like Burns's poor labourer,

> 'So constantly in Ruin's sight,
> The view o't gives me little fright.'"

CHAPTER LXVII.

EXTRACT FROM JAMES BALLANTYNE'S MEMORANDA—ANECDOTE FROM MR. SKENE—LETTERS OF JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1826, TO J. G. LOCKHART—MR. MORRITT—AND LADY DAVY—RESULT OF THE EMBARRASSMENTS OF CONSTABLE, HURST, AND BALLANTYNE — RESOLUTION OF SIR WALTER SCOTT — MALACHI MALAGROWTHER.

I INTERRUPT, for a moment, Sir Walter's Diary, to introduce a few collateral illustrations of the period embraced in the foregoing chapter. When he returned to Edinburgh from Abbotsford on Monday, the 16th of January, he found (as we have seen) that Hurst & Co. had dishonoured a bill of Constable's; and then proceeded, according to engagement, to dine at Mr. Skene of Rubislaw's. Mr. Skene assures me that he appeared that evening quite in his usual spirits, conversing on whatever topic was started as easily and gaily as if there had been no impending calamity; but at parting, he whispered, "Skene, I have something to speak to you about: be so good as to look in on me as you go to the Parliament-House to-morrow." When Skene called in Castle Street, about half-past nine o'clock next morning, he found Scott writing in his study. He rose, and said, "My friend, give me a shake of your hand—mine is that of a beggar." He then told him that Ballantyne had just been with him, and that his ruin was certain and complete; explaining, briefly, the nature of his connexion with the three houses, whose downfall must that morning be made public. He added, "Don't fancy I am going to stay at home to brood idly on what can't be helped. I was at work upon Woodstock when you came in, and I shall take up the pen the moment I get back from Court. I mean to dine with you again on Sunday, and hope then to report progress to some purpose." When Sunday came, he reported accordingly, that in spite of all the numberless interruptions of meetings and conferences with his partner, the Constables, and men of business—to say nothing of his distressing anxieties on account of his wife and daughter—he had written a chapter of his novel every intervening day.

The reader may be curious to see what account James Ballantyne's memorandum gives of that dark announcement on the morning of Tuesday the 17th. It is as follows:—"On the evening of the 16th, I received from Mr. Cadell a distinct message putting me in possession of the truth. I called immediately in Castle Street, but found Sir Walter had gained an unconscious respite by being engaged out at dinner. It was between eight and nine next morning that I made the final communication. No doubt he was greatly stunned—but, upon the whole, he bore it with wonderful fortitude. He then asked, 'Well, what is the actual step we must first take—I suppose we must do something?' I reminded him that two or three thousand pounds were due that day, so that we had only to do what we must do—refuse payment—to bring the disclosure sufficiently before the world. He took leave of me with these striking words, 'Well, James, depend upon that, I will never forsake you.'"

After the ample details of Scott's Diary, it would be idle to quote here many of his private letters in January, 1826; but I must give two of those addressed to myself, one written at Abbotsford on the 15th, the day before he started for Edinburgh to receive the fatal intelligence—the other on the 20th. It will be seen that I had been so very unwise as to intermingle with the account of one of my painful interviews with Constable, an expression of surprise at the nature of Sir Walter's commercial engagements which had then for the first time been explained to me; and every reader will, I am sure, appreciate the gentleness of the reply, however unsatisfactory he may consider it as regards the main fact in question.

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq. 25, Pall-Mall, London.

"Abbotsford, January 15, 1826.

"My dear Lockhart,

"I have both your packets. I have been quite well since my attack, only for some time very downhearted with the calomel and another nasty stuff they call hyoscyamus—and to say truth, the silence of my own household, which used to be merry at this season.

"I enclose the article on Pepys. It is totally uncorrected, so I wish of course much to see it in proof if possible, as it must be dreadfully inaccurate; the opiate was busy with my brain when the beginning was written, and as James Ballantyne complains wofully, so will your printer, I doubt. The subject is like a good sirloin, which requires only to be basted with its own drippings. I had little trouble of research or reference; perhaps I have made it too long, or introduced too many extracts—if so, use the pruning-knife, hedgebill, or axe, *ad libitum*. You know I don't care a curse about what I write or what becomes of it.

"To-morrow, snow permitting, we go into Edinburgh; mean-time ye can expect no news from this place. I saw poor Chiefswood the other day. Cock-a-pistol* sends his

† Here follow several anecdotes, since published in Moore's Life of Byron.

* A gardener, by name James Scott, who lived at a place called popularly Cock-a-pistol, because the battle of Melrose (A. D. 1526) began there.

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humole remembrances. Commend me a thousand times to the magnanimous Johnnie. I live in hopes he will not greatly miss Marion and the red cow. Don't let him forget poor ha-papa. Farewell, my dear Lockhart: never trouble yourself about writing to me, for I suspect you have enough of that upon hand.

"Pardon my sending you such an unwashed, uncombed thing as the enclosed. I really can't see now to read my own hand, so bad have my eyes or my fingers or both become.—Always yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

Edinburgh, January 20, 1826.

"My dear Lockhart,

"I have your kind letter. Whenever I heard that Constable had made a *cessio fori*, I thought it became me to make public how far I was concerned in these matters, and to offer my fortune so far as it was prestable, and the completion of my literary engagements—(the better thing almost of the two)—to make good all claims upon Ballantyne and Co.; and even supposing that neither Hurst and Co. nor Constable and Co. ever pay a penny they owe me, my old age will be far from destitute—even if my right hand should lose its cunning. This is the *very worst* that can befall me; but I have little doubt that, with ordinary management, the affairs of those houses will turn out favourably. It is needless to add that I will not engage myself, as Constable desires, for £20,000 more—or £2000—or £200. I have advanced enough already to pay other people's debts, and must now pay my own. If our friend C. had set out a fortnight earlier, nothing of all this would have happened; but he let the hour of distress precede the hour of provision, and he and others must pay for it. Yet don't hint this to him, poor fellow—it is an infirmity of nature.

"I have made my matters public, and have had splendid offers of assistance, all which I have declined, for I would rather bear my own burden than subject myself to obligation. There is but one way in such cases.

"It is easy, no doubt, for any friend to blame me for entering into connexion with commercial matters at all. But I wish to know what I could have done better; excluded from the bar, and then from all profits for six years, by my colleague's prolonged life. Literature was not in those days what poor Constable has made it; and, with my little capital, I was too glad to make commercially the means of supporting my family. I got but £600 for the Lay of the Last Minstrel, and—it was a price that made men's hair stand on end—£1000 for Marmion. I have been far from suffering by James Ballantyne. I owe it to him to say, that his difficulties, as well as his advantages, are owing to me. I trusted too much to Constable's assurances of his own and his correspondents' stability, but yet I believe he was only sanguine. The upshot is just what Hurst and Co. and Constable may be able to pay me; if 15s. in the pound, I shall not complain of my loss, for I have gained many thousands in my day. But while I live I shall regret the downfall of Constable's house, for never did there exist so intelligent and so liberal an establishment. They went too far when money was plenty, that is certain; yet if every author in Britain had taxed himself half a year's income, he should have kept up the house which first broke in upon the monopoly of the London trade, and made letters what they now are.

"I have had visits from all the monied people, offering their purses—and those who are creditors, sending their managers and treasurers to assure me of their joining in and adopting any measures I may propose. I am glad of this for their sake, and for my own—for although I shall not desire to steer, yet I am the only person that can *cann*, as Lieutenant Hatchway says, to any good purpose. A very odd anonymous offer I had of £30,000,* which I rejected, as I did every other. Unless I die, I shall beat up against this foul weather. A penny I will not borrow from any one. Since my creditors are content to be patient, I have the means of righting them perfectly, and the confidence to employ them. I would have given a good deal to have avoided the *coup d'eclat*; but that having taken place, I would not give sixpence for any other results. I fear you will think I am writing in the heat of excited resistance to bad fortune. My dear Lockhart, I am as calm and temperate as you ever saw me, and working at Woodstock like a very tiger. I am grieved for Lady Scott and Anne, who cannot conceive adversity can have the better of them, even for a moment. If it teaches a little of the frugality which I never had the heart to enforce when money was plenty, and it seemed cruel to interrupt the enjoyment of it in the way they liked best—it will be well.

"Kindest love to Sophia, and tell her to study the songt

* Sir Walter never knew the name of this munificent person.

† "Up with the bonnets of Bonnie Dundee."

and keep her spirits up. Tyne heart, tyne all; and it is making more of money than it is worth to grieve about it. Kiss Johnnie for me. How glad I am fortune carried you to London before these reverses happened, as they would have embittered parting, and made it resemble the boat leaving the sinking ship.—Yours, dear Lockhart, affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

From Sir Walter's letters of the same period, to friends out of his own family, I select the following:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. &c. Marine Terrace, Brighton.

"Edinburgh, 6th February, 1826.

"My dear Morritt,

"It is very true I have been, and am in danger, of a pecuniary loss, and probably a very large one, which, in the uncertainty, I look at as to the full extent, being the manly way of calculating such matters, since one may be better, but can hardly be worse. I can't say I feel overjoyed at losing a large sum of hard-earned money in a most unexpected manner, for all men considered Constable's people secure as the Bank; yet, as I have obtained an arrangement of payment convenient for every body concerned, and easy for myself, I cannot say that I care much about the matter. Some economical restrictions I will make; and it happened oddly that they were such as Lady Scott and myself had almost determined upon without this compulsion. Abbotsford will henceforth be our only establishment; and during the time I must be in town, I will take my bed at the Albyn Club. We shall also break off the rather excessive hospitality to which we were exposed, and no longer stand host and hostess to all that do pilgrimage to Melrose. Then I give up an expensive farm, which I always hated, and turn all my odds and ends into cash. I do not reckon much on my literary exertions—I mean in proportion to former success—because popular taste may fluctuate. But with a moderate degree of the favour which I have always had, my time my own, and my mind unplagued about other things, I may boldly promise myself soon to get the better of this blow.

"In these circumstances, I should be unjust and ungrateful to ask or accept the pity of my friends. I for one, do not see there is much occasion for making moan about it. My womankind will be the greater sufferers,—yet even they look cheerily forward; and, for myself, the blowing off my hat in a stormy day has given me more uneasiness.

"I envy your Brighton party, and your fine weather. When I was at Abbotsford the mercury was down at six or seven in the morning more than once. I am hammering away at a bit of a story from the old affair of the *diablerie* at Woodstock in the Long Parliament times. I don't like it much. I am obliged to hamper my fanatics greatly too much to make them effective; but I make the sacrifice on principle; so, perhaps, I shall deserve good success in other parts of the work. You will be surprised when I tell you that I have written a volume in exactly fifteen days. To be sure, I permitted no interruptions. But then I took exercise, and for ten days of the fifteen attended the Court of Session from two to four hours every day. This is nothing, however, to writing Ivanhoe when I had the actual cramp in my stomach; but I have no idea of these things preventing a man from doing what he has a mind. My love to all the party at Brighton—fireside party I had almost said, but you scorn my words—seaside party then be it. Lady Scott and Anne join in kindest love. I must close my letter, for one of the consequences of our misfortunes is, that we dine every day at half-past four o'clock; which premature hour arises, I suppose, from sorrow being hungry as well as thirsty. One most laughable part of our tragic comedy was, that every friend in the world came formally, just as they do here when a relation dies, thinking that the eclipse of *les beaux yeux de ma cassette* was perhaps a loss as deserving of consolation.

"We had an unpleasant report that your nephew was ill. I am glad to see from your letter it is only the lady, and in the right way; and I hope. *Scottice loquens*, she will be worse before she is better. This mistake is something like the Irish blunder in Faulkner's Journal, "For *his* Grace the Duchess of Devonshire was safely delivered—read *her* Grace the Duke of Devonshire, &c."

Always yours, affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S. Will you do me a favour? Set fire to the Chinese stables; and if it embrace the whole of the Pavilion, it will rid me of a great eye-sore."

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To Lady Davy, 26, Park Street, London.

"6th February, 1826.

"My dear Lady Davy,

"A very few minutes since, I received your kind letter, and answer it in all frankness, and, in Iago's words, 'I am *hurt*, ma'am, but not killed'—nor even kilt. I have made so much by literature, that, even should this loss fall in its whole extent, and we now make preparations for the worst, it will not break, and has not broken my sleep. If I have good luck, I may be as rich again as ever; if not, I shall have still far more than many of the most deserving people in Britain—soldiers, sailors, statesmen, or men of literature.

"I am much obliged to you for your kindness to Sophia, who has tact, and great truth of character, I believe. She will wish to take her company, as the scandal said ladies liked their wine, little and good; and I need not say I shall be greatly obliged by your continued notice of one you have known now for a long time. I am, between ourselves, afraid of the little boy; he is terribly delicate in constitution, and so twined about the parents' hearts, that———But it is needless croaking; what is written on our foreheads at our birth shall be accomplished. So far I am a good Moslem.

"Lockhart is, I think, in his own line, and therefore I do not regret his absence, though, in our present arrangement, as my wife and Anne propose to remain all the year round at Abbotsford, I shall be solitary enough in my lodgings. But I always loved being a bear and sucking my paws in solitude, better than being a lion and ramping for the amusement of others; and as I propose to slam the door in the face of all and sundry for these three years to come, and neither eat nor give to eat, I shall come forth bearish enough, should I live, to make another avatar. Seriously, I intend to receive nobody, old and intimate friends excepted, at Abbotsford this season, for it cost me much more in time than otherwise.

"I beg my kindest compliments to Sir Humphry, and tell him Ill Luck, that direful chemist, never put into his crucible a more indissoluble piece of stuff than your affectionate cousin and sincere well-wisher,

WALTER SCOTT."

I offer no cold comments on the strength of character which Sir Walter Scott exhibited in the crisis of his calamities. But for the revelations of his Diary it would never have been known to his most intimate friends, or even to his own affectionate children, what struggles it cost him to reach the lofty serenity of mind which was reflected in all his outward conduct and demeanour.

As yet, however, he had hardly prepared himself for the extent to which Constable's debts exceeded his assets. The obligations of that house amounted, on a final reckoning, to £256,000; those of Hurst and Robinson to somewhere about £300,000. The former paid, ultimately, only 2s. 9d. in the pound; the latter about 1s. 3d.

The firm of James Ballantyne and Co. might have allowed itself to be declared bankrupt, and obtained a speedy discharge, as the bookselling concerns did, for all its obligations;—but that Sir Walter Scott was a partner. Had he chosen to act in the manner commonly adopted by commercial insolvents, the matter would have been settled in a very short time. The creditors of Ballantyne and Co.—(whose claims, including sheafs of bills of all descriptions, amounted to £117,000)—would have brought into the market whatever property, literary or otherwise, he at the hour of failure possessed; they would have had a right to his liferent of Abbotsford, among other things—and to his reversionary interest in the estate, in case either his eldest son or his daughter-in-law should die without leaving issue, and thus void the provisions of their marriage-contract. All this being brought into the market, the result would have been a dividend very far superior to what the creditors of Constable and Hurst received; and in return, the partners in the printing firm would have been left at liberty to reap for themselves the profits of their future exertions. Things were, however, complicated in consequence of the transfer of Abbotsford in January, 1825. At first, some creditors seem to have had serious thoughts of contesting the validity of that transaction; but a little reflection and examination satisfied them that nothing could be gained by such an attempt. But, on the other hand, Sir Walter felt that he had done wrong in placing any part of his property beyond the reach of his creditors, by entering into that marriage-contract, without a previous most deliberate examination into the state of his responsibilities. He must have felt in this manner, though I have no sort of doubt, that the result of such an examination in January, 1825, if accompanied by an instant calling in of all *counter-bills*, would have been to leave him at perfect liberty to do all that he did upon that occasion. However that may have been, and whatever may have been his delicacy respecting this point, he regarded the embarrassment of his commercial firm, on the whole, with the feelings not of a merchant but of a gentleman. He thought that by devoting the rest of his life to the service of his creditors, he could, in the upshot, pay the last farthing he owed them. They (with one or two paltry exceptions) applauded his honourable intentions and resolutions, and partook, to a large extent, in the self-reliance of their debtor. Nor had they miscalculated as to their interest. Nor had Sir Walter calculated wrongly. He paid the penalty of health and life, but he saved his honour and his self-respect:

"The glory dies not, and the grief is past."

As soon as Parliament met, the recent convulsion in the commercial world became the subject of some very remarkable debates in the Lower House; and the Ministers, tracing it mainly to the rash facility of bankers in yielding credit to speculators, proposed to strike at the root of the evil by taking from private banks the privilege of circulating their own notes as money, and limiting even the Bank of England to the issue of notes of £5 value and upwards. The Government designed that this regulation should apply to Scotland as well as England; and the northern public received the announcement with almost universal reprobation. The Scotch banks apprehended a most serious curtailment of their profits; and the merchants and traders of every class were well disposed to back them in opposing the Ministerial innovation. Scott, ever sensitively jealous as to the interference of English statesmen with the internal affairs of his native kingdom, took the matter up with as much zeal as he could have displayed against the Union had he lived in the days of Queen Anne. His national feelings may have been somewhat stimulated, perhaps, by his deep sense of gratitude for the generous forbearance which several Edinburgh bankinghouses had just been exhibiting towards himself; and I think it need not be doubted, moreover, that the *splendida bilis* which, as the Diary shows, his own misfortunes had engendered, demanded some escape-valve. Hence the three Letters of Malachi Malagrowther, which appeared first in the Edinburgh Weekly Journal, and were afterwards collected into a pamphlet by the late Mr. Blackwood, who, on that occasion, for the first time, had justice done to his personal character by "the Black Hussar of Literature."

These diatribes produced in Scotland a sensation not, perhaps, inferior to that of the Drapier's letters in Ireland; a greater one, certainly, than any political tract had excited in the British public at large since the appearance of Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution. They were answered most elaborately and acutely in the London Courier (then the semi-official organ of Lord Liverpool's Government) by Sir Walter's friend, the Secretary of the Admiralty, Mr. Croker, who, perhaps, hazarded, in the heat of his composition, a few personal allusions that might as well have been spared, and which might have tempted a less good-natured antagonist to a fiery rejoinder. Meeting, however, followed meeting, and petition on petition came up with thousands of signatures; and the Ministers erelong found that the opposition, of which Malachi had led the van, was, in spite of all their own speeches and Mr. Croker's essays, too strong and too rapidly strengthening, to be safely encountered. The Scotch part of the measure was dropt; and Scott, having carried his practical object, was not at all disposed to persist in a controversy which, if farther pursued, could scarcely, as he foresaw, fail

to interrupt the kindly feelings that Croker and he had for many years entertained for each other, and also to aggravate and prolong, unnecessarily, the resentment with which several of his friends in the Cabinet had regarded his unlooked-for appearance as a hostile agitator.

I believe, with these hints, the reader is sufficiently prepared for resuming Sir Walter's Diary.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

DIARY RESUMED—ANECDOTE OF CULLODEN—LETTER FROM MACKINTOSH—EXHIBITION OF PICTURES—MODERN PAINTERS—HABITS OF COMPOSITION—GLENGARRY — ADVOCATES' LIBRARY — NEGOTIATIONS WITH CREDITORS—FIRST LETTER OF MALACHI MALAGROWTHER—CHRONIQUE DE JACQUES DE LALAIN—PROGRESS OF WOODSTOCK AND BUONAPARTE—NOVELS BY GALT—MISS AUSTEN—AND LADY MORGAN—SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF MALACHI—DEPARTURE FROM CASTLE STREET.—FEBRUARY AND MARCH, 1826.

DIARY.

"*Edinburgh, February* 10.—Went through, for a new day, the task of buttoning, which seems to me somehow to fill up more of my morning than usual—not, certainly that such is the case, but that my mind attends to the process, having so little left to hope or fear. The half hour between waking and rising has all my life proved propitious to any task which was exercising my invention. When I got over any knotty difficulty in a story, or have had in former times to fill up a passage in a poem, it was always when I first opened my eyes that the desired ideas thronged upon me. This is so much the case, that I am in the habit of relying upon it, and saying to myself, when I am at a loss, 'Never mind, we shall have it at seven o'clock to morrow morning.' If I have forgotten a circumstance or a name, or a copy of verses, it is the same thing. I think the first hour of the morning is also favourable to the bodily strength. Among other feats, when I was a young man, I was able at times to lift a smith's anvil with one hand, by what is called the *horn*, that projecting piece of iron on which things are beaten to turn them round. But I could only do this before breakfast. It required my full strength, undiminished by the least exertion, and those who choose to try will find the feat no easy one. This morning I had some new ideas respecting Woodstock, which will make the story better. The devil of a difficulty is, that one puzzles the skein in order to excite curiosity, and then cannot disentangle it for the satisfaction of the prying fiend they have raised. I have a prettily expressed letter of condolence from Sir James Mackintosh.* Yesterday I had an anecdote from old Sir James Stewart Denham,* which is worth writing down. His uncle, Lord Elcho, was, as is well known, engaged in the affair of 1745. He was dissatisfied with the conduct of matters from beginning to end. But after the left wing of the Highlanders was repulsed and broken at Culloden, Elcho rode up to the Chevalier and told him all was lost, and that nothing remained except to charge at the head of two thousand men, who were still unbroken, and either turn the fate of the day or die sword in hand, as became his pretensions. The Chevalier gave him some evasive answer, and, turning his horse's head, rode off the field. Lord Elcho called after him (I write his very words,) 'There you go for a damned cowardly Italian,' and never would see him again, though he lost his property and remained an exile in the cause. Lord Elcho left two copies of his memoirs, one with Sir James Stewart's family, one with Lord Wemyss. This is better evidence than the romance of Chevalier Johnstone; and I have little doubt it is true. Yet it is no proof of the Prince's cowardice, though it shows him to have been no John of Gaunt. Princes are constantly surrounded with people who hold up their own *life* and *safety* to them as by far the most important stake in any contest; and this is a doctrine in which conviction is easily received. Such an eminent person finds every body's advice, save here and there that of a desperate Elcho, recommend obedience to the natural instinct of self-preservation, which very often men of inferior situations find it difficult to combat, when all the world are crying to them to get on and be damned, instead of encouraging them to run away. At Prestonpans the Chevalier offered to lead the van, and he was with the second line, which, during that brief affair, followed the first very close. Johnstone's own account, carefully read, brings him within a pistol-shot of the first line. At the same time Charles Edward had not a head or heart for great things, notwithstanding his daring adventure; and the Irish officers, by whom he was guided, were poor creatures. Lord George Murray was the soul of the undertaking.†

"*February* 11.—Court sat till half-past one. A man, calling himself * * * * of * * * * *, writes to me, expressing sympathy for my misfortunes, and offering me half the profits of what, if I understand him right, is a patent medicine, to which I suppose he expects me to stand trumpeter. He endeavours to get over my objections to accepting his liberality (supposing me to entertain them) by assuring me his conduct is founded on '*a sage self-*

that a fortune earned by genius and expended so generously, should be for the shortest time shaken by the general calamities.

"Those dispositions of yours which most quicken the fellow-feelings of others will best console you. I have heard with delight that your composure and cheerfulness have already comforted those who are most affectionately interested in you. What I heard of your happy temper in this way, reminded me of Warburton's fine character of Bayle—'He had a soul superior to the attacks of fortune, and a heart practised to the best philosophy.' You have expended your fortune too well not to be consoled for a temporary suspension of its produce; you have your genius, your fame, and, what is better than either, your kind and cheerful nature.

"I trust so much to your good-natured indulgence, that I hope you will pardon me for joining my sincere but very humble voice to the admiration and sympathy of Europe.—I am, my dear Sir, yours most truly,

J. MACKINTOSH."

* This letter is so honourable to the writer, as well as to Sir Walter, that I am tempted to insert it in a note:—

To Sir W. Scott, Bart., Edinburgh.

"Cadogan Place, Feb. 7, 1826.

"My dear Sir,

"Having been sailing on Windermere when Lord Gifford past the lakes, and almost constantly confined since my return to town, I did not hear till two days ago, of your very kind message, which, if I had received it in the north, I should probably have answered in person. I do not know that I should now have troubled you with written thanks for what is so natural to you as an act of courtesy and hospitality, if I were not in hopes that you might consider it as excuse enough for an indulgence of inclinations which might otherwise be thought intrusive.

"No man living has given pleasure to so many persons as you have done; and you must be assured that great multitudes who never saw you, in every quarter of the world, will regret the slightest disturbance of your conscience. But, as I have observed that the express declaration of one individual sometimes makes more impression than the strongest assurance of the sentiments of multitudes, I venture to say that I most sincerely lament that any untoward circumstances should, even for a moment, interrupt the indulgence of your taste and your liberal enjoyments. I am sorry that Scotland should, for the honours of the country done to visiters by the person at the head of our literature. Above all I am sorry

* General Sir James Stewart Denham of Coltness, Bart., Colonel of the Scots Greys. His Father, the celebrated political economist, took part in the Rebellion of 1745, and was four afterwards an exile. The reader is no doubt acquainted with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters, addressed to him and his wife Lady Frances. The present venerable Sir James had, I think, attained the rank of Captain in a foreign service before his father's attainder was reversed;—yet he has lived to become the senior general officer in the British army.

† "Had Prince Charles slept during the whole of the expedition," says the Chevalier Johnstone, "and allowed Lord George Murray to act for him according to his own judgment, there is every reason for supposing he would have found the crown of Great Britain on his head when he awoke."—*Memoirs of the Rebellion of 1745, &c.* London, 1810. 4to, p. 140.

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ishness! This is diverting enough. I suppose the Commissioners of Police will next send me a letter of condolence, begging my acceptance of a broom, a shovel, and a scavenger's great coat, and assuring me that they had appointed me to all the emoluments of a well-frequented crossing. It would be doing more than they have done of late for the cleanliness of the streets, which, witness my shoes, are in a piteous pickle. I thanked the selfish sage with due decorum; for what purpose can anger serve? I remember once before, a mad woman, from about Alnwick, by name * * * *, baited me with letters and plans—first for charity for herself or some *protegé*—I gave my guinea—then she wanted to have half the profits of a novel which I was to publish under my name and auspices. She sent me the manuscript, and a *moving* tale it was, for some of the scenes lay in the *Cabinet à l'eau*. I declined the partnership. Lastly, my fair correspondent insisted I was a lover of speculation, and would be much profited by going shares in a patent medicine which she had invented for the benefit of little babes. I dreaded to have any thing to do with such a Herod-like affair, and begged to decline the honour of her correspondence in future. I should have thought the thing a quiz but that the novel was real and substantial. Sir Alexander Don called, and we had a good laugh together.

"*February* 12.—Having ended the second volume of Woodstock last night, I had to begin the third this morning. Now I have not the slightest idea how the story is to be wound up to a catastrophe. I am just in the same case that I used to be when I lost myself in former days in some country to which I was a stranger. I always pushed for the pleasantest route, and either found or made it the nearest. It is the same in writing. I never could lay down a plan—or, having laid it down, I never could adhere to it; the action of composition always extended some passages, and abridged or omitted others; and personages were rendered important or insignificant, not according to their agency in the original conception of the piece, but according to the success, or otherwise, with which I was able to bring them out. I only tried to make that which I was actually writing diverting and interesting, leaving the rest to fate. I have been often amused with the critics distinguishing some passages as particularly laboured, when the pen passed over the whole as fast as it could move, and the eye never again saw them, except in proof. Verse I write twice, and sometimes three times over. This *hab nab at a venture* is a perilous style, I grant, but I cannot help it. When I strain my mind to ideas which are purely imaginative—for argument is a different thing—it seems to me that the sun leaves the landscape—that I think away the whole vivacity of my original conception, and that the results are cold, tame, and spiritless. It is the difference between a written oration and one bursting from the unpremeditated exertions of the speaker, which have always something the air of enthusiasm and inspiration. I would not have young authors imitate my carelessness, however.

"Read a few pages of Will D'Avenant, who was fond of having it supposed that Shakspeare intrigued with his mother. I think the pretension can only be treated as Phæton was, according to Fielding's farce—

> 'Besides, by all the village boys I'm shamed,
> You, the sun's son, you rascal—you be damn'd.'

Egad, I'll put that in Woodstock. It might come well from the old admirer of Shakspeare. Then Fielding's lines were not written. What then?—it is an anachronism for some sly rogue to detect. Besides, it is easy to swear they were written, and that Fielding adopted them from tradition.*

"*February* 13.—The Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts opens to-day, with a handsome entertainment in the Exhibition-room, as at Somerset House. It strikes me that the direction given by amateurs and professors to their *protegés* and pupils, who aspire to be artists, is upon a pedantic and false principle. All the fine arts have it for their highest and most legitimate end and purpose, to affect the human passions, or smooth and alleviate, for a time, the near unquiet feelings of the mind—to excite wonder, or terror, or pleasure, or emotion of some kind or other. It often happens that, in the very rise and origin of these arts, as in the instance of Homer, the principal object is obtained in a degree not equalled by any successor. But there is a degree of execution which, in more refined times, the poet or musician begins to study, which gives a value of its own to their productions of a different kind from the rude strength of their predecessors. Poetry becomes complicated in its rules—music learned in its cadences and harmonies—rhetoric subtle in its periods. There is more given to the labour of executing—less attained by the effect produced. Still the nobler and popular end of these arts is not forgotten; and if we have some productions too learned, too *récherchés* for public feeling, we have, every now and then, music that electrifies a whole assembly, eloquence which shakes the forum, and poetry which carries men up to the third heaven. But in painting it is different; it is all become a mystery, the secret of which is lodged in a few connoisseurs, whose object is not to praise the works of such painters as produce effect on mankind at large, but to class them according to their proficiency in the inferior rules of the art, which, though most necessary to be taught and learned, should yet only be considered as the *Gradus ad Parnassum*, the steps by which the higher and ultimate object of a great popular effect is to be attained. They have all embraced the very style of criticism which induced Michael Angelo to call some Pope a poor creature, when, turning his attention from the general effect of a noble statue, his Holiness began to criticise the hem of the robe. This seems to me the cause of the decay of this delightful art, especially in history, its noblest branch. As I speak to myself, I may say that a painting should, to be excellent, have something to say to the mind of a man, like myself, well educated, and susceptible to those feelings which any thing strongly recalling natural emotion is likely to inspire. But how seldom do I see any thing that moves me much! Wilkie, the far more than Teniers of Scotland, certainly gave many new ideas. So does Will Allan, though overwhelmed with their remarks about colouring and grouping, against which they are not willing to place his general and original merits. Landseer's dogs were the most magnificent things I ever saw—leaping, and bounding, and grinning on the canvass. Leslie has great powers; and the scenes from Molière by Newton are excellent. Yet painting wants a regenerator—some one who will sweep the cobwebs out of his head before he takes the pallet, as Chantrey has done in the sister art. At present we are painting pictures from the ancients, as authors in the days of Louis Quatorze wrote epic poems according to the recipe of Dacier and Co. The poor reader or spectator has no remedy; the compositions are *secundum artem*; and if he does not like them, he is no judge, that's all.

"*February* 14.—I had a call from Glengarry yesterday, as kind and friendly as usual.* This gentleman is a kind of Quixote in our age, having retained, in their full extent, the whole feelings of clanship and chieftainship, elsewhere so long abandoned. He seems to have lived a century too late, and to exist, in a state of complete law and order, like a Glengarry of old, whose will was law to his sept. Warm-hearted, generous, friendly; he is beloved by those who know him, and his efforts are unceasing to show kindness to those of his clan who are disposed fully to admit his pretensions. To dispute them is to incur his resentment, which has some-

* See the couplet, and the apology, in Woodstock—*Waverley Novels*, Vol. v.

* The late Colonel Ranaldson Macdonell of Glengarry. He died in January, 1828.

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times broken out in acts of violence which have brought him into collision with the law. To me he is a treasure, as being full of information as to the history of his own clan and the manners and customs of the Highlanders in general. Strong, active, and muscular, he follows the chase of the deer for days and nights together, sleeping in his plaid when darkness overtakes him. The number of his singular exploits would fill a volume; for, as his pretensions are high, and not always willingly yielded to, he is every now and then giving rise to some rumour. He is, on many of these occasions, as much sinned against as sinning; for men, knowing his temper, sometimes provoke him, conscious that Glengarry, from his character for violence, will always be put in the wrong by the public. I have seen him behave in a very manly manner when thus tempted. He has of late prosecuted a quarrel, ridiculous enough in the present day, to have himself admitted and recognised as Chief of the whole Clan Ranald, or surname of Macdonald. The truth seems to be, that the present Clanranald is not descended from a legitimate chieftain of the tribe; for, having accomplished a revolution in the 16th century, they adopted a Tanist, or Captain, that is, a Chief not in the direct line of succession—namely, a certain Ian Moidart, or John of Moidart, who took the title of Captain of Clanranald, with all the powers of Chief, and even Glengarry's ancestor recognised them as chiefs *de facto* if not *de jure*. The fact is, that this elective power was, in cases of insanity, imbecility, or the like, exercised by the Celtic tribes; and though Ian Moidart was no chief by birth, yet by election he became so, and transmitted his power to his descendants, as would King William III., if he had had any. So it is absurd to set up the *jus sanguinis* now, which Glengarry's ancestors did not, or could not make good, when it was a right worth combating for. I wrought out my full task yesterday.

"Saw Cadell as I returned from the Court. He seemed dejected, and gloomy about the extent of stock of novels, &c. on hand. He infected me with his want of spirits, and I almost wish my wife had not asked Mr. Scrope and Charles K. Sharpe for this day. But the former sent such loads of game that Lady Scott's gratitude became ungovernable. I have not seen a creature at dinner since the direful 17th of January, except my own family and Mr. Laidlaw. The love of solitude increases by indulgence; I hope it will not diverge into misanthropy. It does not mend the matter that this is the first day that a ticket for sale is on my house, poor No. 39. One gets accustomed even to stone walls, and the place suited me very well. All our furniture too is to go—a hundred little articles that seemed to me connected with all the happier years of my life. It is a sorry business. But *sursum corda*.

"My two friends came as expected, also Missie, and staid till half-past ten. Promised Sharpe the set of Piranesi's views in the dining-parlour. They belonged to my uncle, so I do not like to sell them.

"*February* 15.—Yesterday I did not write a line of Woodstock. Partly, I was a little out of spirits, though that would not have hindered. Partly, I wanted to wait for some new ideas—a sort of collecting of straw to make bricks of. Partly, I was a little too far beyond the press. I cannot pull well in long traces, when the draught is too far behind me. I love to have the press thumping, clattering, and banging in my rear: it creates the necessity which almost always makes me work best. Needs must when the devil drives—and drive he does even according to the letter. I must work to-day, however.—Attended a meeting of the Faculty about our new library. I spoke—saying that I hoped we would now at length act upon a general plan, and look forward to commencing upon such a scale as might secure us at least for a century against the petty and partial managements which we have hitherto thought sufficient, of fitting up one room after another. Disconnected and distant, these have been costing large sums of money from time to time, all now thrown away. We are now to have space enough for a very large range of buildings, which we may execute in a simple taste, leaving Government to ornament them if they shall think proper—otherwise to be plain, modest, and handsome, and capable of being executed by degrees, and in such portions as convenience may admit of.—Poor James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, came to advise with me about his affairs,—he is sinking under the times; having no assistance to give him, my advice I fear will be of little service. I am sorry for him if that would help him, especially as, by his own account, a couple of hundred pounds would carry him on.

"*February* 16.—'Misfortune's gowling bark'* comes louder and louder. By assigning my whole property to trustees for behoof of creditors, with two works in progress and nigh publication, and with all my future literary labours, I conceived I was bringing into the field a large fund of payment, which could not exist without my exertions, and that thus far I was entitled to a corresponding degree of indulgence. I therefore supposed, on selling this house, and various other property, and on receiving the price of Woodstock and Napoleon, that they would give me leisure to make other exertions, and be content with the rents of Abbotsford, without attempting a sale. This would have been the more reasonable, as, the very printing of these works must amount to a large sum, of which they will touch the profits. In the course of this delay I supposed I was to have the chance of getting some insight both into Constable's affairs and those of Hurst and Robinson. Nay, employing these houses, under precautions, to sell the works, the publishers' profit would have come in to pay part of their debt. But Gibson last night came in after dinner, and gave me to understand that the Bank of Scotland see this in a different point of view, and consider my contribution of the produce of past, present, and future labours, as compensated *in full* by their accepting of the trust-deed, instead of pursuing the mode of sequestration, and placing me in the Gazette. They therefore expect the trustees to commence a lawsuit to reduce the marriage settlement, which settles the estate upon Walter; thus loading me with a most expensive suit, and I suppose selling library and whatever else they can lay hold on.

"Now this seems unequal measure, and would besides of itself totally destroy any power of fancy, of genius, if it deserves the name, which may remain to me. A man cannot write in the House of Correction; and this species of *peine forte et dure* which is threatened, would render it impossible for one to help himself or others. So I told Gibson I had my mind made up as far back as the 24th of January, not to suffer myself to be harder pressed than law would press me. If this great commercial company, through whose hands I have directed so many thousands, think they are right in taking every advantage and giving none, it must be my care to see that they take none but what the law gives them. If they take the sword of the law, I must lay hold of the shield. If they are determined to consider me as an irretrievable bankrupt, they have no title to object to my settling upon the usual terms which the Statute requires. They probably are of opinion, that I will be ashamed to do this by applying publicly for a sequestration. Now, my feelings are different. I am ashamed to owe debts I cannot pay; but I am not ashamed of being classed with those to whose rank I belong. The disgrace is in being an actual bankrupt, not in being made a legal one. I had like to have been too hasty in this matter. I must have a clear understanding that I am to be benefited or indulged in some way, if I bring in two such funds as those works in progress, worth certainly from £10,000 to £15,000.

"*February* 17.—Slept sound, for nature repays herself for the vexation the mind sometimes gives her. This morning put interlocutor on several Sheriff-Court processes from Selkirkshire. Gibson

* Burn's *Dedication* to Gavin Hamilton.

came to-night to say that he had spoken at full length with Alexander Monypenny, proposed as trustee on the part of the Bank of Scotland, and found him decidedly in favour of the most moderate measures, and taking burden on himself that the Bank would proceed with such lenity as might enable me to have some time and opportunity to clear these affairs out. I repose trust in Mr. M. entirely. His father, Colonel Monypenny, was my early friend, kind and hospitable to me when I was a mere boy. He had much of old General Withers about him, as expressed in Pope's epitaph—

'——A worth in youth approved,
A soft humanity in age beloved!'

His son David, and a younger brother, Frank, a soldier, who perished by drowning on a boating party from Gibraltar, were my schoolfellows; and with the survivor, now Lord Pitmilly, I have always kept up a friendly intercourse. Of this gentleman, on whom my fortunes are to depend, I know little. He was Colin Mackenzie's partner in business while my friend pursued it, and he speaks highly of him: that's a great deal. He is secretary to the Pitt Club, and we have had all our lives the habit *idem sentire de republica:* that's much too. Lastly, he is a man of perfect honour and reputation; and I have nothing to ask which such a man would not either grant or convince me was unreasonable. I have, to be sure, something of a constitutional and hereditary obstinacy; but it is in me a dormant quality. Convince my understanding, and I am perfectly docile; stir my passions by coldness or affronts, and the devil would not drive me from my purpose. Let me record, I have striven against this besetting sin. When I was a boy, and on foot expeditions, as we had many, no creature could be so indifferent which way our course was directed, and I acquiesced in what any one proposed; but if I was once driven to make a choice, and felt piqued in honour to maintain my proposition, I have broken off from the whole party, rather than yield to any one. Time has sobered this pertinacity of mind; but it still exists, and I must be on my guard against it. It is the same with me in politics. In general I care very little about the matter, and from year's end to year's end have scarce a thought connected with them, except to laugh at the fools, who think to make themselves great men out of little by swaggering in the rear of a party. But either actually important events, or such as seemed so by their close neighbourhood to me, have always hurried me off my feet, and made me, as I have sometimes regretted, more forward and more violent than those who had a regular jog-trot way of busying themselves in public matters. Good luck; for had I lived in troublesome times, and chanced to be on the unhappy side, I had been hanged to a certainty. What I have always remarked has been, that many who have hallooed me on at public meetings, and so forth, have quietly left me to the odium which a man known to the public always has more than his own share of; while, on the other hand, they were easily successful in pressing before me, who never pressed forward at all, when there was any distribution of public favours or the like. I am horribly tempted to interfere in this business of altering the system of banks in Scotland; and yet I know that if I can attract any notice, I will offend my English friends, without propitiating our doom in Scotland. I will think of it till to-morrow. It is making myself of too much importance, after all.

"*February* 18.—I set about Malachi Malagrowther's Letter on the late disposition to change every thing in Scotland to an English model, but without resolving about the publication. They do treat us very provokingly.

'O Land of *Cakes!* said the *Northern* bard,
Though all the world betrays thee,
One faithful pen thy rights shall guard,
One faithful harp shall praise thee.'

"*February* 19.—Finished my letter (Malachi Malagrowther) this morning, and sent it to James B., who is to call with the result this forenoon. I am not very anxious to get on with Woodstock. I want to see what Constable's people mean to do when they have their trustee. For an unfinished work they must treat with the author. It is the old story of the varnish spread over the picture, which nothing but the artist's own hand could remove. A finished work might be seized under some legal pretence.

"Being troubled with thick-coming fancies, and a slight palpitation of the heart, I have been reading the Chronicle of the Good Knight Messire Jacques de Lalain—curious, but dull, from the constant repetition of the same species of combats in the same style and phrase. It is like washing bushels of sand for a grain of gold. It passes the time, however, especially in that listless mood when your mind is half on your book, half on something else. You catch something to arrest the attention every now and then, and what you miss is not worth going back upon; idle man's studies, in short. Still things occur to one. Something might be made of a tale of chivalry,—taken from the Passage of Arms, which Jacques de Lalain maintained for the first day of every month for a twelvemonth.* The first mention perhaps of red-hot balls appears in the siege of Oudenarde by the Citizens of Ghent.—Chronique, p. 293. This would be light summer work.

"J. B. came and sat an hour. I led him to talk of Woodstock; and, to say truth, his approbation did me much good. I am aware it *may*, nay, *must* be partial; yet is he Tom Tell-truth, and totally unable to disguise his real feelings. I think I make no habit of feeding on praise, and despise those whom I see greedy for it, as much as I should an under-bred fellow who, after eating a cherry-tart, proceeded to lick the plate. But when one is flagging, a little praise (if it can be had genuine and unadulterated by flattery, which is as difficult to come by as the genuine mountain-dew) is a cordial after all. So now—*vamos corazon*—let us atone for the loss of the morning.

"*February* 20.—Yesterday, though late in beginning, I nearly finished my task, which is six of my close pages, about thirty pages of print, a full and uninterrupted day's work. To-day I have already written four, and with some confidence. Thus does flattery or praise oil the wheels. It is but two o'clock. Skene was here remonstrating against my taking apartments at the Albyn Club, and recommending that I should rather stay with them. I told him that was altogether impossible. I hoped to visit them often, but for taking a permanent residence, I was altogether the country mouse, and voted for

'——A hollow tree,
A crust of bread and liberty.'

The chain of friendship, however bright, does not stand the attrition of constant close contact.

"*February* 21.—Corrected the proofs of Malachi this morning; it may fall dead, and there will be a squib lost; it may chance to light on some ingredients of national feeling and set folk's beards in a blaze—and so much the better if it does. I mean better for Scotland—not a whit for me. Attended the hearing in Parliament-House till near four o'clock, so I shall do little to-night for I am tired and sleepy. One person talking for a long time, whether in pulpit or at the bar, or any where else, unless the interest be great, and the eloquence of the highest character, sets me to sleep. I impudently lean my head on my hand in the Court and take my nap without shame. The Lords may keep awake and mind their own affairs. *Quod supra nos nihil ad nos.* These clerks' stools are certainly as easy seats as are in Scotland, those of the Barons of Exchequer always excepted.

"*February* 22.—Ballantyne breakfasted, and is to negotiate about Malachi with Blackwood. It

* A parody on Moore's *Minstrel Boy.*

* This hint was taken up in Count Robert of Paris.

reads not amiss; and if I can get a few guineas for it I shall not be ashamed to take them; for, paying Lady Scott, I have just left between £3 and £4 for any necessary occasion, and my salary does not become due until 20th March, and the expense of removing, &c., is to be provided for:

'But shall we go mourn for that, my dear?'

The mere scarcity of money (so that actual wants are provided) is not poverty—it is the bitter draught to owe money which we cannot pay. Laboured fairly at Woodstock to-day, but principally in revising and adding to Malachi, of which an edition as a pamphlet is anxiously desired. I have lugged in my old friend Cardrona*—I hope it will not be thought unkindly. The Banks are anxious to have it published. They were lately exercising lenity towards me, and if I can benefit them, it will be an instance of the 'King's errand lying in the cadger's gate.'

"*February* 23.—Corrected two sheets of Woodstock this morning. These are not the days of idleness. The fact is, that the not seeing company gives me a command of my time which I possessed at no other period of my life, at least since I knew how to make some use of my leisure. There is a great pleasure in sitting down to write with the consciousness that nothing will occur during the day to break the spell. Detained in the Court till past three, and came home just in time to escape a terrible squall. I am a good deal jaded, and will not work till after dinner. There is a sort of drowsy vacillation of mind attends fatigue with me. I can command my pen as the school-copy recommends, but cannot equally command my thoughts, and often write one word for another. Read a little volume called the *Omen*—very well written—deep and powerful language.†

"*February* 24.—Went down to printing-office after the Court, and corrected Malachi. J. B. reproaches me with having taken much more pains in this temporary pamphlet than on works which have a greater interest on my fortunes. I have certainly bestowed enough of revision and correction. But the cases are different. In a novel or poem, I run the course alone—here I am taking up the cudgels, and may expect a drubbing in return. Besides, I do feel that this is public matter in which the country is deeply interested; and, therefore, is far more important than any thing referring to my fame or fortune alone. The pamphlet will soon be out—mean-time Malachi prospers and excites much attention. The banks have bespoke 500 copies. The country is taking the alarm; and, I think, the Ministers will not dare to press the measure. I should rejoice to see the old red lion ramp a little, and the thistle again claim its *nemo me impune*. I do believe Scotchmen will show themselves unanimous at last, where their cash is concerned. They shall not want backing. I incline to cry with Biron in Love's Labour's Lost,

'More Atés, more Atés, stir them on.'

I suppose all imaginative people feel more or less of excitation from a scene of insurrection or tumult, or of general expression of national feeling. When I was a lad, poor Davie Douglas‡ used to accuse me of being *cupidus novarum rerum*, and say that I loved the stimulus of a broil. It might be so then, and even still.

'Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.'

Whimsical enough, that when I was trying to animate Scotland against the currency bill, John Gibson brought me the deed of trust, assigning my whole estate, to be subscribed by me; so that I am turning patriot, and taking charge of the affairs of the country, on the very day I proclaim myself incapable of managing my own. What of that? Who would think of their own trumpery debts, when they are taking the support of the whole system of Scottish banking on their shoulders? Odd enough too—on this day, for the first time since the awful 17th January, we entertain a party at dinner—Lady Anna Maria Elliot, W. Clerk, John A. Murray, and Thomas Thomson—as if we gave a dinner on account of my *cessio fori*.

"*February* 26.—Our party yesterday went off very gaily; much laugh and fun, and I think I enjoyed it more from the rarity of the event—I mean from having seen society at home so seldom of late. My head aches slightly though; yet we were but a bottle of Champagne, one of Port, one of old Sherry, and two of Claret, among four gentlemen and three ladies. I have been led, from this incident, to think of taking chambers near Clerk, in Rose Court. Methinks the retired situation should suit me well. Then a man and woman would be my whole establishment. My superfluous furniture might serve, and I could ask a friend or two to dinner, as I have been accustomed to do. I shall look at the place to-day. I must set now to a second epistle of Malachi to the Athenians. If I can but get the sulky Scottish spirit set up, the devil won't turn them.

'Cock up your beaver, and cock it fu' sprush;
We'll over the Border, and give them a brush;
There's somebody there we'll teach better behaviour;
Hey, Johnnie, lad, cock up your beaver.'

"*February* 26.—Spent the morning and till dinner on Malachi's second epistle. It is difficult to steer betwixt the natural impulse of one's national feelings setting in one direction, and the prudent regard to the interests of the empire and its internal peace and quiet, recommending less vehement expression. I will endeavour to keep sight of both. But were my own interest alone concerned, d——n me but I would give it them hot! Had some valuable communications from Colin Mackenzie, which will supply my plentiful lack of facts.

"Received an anonymous satire in doggrel, which, having read the first verse and last, I committed to the flames. Peter Murray of Simprim called, and sat half-an-hour—an old friend, and who, from the peculiarity and originality of his genius, is one of the most entertaining companions I have ever known. But I must finish Malachi.

February 27.—Malachi is getting on; I must finish him to-night. I dare say some of my London friends will be displeased—Canning perhaps, for he is *engoué* of Huskisson. Can't help it. The place I looked at won't do; but I must really get some lodging, for, reason or none, Dalgliesh will not leave me, and cries and makes a scene.* Now, if I staid alone in a little set of chambers, he would serve greatly for my accommodation. There are some places of the kind in the New Buildings; but they are distant from the Court, and I cannot walk well on the pavement. It is odd enough, that just when I had made a resolution to use my coach frequently, I ceased to keep one.

"*February* 28.—Completed Malachi to-day. It is more serious than the first, and in some places perhaps too peppery. Never mind; if you would have a horse kick, make a crupper out of a whin-cow;† and I trust to see Scotland kick and fling to some purpose. Woodstock lies back for this. But *quid non pro patria?*

"*March* 1.—Malachi is in the Edinburgh Journal to-day, and reads like the work of an uncompromising right-forward Scot of the old school. Some of the cautious and pluckless instigators will be afraid of their confederate; for if a man of some energy and openness of character happens to be on the same side with these jobbers, they stand as

* The late Mr. Williamson of Cardrona, in Peeblesshire, was a strange humorist, of whom Sir Walter told many stories. The allusion here is to the anecdote of the *Leslie Andersons* in the first of Malachi's Epistles.—See Scott's *Miscellaneous Prose Works*.

† The Omen, by Mr. Galt, had just been published.—See *Miscellaneous Prose*.

‡ Lord Reston.—See *ante*, p. 10.

* Dalgliesh was Sir Walter's butler. He said he cared not how much his wages were reduced—but go he would not.

† *Whin-cow*—Anglice, a bush of furze.

much in awe of his vehemence as did the inexperienced conjurer who invoked a fiend whom he could not manage. Came home in a heavy shower with the Solicitor. I tried him on the question, but found him reserved. The future Lord Advocate must be cautious; but I can tell my good friend John Hope, that if he acts the part of a firm and resolute Scottish patriot, both his own country and England will respect him the more. Ah! Hal Dundas, there was no truckling in thy day!

"Looked out a quantity of things, to go to Abbotsford; for we are flitting, if you please. It is with a sense of pain that I leave behind a parcel of trumpery prints and little ornaments, once the pride of Lady S——'s heart, but which she sees consigned with indifference to the chance of an auction. Things that have had their day of importance with me I cannot forget, though the merest trifles. But I am glad that she, with bad health, and enough to vex her, has not the same useless mode of associating recollections with this unpleasant business. The best part of it is the necessity of leaving behind, viz. getting rid of, a set of most wretched daubs of landscapes, in great gilded frames, of which I have often been heartily ashamed. The history of them was curious. An amateur artist (a lady) happened to fall into misfortunes, upon which her landscapes, the character of which had been buoyed up far beyond their proper level, sank now beneath it, and it was low enough. One most amiable and accomplished old lady continued to encourage her pencil, and to order pictures after pictures, which she sent in presents to her friends. I suppose I have eight or ten of them, which I could not avoid accepting. There will be plenty of laughing when they come to be sold. It would be a good joke enough to cause it to be circulated that they were performances of my own in early youth, and looked on and bought up as curiosities.——Do you know why you have written all this down, Sir W.? You want to put off writing Woodstock, just as easily done as these memoranda, but which it happens your duty and your prudence recommend, and therefore you are loth to begin.

'Heigho,
I can't say no;
But this piece of task-work off I can stave, O,
For Malachi's posting into an octavo;
To correct the proof-sheets only this night I have, O,
So Conscience you've gotten as good as you gave, O,
But to-morrow a new day we'll better behave, O
So I lay down the pen, and your pardon I crave, O.'

"*March* 3.—I have a letter from Colin Mackenzie, approving Malachi,—'Cold men may say it is too strong; but from the true men of Scotland you are sure of the warmest gratitude.' I never have yet found, nor do I expect it on this occasion, that ill-will dies in debt, or what is called gratitude distresses herself by frequent payments. The one is like a ward-holding, and pays its reddendo in hard blows. The other a blanch-tenure, and is discharged for payment of a red rose, or a peppercorn. He that takes the forlorn hope in an attack, is often deserted by them that should support him, and who generally throw the blame of their own cowardice upon his rashness. We shall see this end in the same way. But I foresaw it from the beginning. The bankers will be persuaded that it is a squib which may burn their own fingers, and will curse the poor pyrotechnist that compounded it—if they do, they be d——d. Slept indifferently, and dreamed of Napoleon's last moments, of which I was reading a medical account last night, by Dr. Arnott. Horrible death—a cancer on the pylorus. I would have given something to have lain still this morning and made up for lost time. But *desidiæ valedixi*. If you once turn on your side after the hour at which you ought to rise, it is all over. Bolt up at once. Bad night last—the next is sure to be better.

'When the drum beats, make ready;
When the fife plays, march away—
To the roll-call, to the roll-call, to the roll-call,
Before the break of day.'

'Dined with Chief Commissioner: Admiral Adam, W. Clerk, Thomson, and I. The excellent old man was cheerful at intervals—at times sad, as was natural. A good blunder, he told us, occurred in the Annandale case, which was a question partly of domicile. It was proved, that leaving Lockwood, the Earl had given up his *kain* and *carriages*;* this an English counsel contended was the best of all possible proofs that the noble Earl designed an absolute change of residence, since he laid aside his *walking-stick* and his *coach*. First epistle of Malachi out of print already.

"*March* 3.—Could not get the last sheets of Malachi, Second Epistle, so they must go out to the world uncorrected—a great loss, for the last touches are always most effectual; and I expect misprints in the additional matter. We were especially obliged to have it out this morning, that it may operate as a gentle preparative for the meeting of inhabitants at two o'clock. *Vogue la galere*—we shall see if Scotsmen have any pluck left. If not, they may kill the next Percy themselves. It is ridiculous enough for me, in a state of insolvency for the present, to be battling about gold and paper currency—it is something like the humorous touch in Hogarth's Distressed Poet, where the poor starveling of the Muses is engaged, when in the abyss of poverty, in writing an Essay on Payment of the National Debt; and his wall is adorned with a plan of the mines of Peru. Nevertheless, even these fugitive attempts, from the success which they have had, and the noise they are making, serve to show the truth of the old proverb—

'When house and land are gone and spent,
Then learning is most excellent.'

On the whole, I am glad of this bruilzie, as far as I am concerned; people will not dare talk of me as an object of pity—no more 'poor-manning.' Who asks how many punds Scots the old champion had in his pocket when

'He set a bugle to his mouth,
And blew so loud and shrill,
The trees in greenwood shook thereat,
Sae loud rang every hill?'

This sounds conceited enough, yet is not far from truth.

"The meeting was very numerous, 500 to 600 at least, and unanimous, saving one Mr. Howden, who having been all his life, as I am told, in bitter opposition to Ministers, proposed on the present occasion that the whole contested measure should be trusted to their wisdom. I suppose he chose the opportunity of placing his own opinion in opposition, single opposition too, to one of a large assembly. The speaking was very moderate. Report had said that Jeffrey, J. A. Murray, and other sages of the economical school, were to unbuckle their mails, and give us their opinions. But no such great guns appeared. If they had, having the multitude on my side, I would have tried to break a lance with them. A few short, but well expressed resolutions, were adopted unanimously. These were proposed by Lord Rollo, and seconded by Sir James Fergusson, Bart. I was named one of a committee to encourage all sorts of opposition to the measure. So I have already broken through two good and wise resolutions—one, that I would not write on political controversy; another, that I would not be named in public committees. If my good resolves go this way, like *snaw aff a dyke*—the Lord help me!

"*March* 4.—Last night I had a letter from Lockhart, who, speaking of Malachi, says, 'The Ministers are sore beyond imagination at present; and some of them, I hear, have felt this new whip on the raw to some purpose.' I conclude he means Canning is offended. I can't help it, as I said before—*fiat justitia, ruat cœlum*. No cause in which I had the slightest personal interest should have made me use my pen against them, blunt and point

* *Kain*, in Scotch law, means payment in *kind—carriages*, in the same phraseology, stands for services in driving with horse and cart.

ed as it may be. But as they are about to throw this country into distress and danger, by a measure of useless and uncalled for experiment, they must hear the opinion of the Scotsman, to whom it is of no other consequence than as a general measure affecting the country at large—and more they *shall* hear. I had determined to lay down the pen. But now they shall have another of Malachi, beginning with buffoonery, and ending as seriously as I can write it. It is like a frenzy that they will agitate the upper and middling classes of society, so very friendly to them, with unnecessary and hazardous projects.

'Oh, thus it was they loved them dear,
And sought how to requite 'em,
And having no friends left but they,
They did resolve to fight them.'

The country is very high just now. England may carry the measure if she will, doubtless. But what will be the consequence of the distress ensuing. God only can foretell. Lockhart, moreover, enquires about my affairs anxiously, and asks what he is to say about them; says 'he has enquiries every day; kind, most kind all, and among the most interested and anxious, Sir William Knighton, who told me the King was quite melancholy all the evening he heard of it.' *This* I can well believe, for the King, educated as a prince, has nevertheless as true and kind a heart as any subject in his dominions. He goes on—'I do think they would give you a Baron's gown as soon as possible,' &c. I have written to him in answer, showing I have enough to carry me on, and can dedicate my literary efforts to clear my land. The preferment would suit me well, and the late Duke of Buccleuch gave me his interest for it. I dare say the young Duke would do the same, for the invaried love I have borne his house; and by and by he will have a voice potential. But there is Sir William Rae, whose prevailing claim I would never place my own in opposition to, even were it possible, by a *tour de force*, such as L. points at, to set it aside. Mean-time, I am building a barrier betwixt me and promotion.

"In the mean-while, now I am not pulled about for money, &c., methinks I am happier without my wealth than with it. Every thing is paid. I have no one anxious to *make up a sum*, and pushing for his account to be paid. Since 17th January I have not laid out a guinea, out of my own hand, save two or three in charity, and six shillings for a pocket-book. But the cash with which I set out having run short for family expenses, I drew on Blackwood, through Ballantyne, which was honoured, for £25, to account of Malachi's Letters, of which another edition of 1000 is ordered, and gave it to Lady Scott, because our removal will require that in hand. On the 20th my quarter comes in, and though I have something to pay out of it, I shall be on velvet for expense—and regular I will be. Methinks all trifling objects of expenditure seem to grow light in my eyes. That I may regain independence I must be saving. But ambition awakes as love of indulgence dies and is mortified within me. 'Dark Cuthullin will be renowned or dead.'

"*March* 5.—Something of toddy and cigar in that last quotation, I think. Yet I only smoked two, and liquified with one glass of spirits and water. I have sworn I will not blot out what I have once written here.

"*March* 6.—Finished third Malachi, which I don't much like. It respects the difficulty of finding gold to replace the paper circulation. Now this should have been considered first. The admitting that the measure may be imposed, is yielding up the question, and Malachi is like a commandant who should begin to fire from interior defences before his outworks were carried. If Ballantyne be of my own opinion I will suppress it. We are all in a bustle shifting things to Abbotsford. It is odd, but I don't feel the impatience for the country which I have usually experienced.

"*March* 7.—Detained in the Court till *three* by a hearing. Then to the committee appointed at the meeting on Friday, to look after the small note business. A pack of old *faineants*, incapable of managing such a business, and who will lose the day from mere coldness of heart. There are about a thousand names at the petition. They have added no designations—a great blunder; for *testimonia sunt ponderanda non numeranda* should never be lost sight of. They are disconcerted and helpless; just as in the business of the King's visit, when every body threw the weight on me. In another time—so disgusted was I with seeing them sitting in ineffectual helplessness, spitting on the hot iron that lay before them, and touching it with a timid finger, as if afraid of being scalded, that I might have dashed in and taken up the hammer, summoned the deacons and other heads of public bodies, and by consulting them have carried them with me. But I cannot waste my time, health, and spirits, in fighting thankless battles. I left them in a quarter of an hour, and presage, unless the country make an alarm, the cause is lost. The philosophical reviewers manage their affairs better—hold off—avoid committing themselves, but throw their *vis inertiæ* into the opposite scale, and neutralize feelings which they cannot combat. To force them to fight on disadvantageous ground is our policy. But we have more sneakers after ministerial favour than men who love their country, and who, upon a liberal scale, would serve their party. For to force the Whigs to avow an unpopular doctrine in popular assemblies, or to wrench the government of such bodies from them, would be a *coup de maitre*. But they are alike destitute of manly resolution and sound policy. D——n the whole nest of them! I have corrected the last of Malachi, and let the thing take its chance. I have made just enemies enough, and indisposed enough of friends.

"*March* 8.—At the Court, though a teind day. A foolish thing happened while the Court were engaged with the teinds. I amused myself with writing on a sheet of paper, notes on Frederick Maitland's account of the capture of Buonaparte; and I have lost these notes—shuffled in perhaps among my own papers, or those of the teind clerks. What a curious document to be found in a process of valuation. Being jaded and sleepy, I took up Le Duc de Guise on Naples. I think this, with the old Memoirs on the same subject which I have at Abbotsford, would enable me to make a pretty essay for the Quarterly. We must take up Woodstock now in good earnest. Mr. Cowan, a good and able man, is chosen trustee in Constable's affairs, with full power. From what I hear, the poor man Constable is not sensible of the nature of his own situation; for myself, I have succeeded in putting the matter perfectly out of my mind since I cannot help it, and have arrived at a flocci-pauci-nihili-pili-fication of misery, and I thank whoever invented that long word. They are removing our wine, &c. to the carts, and you will judge if our flitting is not making a noise in the world, or in the street at least.

"*March* 9.—I foresaw justly,

'When first I set this dangerous stone a-rolling,
'Twould fall upon myself.'

Sir Robert Dundas to-day put into my hands a letter of between twenty and forty pages, in angry and bitter reprobation of Malachi, full of general averments, and very untenable arguments, all written *at* me by name, but of which I am to have no copy, and which is to be circulated to other special friends, to whom it may be necessary to 'give the sign to hate.' I got it at two o'clock, and returned it with an answer four hours afterwards, in which I have studied not to be tempted into either sarcastic or harsh expressions. A quarrel it is, however, in all the forms, between my old friend and myself, and his Lordship's reprimand is to be *read out in order* to all our friends. They all know what I have said is true, but that will be nothing to the purpose if they are desired to consider it as false.

Nobody at least can plague me for interest with Lord Melville as they used to do. By the way, from the tone of his letter, I think his Lordship will give up the measure, and I shall be the peace-offering. All will agree to condemn me as too warm—*too rash*—and yet rejoice in privileges which they would not have been able to save but for a little rousing of spirit, which will not perhaps fall asleep again.—A gentleman called on the part of a Captain Rutherford, to make enquiry about the Lord Rutherfords. Not being very *cleever*, as John Frazer used to say, at these pedigree matters, referred him to my cousin Robert Rutherford. Very odd—when there is a vacant, or dormant title in a Scottish family or *name*, every body, and all connected with the clan, conceive they have *quodam modo* a right to it. Not being engrossed by any individual, it communicates part of its lustre to every individual in the tribe, as if it remained in common stock for that purpose.

"*March* 10.—I am not made entirely on the same mould of passions like other people. Many men would deeply regret a breach with so old a friend as Lord Melville, and many men would be in despair at losing the good graces of a Minister of State for Scotland, and all pretty views about what might be done for myself and my sons, especially Charles. But I think my good Lord doth ill to be angry, like the patriarch of old, and I have, in my odd *sans souciance* character, a good handful of meal from the grist of the Jolly Miller, who

'Once
Dwelled on the river Dee;
I care for nobody, no not I,
Since nobody cares for me.'

"Sandie Young* came in at breakfast-time with a Monsieur Brocque of Montpelier. Saw Sir Robert Dundas at Court. He is to send my letter to Lord Melville. Colin Mackenzie concurs in thinking Lord M. quite wrong. *He must cool in the skin he het in.*

"On coming home from the Court a good deal fatigued, I took a nap in my easy-chair, then packed my books, and committed the refuse to Jock Stevenson—

'Left not a limb on which a Dane could triumph.'

Gave Mr. Gibson my father's cabinet, which suits a man of business well. Gave Jock Stevenson the picture of my favourite dog Camp, mentioned in one of the introductions to Marmion, and a little crow-quill drawing of Melrose Abbey by Nelson, whom I used to call the Admiral, poor fellow. He had some ingenuity, and was in a moderate way a good penman and draughtsman. He left his situation of amanuensis to go into Lord Home's militia regiment, but his dissipation got the better of a strong constitution, and he fell into bad habits and poverty, and died, I believe, in the Hospital at Liverpool.—Strange enough that Henry Weber, who acted afterwards as my amanuensis for many years, had also a melancholy fate ultimately. He was a man of very superior attainments, an excellent linguist and geographer, and a remarkable antiquary. He published a collection of ancient Romances, superior, I think, to the elaborate Ritson. He also published an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, but too carelessly done to be reputable. He was a violent Jacobin, which he thought he disguised from me, while I, who cared not a fig about the poor young man's politics, used to amuse myself with teazing him. He was an excellent and affectionate creature, but unhappily was afflicted with partial insanity, especially if he used strong liquors, to which, like others with that unhappy tendency, he was occasionally addicted. In 1814, he became quite insane, and, at the risk of my life, I had to disarm him of a pair of loaded pistols, which I did by exerting the sort of authority which, I believe, gives an effectual control in such cases.† My patronage in this way has not been lucky to the parties protected. I hope poor George Huntly Gordon will escape the influence of the evil star. He has no vice, poor fellow, but his total deafness makes him helpless.

"*March* 11.—This day the Court rose after a long and laborious sederunt. I employed the remainder of the day in completing a set of notes on Captain Maitland's manuscript narrative of the reception of Napoleon Buonaparte on board the Bellerophon. It had been previously in the hands of my friend Basil Hall, who had made many excellent corrections in point of style; but he had been hypercritical in wishing (in so important a matter, where every thing depends on accuracy) this expression to be altered—for delicacy's sake, that to be corrected, for fear of giving offence—and that other to be abridged, for fear of being tedious. The plain sailor's narrative for me, written on the spot, and bearing in its minuteness the evidence of its veracity. Lord Elgin sent me, some time since, a curious account of his imprisonment in France, and the attempts which were made to draw him into some intrigue which might authorize treating him with rigour.* He called to-day and communicated some curious circumstances, on the authority of Fouché, Denon, and others, respecting Buonaparte and the Empress Maria Louisa, whom Lord Elgin had conversed with on the subject in Italy. His conduct towards her was something like that of Ethwald to Elburga, in Joanna Baillie's fine tragedy, making her postpone her high rank by birth to the authority which he had acquired by his talents.

"*March* 12.—Resumed Woodstock, and wrote my task of six pages. I cannot *gurnalize*, however, having wrought my eyes nearly out.

"*March* 13.—Wrote to the end of a chapter, and knowing no more than the man in the moon what comes next, I will put down a few of Lord Elgin's remembrances, and something may occur to me in the mean-while. * * * * *

"I have hinted in these notes that I am not entirely free from a sort of gloomy fits, with a fluttering of the heart and depression of spirits, just as if I knew not what was going to befall me. I can sometimes resist this successfully, but it is better to evade than to combat it. The hang-dog spirit may have originated in the confusion and chucking about of our old furniture, the stripping of walls of pictures, and rooms of ornaments; the leaving of a house we have so long called our home, is altogether melancholy enough. I am glad Lady S. does not mind it, and yet I wonder, too. She insists on my remaining till Wednesday, not knowing what I suffer. Mean-while, to make my recusant spirit do penance, I have set to work to clear away papers and pack them for my journey. What a strange medley of thoughts such a task produces. There lie letters which made the heart throb when received, now lifeless and uninteresting—as are perhaps their writers. Riddles which have been read—schemes which time has destroyed or brought to maturity—memorials of friendships and enmities which are now alike faded. Thus does the ring of Saturn consume itself. To-day annihilates yesterday, as the old tyrant swallowed his children, and the snake its tail. But I must say to my Journal as poor Byron did to Moore—'D—n it, Tom, don't be poetical.'

"*March* 14.—J. B. called this morning to take leave, and receive directions about proofs, &c. Talks of the uproar about Malachi; but I am tired of Malachi—the humour is off, and I have said what I wanted to say, and put the people of Scotland on their guard, as well as Ministers, if they like to be warned. They are gradually destroying what remains of nationality, and making the country *tabula rasa* for doctrines of bold innovation. Their loosening and grinding down all those peculiarities which distinguished us as Scotsmen will throw the country into a state in which it will be universally

* Alexander Young, Esq. of Harburn—a steady Whig of the old school, and a steady and highly esteemed friend of Sir Walter's.

† See ante, p. 186.

* See *Life of Buonaparte—Miscellaneous Prose Works.*

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turned to democracy, and instead of canny Saunders, they will have a very dangerous North British neighbourhood. Some lawyer expressed to Lord Elibank an opinion, that at the Union the English law should have been extended all over Scotland. 'I cannot say how that might have answered our purpose,' said Lord Patrick, who was never nonsuited for want of an answer, 'but it would scarce have suited *yours*, since by this time the *Aberdeen Advocates** would have possessed themselves of all the business in Westminster Hall.'

"What a detestable feeling this fluttering of the heart is! I know it is nothing organic, and that it is entirely nervous; but the sickening effects of it are dispiriting to a degree. Is it the body brings it on the mind, or the mind that inflicts it upon the body? I cannot tell; but it is a severe price to pay for the *Fata Morgana* with which Fancy sometimes amuses men of warm imaginations. As to body and mind, I fancy I might as well enquire whether the fiddle or fiddlestick makes the tune. In youth this complaint used to throw me into involuntary passions of causeless tears. But I will drive it away in the country by exercise. I wish I had been a mechanic: a turning-lathe or a chest of tools would have been a God-send; for thought makes the access of melancholy rather worse than better. I have it seldom, thank God, and, I believe, lightly, in comparison of others.

"It was the fiddle after all, was out of order—not the fiddlestick; the body, not the mind. I walked out; met Mrs. Skene, who took a round with me in Prince's Street. Bade Constable and Cadell farewell, and had a brisk walk home, which enables me to face the desolation here with more spirit. News from Sophia. She has had the luck to get an anti-druggist in a Dr. Gooch, who prescribes care for Johnnie instead of drugs, and a little home-brewed ale instead of wine; and, like a liberal physician, supplies the medicine he prescribes. As for myself, since I had scarce stirred to take exercise for four or five days, no wonder I had the mulligrubs. It is an awful sensation though, and would have made an enthusiast of me, had I indulged my imagination on devotional subjects. I have been always careful to place my mind in the most tranquil posture which it can assume during my private exercises of devotion.

"I have amused myself occasionally very pleasantly during the last few days by reading over Lady Morgan's novel of O'Donnel, which has some striking and beautiful passages of situation and description, and in the comic part is very rich and entertaining. I do not remember being so much pleased with it at first. There is a want of story, always fatal to a book the first reading—and it is well if it gets a chance of a second. Alas, poor novel! Also read again, and for the third time at least, Miss Austen's very finely written novel of Pride and Prejudice. That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements, and feelings, and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The Big Bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going; but the exquisite touch, which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early!

"*March* 15.—This morning I leave No. 39, Castle Street, for the last time. 'The cabin was convenient,' and habit had made it agreeable to me. I never reckoned upon a change in this particular so long as I held an office in the Court of Session. In all my former changes of residence it was from good to better; this is retrograding. I leave this house for sale, and I cease to be an Edinburgh citizen, in the sense of being a proprietor, which my father and I have been for sixty years at least. So farewell, poor 39, and may you never harbour worse people than those who now leave you. Not to desert the Lares all at once, Lady S. and Anne remain till Sunday. As for me, I go, as aforesaid, this morning.

'Ha til mi tulidh'!—"*

* The *Attorneys* of the town of Aberdeen are styled *Advocates*. This valuable privilege is said to have been bestowed at an early period by some (sportive) monarch.

* We return no more.

CHAPTER LXIX.

DOMESTIC AFFLICTIONS—CORRESPONDENCE WITH SIR ROBERT DUNDAS AND MR. CROKER ON THE SUBJECT OF MALACHI MALAGROWTHER.

Sir Walter's diary begins to be clouded with a darker species of distress than a mere loss of wealth could bring to his spirit. His darling grandson is sinking apace at Brighton. The misfortunes against which his manhood struggled with stern energy were encountered by his affectionate wife under the disadvantages of enfeebled health; and it seems but too evident that mental pain and mortification had a great share in hurrying her ailments to a fatal end.

Nevertheless, all his afflictions do not seem to have interrupted for more than a day or two his usual course of labour. With rare exceptions he appears, all through this trying period, to have finished his daily task—thirty printed pages of Woodstock, until that novel was completed; or, if he paused in it, he gave a similar space of time to some minor production; such as his paper on Galt's Omen, for Blackwood's Magazine—or his very valuable one on the life of Kemble for the Quarterly Review. And hardly had Woodstock been finished before he began the Chronicles of the Canongate. He also corresponded much as usual (notwithstanding all he says about indolence on that score) with his absent friends; and I need scarcely add that his duties as Sheriff claimed many hours every week. The picture of resolution and industry which this portion of his Journal presents is certainly as remarkable as the boldest imagination could have conceived.

Before I open the Diary again, however, I may as well place in what an ingenious contemporary novelist calls an "inter-chapter," three letters connected with the affair of Malachi Malagrowther. The first was addressed to the late Sir Robert Dundas (his colleague at the Clerk's table) on receiving through him the assurance that Lord Melville, however strong in his dissent from Malachi's views on the Currency Question, had not allowed that matter to interrupt his affectionate regard for the author. The others will speak for themselves.

To Sir Robert Dundas of Dunira, Bart., Heriot Row, Edinburgh.

"My dear Sir Robert,

"I had your letter to-day, and am much interested and affected by its contents. Whatever Lord Melville's sentiments had been towards me, I could never have lost remembrance of the very early friend with whom I carried my satchel to school, and whose regard I had always considered as one of the happiest circumstances of my life. I remain of the same opinion respecting the Letters which have occasioned so much more notice than they would have deserved, had there not been a very general feeling in this country, and among Lord Melville's best friends too, authorizing some public remonstrances of the kind from some one like myself, who had nothing to win or to lose—or rather who hazarded losing a great deal in the good opinion of friends whom he was accustomed not to value only, but to reverence. As to my friend Croker, an adventurer like myself, I would throw my hat into the ring for love, and give him a bellyful. But I do not feel there is any call on me to do so, as I could not do it without entering into particulars, which I have avoided. If I had said, which I might have done, that, in a recent case, a gentleman, holding an office under the Great Seal of Scotland, was referred to the English Crown Counsel—who gave their opinion—on which opinion the Secretary was prepared to act—that he was forcibly to be pushed from his situation, because he was, from age and malady, not adequate to its duties; and that by a process of English law, the very name of which was unknown to us, I would I think have made a strong case. But I care not to enter into statements to the public, the indirect consequence of which might be painful to some of our friends. I only venture to hope on that subject, that, suffering Malachi to go as a misrepresenter, or calumniator, or what they will, some attention may be paid that such

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grounds for calumny and misrepresentation shall not exist in future—I am contented to be the scape-goat. I remember the late Lord Melville defending, in a manner that defied refutation, the Scots laws against sedition, and I have lived to see these repealed, by what our friend Baron Hume calls 'a bill for the better encouragement of sedition and treason.' It will last my day probably; at least I shall be too old to be shot, and have only the honourable chance of being hanged for *incivisme*. The whole burgher class of Scotland are gradually preparing for radical reform—I mean the middling and respectable classes; and when a burgh reform comes, which perhaps cannot long be delayed, Ministers will not return a member for Scotland from the towns. The gentry will abide longer by sound principles; for they are needy, and desire advancement for their sons, and appointments, and so on. But this is a very hollow dependence, and those who sincerely hold ancient opinions are waxing old.

"Differing so much as we do on this head, and holding my own opinion as I would do a point of religious faith, I am sure I ought to feel the more indebted to Lord Melville's kindness and generosity for suffering our difference to be no breach in our ancient friendship. I shall always feel his sentiments in this respect as the deepest obligation I owe him; for, perhaps, there are some passages in Malachi's epistles that I ought to have moderated. But I desired to make a strong impression, and speak out, not on the currency question alone, but on the treatment of Scotland generally, the opinion which, I venture to say, has been long entertained by Lord Melville's best friends, though who that had any thing to hope or fear would have hesitated to state it? So much for my Scottish feelings—prejudices, if you will; but which were born, and will die with me. For those I entertain towards Lord Melville personally, I can only say that I have lost much in my life; but the esteem of an old friend is that I should regret the most; and I repeat I feel most sensibly the generosity and kindness so much belonging to his nature, which can forgive that which has probably been most offensive to him. People may say I have been rash and inconsiderate; they cannot say I have been either selfish or malevolent. I have shunned all the sort of popularity attending the discussion; nay, have refused to distribute the obnoxious letters in a popular form, though urged from various quarters.

"Adieu; God bless you, my dear Sir Robert. You may send the whole, or any part of this letter, if you think proper; I should not wish him to think that I was sulky about the continuance of his friendship.—I am yours most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Sir Walter Scott, Bart.
[Private and confidential.]

"Admiralty, March 16, 1826.

"My dear Scott,

"I have seen Lord Melville's and your letters to Sir R. Dundas, and the tone of both of them makes me feel very anxious to say a confidential word or two to you on the subject. I am not going to meddle with the politics, which are bad enough in printed letters, but to endeavour, in the cordiality of a sincere private friendship, to satisfy you that these differences on speculative points of public policy do not, in this region, and ought not in yours, to cause any diminution of private intercourse and regard. Lord Melville certainly felt that *his* administration of Scottish affairs was sweepingly attacked, and the rest of the government were astonished to see the one-pound note question made a kind of war-cry which might excite serious practical consequences, and, no doubt, these feelings were expressed pretty strongly, but it was in the spirit of *et tu, Brute!* The regard, the admiration, the love, which we all bear towards you, made the stroke so much more painful to those who thought it directed at them, but that feeling was local and temporary; by local I mean that the pain was felt on the spot where the blow was given—and I hope and believe it was so temporary as to be already forgotten. I can venture to assure you that it did not at all interfere with the deep sympathy with which we all heard of the losses you had sustained, nor would it, I firmly believe, have caused a moment's hesitation in doing any thing which might be useful or agreeable to you if such an opportunity had occurred. However Lord Melville may have expressed his soreness on what, it must be admitted, was an attack *on him*, as being for the last twenty years the minister for Scotland, there is not a man in the world who would be more glad to have an opportunity of giving you any mark of his regard; and from the moment we heard of the inconvenience you suffered, even down to this hour, I do not believe he has had another feeling towards you privately, than that which you might have expected from his general good-nature and his particular friendship for you.

"As to *myself*, (if I may venture to name myself to you,) I am so ignorant of Scottish affairs and so remote from Scottish interest, that you will easily believe that I felt no *personal* discomposure from Mr. Malagrowther. What little I know of Scotland *you* have taught me, and my chief feeling on this subject was *wonder* that so clever a fellow as M. M. could entertain opinions so different from those which I fancied that I had learned from you; but this has nothing to do with our *private feelings*. If I differed from M. M. as widely as I do from Mr. M'Culloch, that need not affect my *private feelings* towards Sir Walter Scott nor his towards me. He may feel the matter very warmly as a Scotchman; I can only have a very general, and therefore proportionably faint interest in the subject; but in either case you and I are not, like Sir Archy and Sir Callaghan, to quarrel about Sir Archy's great grandmother; but I find that I am dwelling too long on so insignificant a part of the subject as myself. I took up my pen with the intention of satisfying you as to the feelings of more important persons, and I shall now quit the topic altogether, with a single remark, that this letter is strictly confidential, that even Lord Melville knows nothing of it, and *à plus forte raison*, nobody else.—Believe me to be, my dear Scott, most sincerely and affectionately yours,

J. W. CROKER."

To J. W. Croker, Esq., M. P., &c. &c., Admiralty.

"Abbotsford, 19th March, 1826.

"My dear Croker,

"I received your very kind letter with the feelings it was calculated to excite, those of great affection mixed with pain, which, indeed, I had already felt and anticipated before taking the step which I knew you must all feel as awkward, coming from one who has been honoured with so much personal regard. I need not, I am sure, say, that I acted from nothing but an honest desire of serving this country. Depend upon it, that if a succession of violent and experimental changes are made from session to session, with bills to amend bills, where no want of legislation had been at all felt, Scotland will, within ten or twenty years, perhaps much sooner, read a more fearful commentary on poor Malachi's epistles than any statesman residing out of the country, and stranger to the habits and feelings which are entertained here, can possibly anticipate. My head may be low—I hope it will—before the time comes. But Scotland, completely liberalized, as she is in a fair way of being, will be the most dangerous neighbour to England that she has had since 1639. There is yet time to make a stand, for there is yet a great deal of good and genuine feeling left in the country. But if you *unscotch* us, you will find us damned mischievous Englishmen. The restless and yet laborious and constantly watchful character of the people, their desire for speculation in politics or any thing else, only restrained by some proud feelings about their own country, now become antiquated, and which late measures will tend much to destroy, will make them, under a wrong direction, the most formidable revolutionists who ever took the field of innovation. The late Lord Melville knew them well, and managed them accordingly. Our friend the present Lord Melville, with the same sagacity, has not the same advantages. His high office has kept him much in the south; and when he comes down here, it is to mingle with persons who have almost all something to hope or ask for at his hands.

"But I shall say no more on this subject so far as politics are concerned, only you will remember the story of the shield, which was on one side gold, and on the other silver, and which two knights fought about till they were mutually mortally wounded, each avowing the metal to be that which he himself witnessed. You see the shield on the golden, I, God knows, not on the silver side—but in a black, gloomy, and most ominous aspect.

"With respect to your own share in the controversy, it promised me so great an honour that I laboured under a strong temptation to throw my hat into the ring, tie my colours to the ropes, cry *Hollo there, Saint Andrew for Scotland!* and try what a good cause might do for a bad, at least an inferior, combatant. But then I must have brought forward my facts; and as these must have compromised friends individually concerned, I felt myself obliged, with regret for forfeiting some honour, rather to abstain from the contest. Besides, my dear Croker, I must say, that you sported too many and too direct personal allusions to myself, not to authorize and even demand some retaliation *dans le meme genre;* and however good-humouredly men begin this sort of 'sharp encounter of their wits,' their temper gets the better of them at last. When I was a cudgel-player, a sport at which I was once an ugly customer, we used to bar rapping over the knuckles, because it always ended in breaking heads; the matter may be remedied by baskets in a set-to with oak saplings, but I know no such defence in

the rapier and poinard game of wit. So I thought it best not to endanger the loss of an old friend for a bad jest, and sit quietly down with your odd hits, and the discredit which I must count on here for not repaying them, or trying to do so.

"As for my affairs, which you allude to so kindly, I can safely say, that no oak ever quitted its withered leaves more easily than I have done what might be considered as great wealth. I wish to God it were as easy for me to endure impending misfortunes of a very different kind. You may have heard that Lockhart's only child is very ill, and the delicate habits of the unfortunate boy have ended in a disease of the spine, which is a hopeless calamity, and in my daughter's present situation, may have consequences on her health terrible for me to anticipate. To add to this, though it needs no addition—for the poor child's voice is day and night in my ear—I have, from a consultation of physicians, a most melancholy account of my wife's health, the faithful companion of rough and smooth, weal and wo, for so many years. So if you compare me to Brutus in the harsher points of his character, you must also allow me some of his stoical fortitude—'no man bears sorrow better.'

"I cannot give you a more absolute assurance of the uninterrupted regard with which I must always think of you, and the confidence I repose in your expressions of cordiality, than by entering on details, which one reluctantly mentions, except to those who are sure to participate in them.

"As for Malachi, I am like poor Jean Gordon, the prototype of Meg Merrilees, who was ducked to death at Carlisle for being a Jacobite, and till she was smothered outright, cried out every time she got her head above water, *Charlie yet*. But I have said my say, and have no wish to give my friends a grain more offence than is consistent with the discharge of my own feelings, which, I think, would have choked me if I had not got my breath out. I had better, perhaps, have saved it to cool my porridge; I have only the prospect of being a sort of Highland Cassandra. But even Cassandra tired of her predictions, I suppose, when she had cried herself hoarse, and disturbed all her friends by howling in their ears what they were not willing to listen to.

"And so God bless you—and believe, though circumstances have greatly diminished the chance of our meeting, I have the same warm sense of your kindness as its uniform tendency has well deserved.—Yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

CHAPTER LXX.

DIARY RESUMED—ABBOTSFORD IN SOLITUDE—DEATH OF SIR A. DON—REVIEW OF THE LIFE OF KEMBLE, &c.—CONCLUSION OF WOODSTOCK—DEATH OF LADY SCOTT—CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE BEGUN—APRIL—MAY, 1826.

DIARY.

"*Abbotsford, March* 15, 9 *at night*.—The naturally unpleasant feelings which influence me in my ejectment, for such it is virtually, readily evaporated in the course of the journey, though I had no pleasanter companions than Mrs. Mackay the housekeeper and one of the maids; and I have a shyness of disposition, which looks like pride, but is not, which makes me awkward in speaking to my household domestics. With an out-of-doors' labourer or an old woman gathering sticks I can crack for ever. I was welcomed here on my arrival by the tumult great of men and dogs, all happy to see me. One of my old labourers killed by the fall of a stone working at Gattonside Bridge. Old Will Straiton, my man of wisdom and proverbs, also dead. He was entertaining from his importance and self-conceit, but really a sensible old man. When he heard of my misfortunes, he went to bed, and said he would not rise again, and kept his word. He was very infirm when I last saw him. Tom Purdie in great glory, being released from all farm duty, and destined to attend the woods and be my special assistant.

"*March* 17.—Sent off a packet to J. B.; only three pages copy—so must work hard for a day or two. I wish I could wind up my bottom handsomely (an odd but accredited phrase;) the conclusion will not be luminous; we must try to make it dashing. Have a good deal to do between hands in sorting up—hourly arrival of books. I need not have exulted so soon in having attained ease and quiet. I am robbed of both with a vengeance. A letter from Lockhart. My worst augury is verified; the medical people think poor Johnnie is losing strength; he is gone with his mother to Brighton. The bitterness of this probably impending calamity is extreme. The child was almost too good for this world; beautiful in features; and though spoiled by every one, having one of the sweetest tempers as well as the quickest intellect I ever saw; a sense of humour quite extraordinary in a child, and, owing to the general notice which was taken of him, a great deal more information than suited his hours. He was born in the eighth month, and such children are never strong—seldom long-lived. I look on this side and that, and see nothing but protracted misery, a crippled frame, and decayed constitution, occupying the attention of his parents for years, and dying at the end of that period, when their hearts were turned on him; or the poor child may die before Sophia's confinement, and that may again be a dangerous and bad affair; or she may, by increase of attention to him, injure her own health. In short, to trace into how many branches such a misery may flow is impossible. The poor dear love had so often a slow fever, that when it pressed its little lips to mine, I always foreboded to my own heart what all I fear are now aware of.

"*March* 18.—Slept indifferently, and under the influence of Queen Mab, seldom auspicious to me. Dreamed of reading the tale of the Prince of the Black Marble Islands to little Johnnie, extended on a paralytic chair, and yet telling all his pretty stories about Ha-Papa, as he calls me, and Chiefswood—and waked to think I should see the little darling no more, or see him as a thing that had better never have existed. Oh misery, misery, that the best I can wish for him is early death, with all the wretchedness to his parents that is likely to ensue! I had intended to have staid at home to-day; but Tom more wisely had resolved that I should walk, and hung about the window with his axe and my own in his hand till I turned out with him, and helped to cut some fine paling.

"*March* 19.—Lady S., the faithful and true companion of my fortunes, good and bad, for so many years, has, but with difficulty, been prevailed on to see Dr. Abercrombie, and his opinion is far from favourable. Her asthmatic complaints are fast terminating in hydropsy, as I have long suspected; yet the announcement of the truth is overwhelming. They are to stay a little longer in town, to try the effects of a new medicine. On Wednesday they propose to return hither—a new affliction, where there was enough before; yet her constitution is so good, that if she will be guided by advice, things may be yet ameliorated. God grant it! for really these misfortunes come too close upon each other.

"*March* 20.—Despatched proofs and copy this morning; and Swanston the carpenter coming in, I made a sort of busy idle day of it with altering and hanging pictures and prints, to find room for those which came from Edinburgh, and by dint of being on foot from ten to near five, put all things into apple-pie order. What strange beings we are! The serious duties I have on hand cannot divert my mind from the most melancholy thoughts; and yet the talking of these workmen, and the trifling occupation which they give me, serves to dissipate my attention. The truth is, I fancy that a body under the impulse of violent motion cannot be stopped or forced back, but may indirectly be urged into a different channel. In the evening I read and sent off my sheriff-court processes.

"*March* 21.—Perused an attack upon myself done with as much ability as truth, by no less a man than Joseph Hume, the night-work man of the House of Commons, who lives upon petty abuses, and is a very useful man by so doing. He has had the kindness to say that I am interested in keeping up the taxes; I wish I had any thing else

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to do with them than to pay them. But he is an ass, and not worth a man's thinking about. Joseph Hume indeed!—I say Joseph Hum,—and could add a Swiftian rhyme, but forbear. Busy in unpacking and repacking. I wrote five pages of Woodstock, which work begins

'To appropinque an end.'

"*March* 23.—Lady Scott arrived yesterday to dinner. She was better than I expected, but Anne, poor soul, looked very poorly, and had been much worried with the fatigue and discomfort of the last week. Lady S. takes the *digitalis*, and, as she thinks, with advantage, though the medicine makes her very sick. Yet on the whole, things are better than my gloomy apprehensions had anticipated. Took a brushing walk, but not till I had done a good task.

"*March* 24.—Sent off copy, proofs, &c., to J. B., clamorous for a motto. It is foolish to encourage people to expect such decoraments. It is like being in the habit of showing feats of strength, which you gain little praise by accomplishing, while some shame occurs in failure.

"*March* 26.—Here is a disagreeable morning, snowing and hailing, with gleams of bright sunshine between, and all the ground white, and all the air frozen. I don't like this jumbling of weather. It is ungenial, and gives chilblains. Besides, with its whiteness, and its coldness, and its discomfort, it resembles that most disagreeable of all things, a vain, cold, empty, beautiful woman, who has neither mind nor heart, but only features like a doll. I do not know what is so like this disagreeable day, when the sun is so bright, and yet so uninfluential, that

'One may gaze upon its beams,
Till he is starved with cold.'

No matter, it will serve as well as another day to finish Woodstock. Walked right to the lake, and coquetted with this disagreeable weather, whereby I catch chilblains in my fingers, and cold in my head. Fed the swans. Finished Woodstock however, *cum tota sequela* of title-page, introduction, &c., and so, as Dame Fortune says in *Quevedo*,

'Go wheel, and may the devil drive thee.'

"*March* 27.—Another bright cold day. I answered two modest requests from widow ladies. One, whom I had already assisted in some law business, on the footing of her having visited my mother, requested me to write to Mr. Peel, saying on her authority, that her second son, a youth of infinite merit and accomplishment, was fit for any situation in a public office, and that I requested he might be provided accordingly. Another widowed dame, whose claim is having read Marmion and the Lady of the Lake, besides a promise to read all my other works—Gad, it is a rash engagement!—demands that I shall either pay £200 to get her cub into some place or other, or settle him in a seminary of education. Really this is very much after the fashion of the husbandman of Miguel Turra's requests of Sancho when Governor. 'Have you any thing else to ask, honest man?' quoth Sancho. But what are the demands of an honest man to those of an honest woman, and she a widow to boot? I do believe your destitute widow, especially if she hath a charge of children, and one or two fit for patronage, is one of the most impudent animals living. Went to Galashiels, and settled the dispute about Sandie's Wall.

"*March* 28.—We have now been in solitude for some time,—myself nearly totally so, excepting at meals. One is tempted to ask himself, knocking at the door of his own heart, Do you love this extreme loneliness? I can answer conscientiously, *I do*. The love of solitude was with me a passion of early youth; when in my teens, I used to fly from company to indulge in visions and airy castles of my own, the disposal of ideal wealth, and the exercise of imaginary power. This feeling prevailed even till I was eighteen, when love and ambition awakening with other passions, threw me more into society, from which I have, however, at times withdrawn myself, and have been always even glad to do so. I have risen from a feast satiated; and unless it be one or two persons of very strong intellect, or whose spirits and good-humour amuse me, I wish neither to see the high, the low, nor the middling class of society. This is a feeling without the least tinge of misanthropy, which I always consider as a kind of blasphemy of a shocking description. If God bears with the very worst of us, we may surely endure each other. If thrown into society, I always have, and always will endeavour to bring pleasure with me, at least to show willingness to please. But for all this 'I had rather live alone,' and I wish my appointment, so convenient otherwise, did not require my going to Edinburgh. But this must be, and in my little lodging I shall be lonely enough. Reading at intervals a novel called Granby, one of the class that aspire to describe the actual current of society, whose colours are so evanescent that it is difficult to fix them on the canvass. It is well written, but overlaboured—too much attempt to put the reader exactly up to the thoughts and sentiments of the parties. The women do this better; Edgeworth, Ferrier, Austen, have all given portraits of real society, far superior to any thing man, vain man, has produced of the like nature.

"*March* 29.—Worked in the morning. Walked from one till half-past four. A fine flashy disagreeable day, snow-clouds sweeping past among sunshine, driving down the valley, and whitening the country behind them. Mr. Gibson came suddenly in after dinner. Brought very indifferent news from Constable's house. It is not now hoped that they will pay above three or four shillings in the pound. Robinson supposed not to be much better. Mr. G. goes to London immediately, to sell Woodstock. This work may fail perhaps, though better than some of its predecessors. If so, we must try some new manner. I think I could catch the dogs yet. A beautiful and perfect lunar rainbow to-night.

"*April* 1.—*Ex uno die disce omnes*.—Rose at seven or sooner, studied and wrote till breakfast, with Anne, about a quarter before ten. Lady Scott seldom able to rise till twelve or one. Then I write or study again till one. At that hour to-day I drove to Huntly-Burn, and walked home by one of the hundred and one pleasing paths which I have made through the woods I have planted—now chatting with Tom Purdie, who carries my plaid and speaks when he pleases, telling long stories of hits and misses in shooting twenty years back—sometimes chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy—and sometimes attending to the humours of two curious little terriers of the Dandie Dinmont breed, together with a noble wolf-hound puppy which Glengarry has given me to replace Maida. This brings me down to the very moment I do tell—the rest is prophetic. I shall feel drowsy when this book is locked, and perhaps sleep until Dalgliesh brings the dinner summons. Then I shall have a chat with Lady S. and Anne; some broth or soup, a slice of plain meat—and man's chief business, in Dr. Johnson's estimation, is briefly despatched. Half an hour with my family, and half an hour's coquetting with a cigar, a tumbler of weak whisky and water, and a novel perhaps, lead on to tea, which sometimes consumes another half hour of chat; then write and read in my own room till ten o'clock at night; a little bread, and then a glass of porter, and to bed; and this, very rarely varied by a visit from some one, is the tenor of my daily life—and a very pleasant one indeed, were it not for apprehensions about Lady S. and poor Johnnie Hugh. The former will, I think, do well; for the latter—I fear- I fear——

"*April* 2.—I am in a wayward humour this morning. I received yesterday the last proof-sheets of Woodstock, and I ought to correct them. Now, this *ought* sounds as like as possible to *must*, and

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must I cannot abide. I would go to Prester John's country of free good-will, sooner than I would *must* it to Edinburgh. Yet this is all folly, and silly folly too; and so *must* shall be for once obeyed *after* I have thus written myself out of my aversion to its peremptory sound.—Corrected the said proofs till twelve o'clock—when I think I will treat resolution, not to a dram, as the fellow said after he had passed the gin-shop, but to a walk, the rather that my eyesight is somewhat uncertain and wavering.

"*April* 3.—I have the extraordinary and gratifying news that Woodstock is sold for £8228; all ready money—a matchless sale for less than three months' work.* If Napoleon does as well, or near it, it will put the trust affairs in high flourish. Four or five years of leisure and industry would, with such success, amply replace my losses. I have a curious fancy; I will go set two or three acorns, and judge by their success in growing whether I shall succeed in clearing my way or not. I have a little toothach keeps me from working much to-day, besides I sent off, per Blucher, copy for Napoleon, as well as the d———d proofs. A blank forenoon!—But how could I help it, Madam Duty? I was not lazy; on my soul I was not. I did not cry for half holiday for the sale of Woodstock. But in came Colonel Ferguson with Mrs. Stewart of Blackhill, or hall, or some thing, and I must show her the garden, pictures, &c. This lasts till one; and just as they are at their lunch, and about to go off, guard is relieved by the Laird and Lady Harden, and Miss Eliza Scott—and my dear Chief, whom I love very much, proving a little obsidional or so, remains till three. That same crown, composed of the grass which grew on the walls of besieged places, should be offered to visiters who stay above an hour in any eident† person's house. Wrote letters this evening.

"*April* 4.—Wrote two pages in the morning. Then went to Ashestiel with Colonel Ferguson. Found my cousin Russell settled kindly to his gardening, &c. He seems to have brought home with him the enviable talent of being interested and happy in his own place. Ashestiel looks waste I think at this time of the year, but is a beautiful place in summer, where I passed some happy years. Did I ever pass unhappy years any where? None that I remember, save those at the High School, which I thoroughly detested on account of the confinement. I disliked serving in my father's office, too, from the same hatred to restraint. In other respects, I have had unhappy days, unhappy weeks—even, on one or two occasions, unhappy months; but Fortune's finger has never been able to play a dirge on me for a quarter of a year together. I am sorry to see the Peel-wood and other natural coppice decaying and abridged about Ashestiel—

> 'The horrid plough has razed the green,
> Where once my children play'd;
> The axe has fell'd the hawthorn screen,
> The schoolboy's summer shade.'‡

"There was a very romantic pasturage, called the Cow-park, which I was particularly attached to, from its wild and sequestered character. Having been part of an old wood which had been cut down, it was full of copse—hazel, and oak, and all sorts of young trees, irregularly scattered over the fine pasturage, and affording a hundred intricacies so delicious to the eye and the imagination. But some misjudging friend had cut down and cleared away without mercy, and divided the varied and sylvan scene (which *was* divided by a little rivulet) into the two most formal things in the world—a *thriving* plantation, many-angled, as usual—and a park *laid down in grass*, wanting, therefore, the rich graminivorous variety which Nature gives her carpet, and showing instead a braid of six days' growth—lean and hungry growth too—of rye-grass and clover. As for the rill, it stagnates in a deep square ditch, which silences its prattle, and restrains its meanders with a witness. The original scene was, of course, imprinted still deeper on Russell's mind than mine, and I was glad to see he was intensely sorry for the change.

"*April* 5.—Rose late in the morning to give the cold and toothach time to make themselves scarce, which they have obligingly done. Yesterday every tooth on the right side of my head was absolutely waltzing. I would have drawn by the half-dozen, but country dentists are not to be lippened* to. To-day all is quietness, but a little stiffness and swelling in the jaw. Worked a fair task; dined, and read Clapperton's journey and Denman's into Bornou. Very entertaining, and less botheration about mineralogy, botany, and so forth, than usual. Pity Africa picks off so many brave men, however. Work again in the evening.

"*April* 6.—Wrote in the morning. Went at one to Huntly-Burn, where I had the great pleasure to hear, through a letter from Sir Adam, that Sophia was in health, and Johnnie gaining strength. It is a fine exchange from deep and aching uncertainty on so interesting a subject to the little spitfire feeling of 'well, but they might have taken the trouble to write;' but so wretched a correspondent as myself has not much to say, so I will but grumble sufficiently to maintain the patriarchal dignity. I returned in time to work; and to have a shoal of things from J. B. Among others, a letter from an Irish lady, who, for the *beaux yeux* which I shall never look upon, desires I may forthwith send her all the Waverley Novels, which she assures me will be an *era* in her life. She may find out some other epocha.

"*April* 7.—Made out my morning's task—at one drove to Chiefswood, and walked home by the Rhymer's Glen, Mar's Lee, and Haxell-Cleugh. Took me three hours. The heath gets somewhat heavier for me every year—but never mind, I like it altogether as well as the day I could tread it best. The plantations are getting all into green leaf, especially the larches, if theirs may be called leaves, which are only a sort of hair. As I returned, there was, in the phraseology of that most precise of prigs in a white collarless coat and chapeau bras, Mister Commissary ******, 'a rather dense inspissation of rain.' Diel care.

> 'Lord, who would live turmoiled in the Court,
> And may enjoy such quiet walks as these?'†

Yet misfortune comes our way too. Poor Laidlaw lost a fine prattling child of five years old yesterday. It is odd enough—John, the Kentish Esquire, has just made the ejaculation which I adopted in the last page, when he kills Cade, and posts away up to Court to get the price set upon his head. Here is a letter come from Lockhart, full of Court news, and all sorts of news. He erroneously supposes that I think of applying to Ministers about Charles. I would not make such an application for millions; I think if I were to ask patronage it would not be through them, for some time at least, and I might have better access.‡

"*April* 8.—We expect a *raid* of folks to visit us this morning, whom we must have *dined* before our misfortunes. Save time, wine, and money, these misfortunes—and so far are convenient things. Besides, there is a dignity about them when they come only like the gout in its mildest shape, to authorize diet and retirement, the night-gown and the velvet shoe; when the one comes to chalk-stones, and you go to prison through the other, it is the devil. Or compare the effects of Sieur Gout and absolute poverty upon the stomach—the necessity of a bottle of laudanum in the one case, the want of a morsel of meat in the other. Laidlaw's infant which died on Wednesday, is buried to-day. The people coming to visit prevent my going, and I am glad of

* The reader will understand that, the Novel being sold for the behoof of James Ballantyne and Company's creditors, this sum includes the cost of printing the first edition, as well as paper.

† *Eident*, i. e. eagerly diligent.

‡ These lines are slightly altered from Logan.

* *Lippened*—i. e. relied upon.

† 2d *King Henry VI.* Act IV. Scene 10.

‡ In a letter of the same day he says—"My interest, as you might have known, lies Windsor-way."

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it. I hate funerals—always did. There is such a mixture of mummery with real grief—the actual mourner perhaps heart-broken, and all the rest making solemn faces, and whispering observations on the weather and public news, and here and there a greedy fellow enjoying the cake and wine. To me it is a farce of most tragical mirth, and I am not sorry, (like Provost Coulter,*) but glad that I shall not see my own. This is a most unfilial tendency of mine, for my father absolutely loved a funeral; and as he was a man of a fine presence, and looked the mourner well, he was asked to every interment of distinction. He seemed to preserve the list of a whole bead-roll of cousins, merely for the pleasure of being at their funerals, which he was often asked to superintend, and I suspect had sometimes to pay for. He carried me with him as often as he could to these mortuary ceremonies; but feeling I was not, like him, either useful or ornamental, I escaped as often as I could. I saw the poor child's funeral from a distance. Ah, that *distance!* What a magician for conjuring up scenes of joy or sorrow, smoothing all asperities, reconciling all incongruities, veiling all absurdities, softening every coarseness, doubling every effect by the influence of the imagination. A Scottish wedding should be seen at a distance—the gay band of dancers just distinguished amid the elderly group of the spectators—the glass held high, and the distant cheers as it is swallowed, should be only a sketch, not a finished Dutch picture, when it becomes brutal and boorish. Scotch psalmody, too, should be heard from a distance. The grunt and the snivel, and the whine and the scream, should all be blended in that deep and distant sound, which, rising and falling like the Eolian harp, may have some title to be called the praise of one's Maker. Even so the distant funeral—the few mourners on horseback, with their plaids wrapped around them—the father heading the procession as they enter the river, and pointing out the ford by which his darling is to be carried on the last long road—none of the subordinate figures in discord with the general tone of the incident—but seeming just accessions, and no more—this *is* affecting.

"*April* 12.—I have finished my task this morning at *half-past eleven*—easily and early—and, I think, not amiss. I hope J. B. will make some great points of admiration!!! otherwise I shall be disappointed. If this work answers—if it *but* answers, it must set us on our legs; I am sure worse trumpery of mine has had a great run. I remember with what great difficulty I was brought to think myself something better than common, and now I will not in mere faintness of heart give up good hopes.

"*April* 13.—On my return from my walk yesterday I learnt with great concern the death of my old friend, Sir Alexander Don. He cannot have been above six or seven-and-forty. Without being much together, we had, considering our different habits, lived in much friendship, and I sincerely regret his death. His habits were those of a gay man, much connected with the turf; but he possessed strong natural parts, and in particular few men could speak better in public when he chose. He had tact, with power of sarcasm, and that indescribable something which marks the gentleman. His manners in society were extremely pleasing, and as he had a taste for literature and the fine arts, there were few more agreeable companions, besides being a highly-spirited, steady, and honourable man. His indolence prevented his turning these good parts towards acquiring the distinction he might have attained. He was among the *detenus* whom Buonaparte's iniquitous commands confined so long in France; and coming into possession of a large estate in right of his mother, the heiress of the Glencairn family, he had the means of being very expensive, and probably then acquired those gay habits which rendered him averse to serious business. Being our member for Roxburghshire, his death will make a stir amongst us. I prophesy Harden *will be here*, to talk about starting his son Henry. Accordingly the Laird and Lady called. I exhorted him to write instantly. There can be no objection to Henry Scott for birth, fortune, or political principles; and I do not see where we could get a better representative.

"*April* 15.—Received last night letters from Sir John Scott Douglas, and Sir William Elliot, of Stobbs, both canvassing for the county. Young Harry's the lad for me. Poor Don died of a disease in the heart; the body was opened, which was very right. Odd enough, too, to have a man, probably a friend two days before, slashing at one's heart as it were a bullock's. I had a letter yesterday from John Gibson. The House of Longman and Co. guarantee the sale of Woodstock. Also I made up what was due of my task both for 13th and 14th. So hey for a Swiftianism—

I loll in my chair,
And around me I stare,
With a critical air,
Like a calf at a fair;
And, say I, Mrs. Duty,
Good morrow to your beauty,
I kiss your sweet shoe-tie,
And hope I can suit ye.

"Fair words butter no parsnips, says Duty; don't keep talking, then, but go to your work again. Here is a day's task before you—the siege of Toulon. Call you that a task? d—me, I'll write it as fast as Boney carried it on.

"*April* 16.—I am now far a-head with Nap. Lady Scott seems to make no way. A sad prospect! In the evening a despatch from Lord Melville, written with all the familiarity of former times. I am very glad of it.

"*Jedburgh, April* 17.—Came over to Jedburgh this morning, to breakfast with my good old friend Mr. Shortreed, and had my usual warm reception. Lord Gillies held the Circuit Court, and there was no criminal trial for any offence whatever. I have attended these circuits with tolerable regularity since 1792, and though there is seldom much of importance to be done, yet I never remember before the Porteous roll being quite blank. The judge was presented with a pair of white gloves, in consideration of its being a maiden circuit.

"Received £100 from John Lockhart, for a review of Pepys; but this is by far too much; £50 is plenty. Still 'I must *impeticos the gratility*'* for the present. Wrote a great many letters. Dined with the judge, where I met the disappointed candidate, Sir J. S. D., who took my excuse like a gentleman.

"*April* 18.—This morning I go down to Kelso to poor Don's funeral. It is, I suppose, forty years since I saw him first. I was staying at Sydenham, a lad of fourteen, or by'r Lady some sixteen; and he, a boy of six or seven, was brought to visit me on a pony, a groom holding the leading rein; and now I, an old grey man, am going to lay him in his grave. Sad work. The very road I go, is a road of grave recollections.

"*Abbotsford, April* 19.—Returned last night from the house of death and mourning to my own, now the habitation of sickness and anxious apprehension. The result cannot yet be judged. Two melancholy things last night. I left my pallet in our family apartment, to make way for a female attendant, and removed to a dressing-room adjoining, when to return, or whether ever, God only can tell. Also my servant cut my hair, which used to be poor Charlotte's personal task. I hope she will not observe it. The funeral yesterday was very mournful; about fifty persons present, and all seemed affected. The domestics in particular, were very much so. Sir Alexander was a kind, though an exact master. It was melancholy to see those apartments, where I have so often seen him play the graceful and kind landlord, filled with those who were to carry him to his long home. There was very little talk of the election, at least till the funeral was over.

* See *ante*, p. 147.

* *Twelfth Night*, Act II. Sc. 3.

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"*April* 20.—Another death: Thomas Riddell, younger, of Camiston, serjeant-major of the Edinburgh Troop in the sunny days of our yeomanry, and a very good fellow. The day was so tempting that I went out with Tom Purdie to cut some trees, the rather that my task was very well advanced. He led me into the wood, as the blind king of Bohemia was led by his four knights into the thick of the battle at Agincourt or Cressy, and then, like the old king, 'I struck good strokes more than one,' which is manly exercise.

"*April* 24.—Good news from Brighton. Sophia is confined, and both she and her baby are doing well, and the child's name is announced to be Walter, a favourite name in our family, and I trust of no bad omen. Yet it is no charm for life. Of my father's family, I was the second Walter, if not the third. I am glad the name came my way, for it was borne by my father, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather; also by the grandsire of that last named venerable person, who was the first laird of Raeburn. Hurst and Robinson, the Yorkshire tykes, have failed, after all their swaggering. But if Woodstock and Napoleon take with the public, I shall care but little about their insolvency; and if they do not, I don't think their solvency would have lasted long. Constable is sorely broken down.

'Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.'

His conduct has not been what I deserved at his hand, but I believe that, walking blindfold himself, he misled me without *malice prepense*. It is best to think so at least, until the contrary be demonstrated. To nourish angry passions against a man whom I really liked, would be to lay a blister on my own heart.

"*April* 27.—This is one of those abominable April mornings which deserve the name of *Sans Culottides*, as being cold, beggarly, coarse, savage, and intrusive. The earth lies an inch deep with snow, to the confusion of the worshippers of Flora. It is as imprudent to attach yourself to flowers in Scotland as to a caged bird; the cat, sooner or later, snaps up the one, and these *Sans Culottides* annihilate the other. It was but yesterday I was admiring the glorious flourish of the pears and apricots, and now hath come the 'killing frost.' But let it freeze without, we are comfortable within. Lady Scott continues better, and, we may hope, has got the turn of her disease.

"*April* 28.—Beautiful morning, but ice as thick as pasteboard, too surely showing that the night has made good yesterday's threat. Dalgliesh, with his most melancholy face, conveys the most doleful tidings from Bogie. But servants are fond of the woful, it gives such consequence to the person who communicates bad news. Wrote two letters, and read till twelve, and now for a stout walk among the plantations till four. Found Lady Scott obviously better, I think, than I had left her in the morning. In walking I am like a spavined horse, and heat as I get on. The flourishing plantations around me are a great argument for me to labour hard. 'Barbarus has segetes?' I will write my finger-ends off first.

"*April* 29.—I was always afraid, privately, that Woodstock would not stand the test. In that case my fate would have been that of the unfortunate minstrel and trumpeter Maclean at the battle of Sheriffmuir—

'Through misfortune he happened to fa', man,
But saving his neck
His trumpet did break,
And came off without music at a', man.'

J. B. corroborated my doubts by his raven-like croaking and criticizing; but the good fellow writes me this morning that he is written down an ass, and that the approbation is unanimous. It is but Edinburgh, to be sure; but Edinburgh has always been a harder critic than London. It is a great mercy, and gives encouragement for future exertion. Having written two leaves this morning, I think I will turn out to my walk, though two hours earlier than usual. Egad, I could not persuade myself that it was such bad *Balaam*,* after all.

"*May* 2.—Yesterday was a splendid May-day; to-day seems inclined to be *soft*, as we call it; but *tant mieux*. Yesterday had a twang of frost in it. I must get to work and finish Boaden's Life of Kemble, and Kelly's Reminiscences, for the Quarterly.† I wrote and read for three hours, and then walked, the day being soft and delightful; but, alas, all my walks are lonely, from the absence of my poor companion. She does not suffer, thank God, but strength must fail at last. Since Sunday there has been a gradual change—very gradual—but, alas, to the worse. My hopes are almost gone. But I am determined to stand this grief as I have done others.

"*May* 4.—On visiting Lady Scott's sick-room this morning I found her suffering, and I doubt if she knew me. Yet, after breakfast, she seemed serene and composed. The worst is, she will not speak out about the symptoms under which she labours. Sad, sad work; I am under the most melancholy apprehension, for what constitution can hold out under these continued and wasting attacks. My niece, Anne Scott, a prudent, sensible, and kind young woman, arrived to-day, having come down to assist us in our distress from so far as Cheltenham. This is a great consolation.—Henry Scott carries the county without opposition.

"*May* 6.—The same scene of hopeless (almost) and unavailing anxiety. Still welcoming me with a smile, and asserting she is better. I fear the disease is too deeply entwined with the principles of life. Still labouring at this Review, without heart or spirits to finish it. I am a tolerable Stoic, but preach to myself in vain.

'Are these things then necessities?
Then let us meet them like necessities.'‡

"*May* 7.—Hammered on at the Review till my backbone ached. But I believe it was a nervous affection, for a walk cured it. Sir Adam and the Colonel dined here. So I spent the evening as pleasantly as I well could, considering I am so soon to go like a stranger to the town of which I have been so long a citizen, and leave my wife lingering, without prospect of recovery, under the charge of two poor girls. *Talia cogit dura necessitas.*

"*May* 8.—I went over to the election at Jedburgh. There was a numerous meeting; the Whigs, who did not bring ten men to the meeting, of course took the whole matter under their patronage, which was much of a piece with the Blue Bottle drawing the carriage. To see the difference of modern times! We had a good dinner, and excellent wine; and I had ordered my carriage at half-past seven, almost ashamed to start so soon. Every body dispersed at so early an hour, however, that when Henry had left the chair, there was no carriage for me, and Peter proved his accuracy by showing me it was but a quarter past seven. In the days that I remember they would have kept it up till day-light; nor do I think poor Don would have left the chair before midnight. Well, there is a medium. Without being a veteran Vice, a grey Iniquity, like Falstaff, I think an occassional jolly-bout, if not carried to excess, improved society; men were put into good humour; when the good wine did its good office, the jest, the song, the speech, had double effect; men were happy for the night, and better friends ever after, because they had been so.

"*May* 11.—'Der Abschied's tag est da,
Schwer liegt es auf den herzen—schwer.'§

* Hogg's *Jacobite Relics*, Vol. ii., p. 5.

* *Balaam* is the cant name in a newspaper office for Asinine paragraphs, about monstrous productions of nature and the like, kept standing in type to be used whenever the real news of the day leave an awkward space that must be filled up somehow.

† See *Miscellaneous Prose Works*.

‡ 2d *King Henry VI.*, Act III. Scene 1.

§ This is the opening couplet of a German trooper's song, alluded to, *ante*—p. 67. The literal translation is—

The day of departure is come,
Heavy lies it on the hearts—heavy

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"Charlotte was unable to take leave of me, being in a sound sleep, after a very indifferent night. Perhaps it was as well. Emotion might have hurt her; and nothing I could have expressed would have been worth the risk. I have foreseen, for two years and more, that this menaced event could not be far distant. I have seen plainly, within the last two months, that recovery was hopeless. And yet to part with the companion of twenty-nine years when so very ill—that I did not, could not foresee. It withers my heart to think of it, and to recollect that I can hardly hope again to seek confidence and counsel from that ear to which all might be safely confided. But in her present lethargic state, what would my attendance have availed—and Anne has promised close and constant intelligence. I must dine with James Ballantyne to-day *en famille*. I cannot help it; but would rather be at home and alone. However, I can go out too. I will not yield to the barren sense of hopelessness which struggles to invade me.

"*Edinburgh—Mrs. Brown's lodgings, North St. David Street—May* 12.—I passed a pleasant day with kind J. B., which was a great relief from the black dog, which would have worried me at home. He was quite alone.

"Well, here I am in Arden. And I may say with Touchstone, 'When I was at home I was in a better place;'* I must, when there is occasion, draw to my own Bailie Nicol Jarvie's consolation—'One cannot carry the comforts of the Saut-Market about with one.' Were I at ease in mind, I think the body is very well cared for. Only one other lodger in the house, a Mr. Shandy—a clergyman; and, despite his name, said to be a quiet one.

"*May* 13.—The projected measure against the Scottish bank-notes has been abandoned. Malachi might clap his wings upon this, but, alas! domestic anxiety has cut his comb.—I think very lightly in general of praise; it costs men nothing, and is usually only lip-salve. Some praise, however, and from some people, does at once delight and strengthen the mind; and I insert in this place the quotation with which Ld. C. Baron Shepherd concluded a letter concerning me to the Chief Commissioner: —"Magna etiam illa laus, et admirabilis videri solet, tulisse casus sapienter adversos, non fractum esse fortunâ, retinuisse in rebus asperis dignitatem."† I record these words, not as meriting the high praise they imply, but to remind me that such an opinion being partially entertained of me by a man of a character so eminent, it becomes me to make my conduct approach as much as possible to the standard at which he rates it.—As I must pay some cash in London, I have borrowed from Mr. Alexander Ballantyne the sum of £500. If God should call me before next November, when my note falls due, I request my son Walter will, in reverence to my memory, see that Mr. Alexander Ballantyne does not suffer for having obliged me in a sort of exigency—he cannot afford it, and God has given my son the means to repay him.

"*May* 14.—A fair good morrow to you Mr. Sun, who are shining so brightly on these dull walls. Methinks you look as if you were looking as bright on the banks of the Tweed; but look where you will, Sir Sun, you look upon sorrow and suffering. —Hogg was here yesterday in danger, from having obtained an accommodation of £100 from James Ballantyne, which he is now obliged to repay. I am unable to help the poor fellow, being obliged to borrow myself. But I long ago remonstrated against the transaction at all, and gave him £50 out of my pocket to avoid granting the accommodation, but it did no good.

"*May* 15.—Received the melancholy intelligence that all is over at Abbotsford.

"*Abbotsford, May* 16.—She died at nine in the morning, after being very ill for two days—easy at last. I arrived here late last night. Anne is worn out, and has had hysterics, which returned on my arrival. Her broken accents were like those of a child, the language as well as the tones broken, but in the most gentle voice of submission. 'Poor mamma—never return again—gone for ever—a better place.' Then when she came to herself, she spoke with sense, freedom, and strength of mind, till her weakness returned. It would have been inexpressibly moving to me as a stranger—what was it then to the father and the husband? For myself, I scarce know how I feel, sometimes as firm as the Bass Rock, sometimes as weak as the water that breaks on it. I am as alert at thinking and deciding as I ever was in my life. Yet, when I contrast what this place now is, with what it has been not long since, I think my heart will break. Lonely, aged, deprived of my family—all but poor Anne; an impoverished, an embarrassed man, deprived of the sharer of my thoughts and counsels, who could always talk down my sense of the calamitous apprehensions which break the heart that must bear them alone.—Even her foibles were of service to me, by giving me things to think of beyond my weary self-reflections.

"I have seen her. The figure I beheld is, and is not my Charlotte—my thirty years' companion. There is the same symmetry of form, though those limbs are rigid which were once so gracefully elastic —but that yellow masque, with pinched features, which seems to mock life rather than emulate it, can it be the face that was once so full of lively expression? I will not look on it again. Anne thinks her little changed, because the latest idea she had formed of her mother is as she appeared under circumstances of extreme pain. Mine go back to a period of comparative ease. If I write long in this way, I shall write down my resolution, which I should rather write up, if I could. I wonder how I shall do with the large portion of thoughts which were hers for thirty years. I suspect they will be hers yet for a long time at least. But I will not blaze cambric and crape in the public eye, like a disconsolate widower, that most affected of all characters.

"*May* 17.—Last night Anne, after conversing with apparent ease, dropped suddenly down as she rose from the supper-table, and lay six or seven minutes, as if dead. Clarkson, however, has no fear of these affections.

"*May* 18.—Another day, and a bright one to the external world, again opens on us; the air soft, and the flowers smiling, and the leaves glittering. They cannot refresh her to whom mild weather was a natural enjoyment. Cerements of lead and of wood already hold her; cold earth must have her soon. But it is not my Charlotte, it is not the bride of my youth, the mother of my children, that will be laid among the ruins of Dryburgh, which we have so often visited in gaiety and pastime. No, no. She is sentient and conscious of my emotions somewhere—somehow; *where* we cannot tell; *how* we cannot tell; yet would I not at this moment renounce the mysterious yet certain hope that I shall see her in a better world, for all that this world can give me. The necessity of this separation, that necessity which rendered it even a relief, that and patience must be my comfort. I do not experience those paroxysms of grief which others do on the same occasion. I can exert myself, and speak even cheerfully with the poor girls. But alone, or if any thing touches me, the choking sensation. I have been to her room; there was no voice in it—no stirring; the pressure of the coffin was visible on the bed, but it had been removed elsewhere; all was neat, as she loved it but all was calm—calm as death. I remembered the last sight of her; she raised herself in bed, and tried to turn her eyes after, me, and said, with a sort of smile, 'You all have such melancholy faces.' These were the last words I ever heard her utter, and I hurried away, for she did not seem quite conscious of what she said—when I returned, immediately departing, she was in a deep sleep. It is deeper now. This was but seven days since.

* *As You Like it*, Act I. Scene 4. † Cicero, *de Orat.* ii. 346.

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"They are arranging the chamber of death; that which was long the apartment of connubial happiness, and of whose arrangements (better than in richer houses) she was so proud. They are treading fast and thick. For weeks you could have heard a foot-fall. Oh, my God!

"*May* 19.—Anne, poor love, is ill with her exertions and agitation—cannot walk—and is still hysterical, though less so. I ordered flesh-brush and tepid bath, which I think will bring her about. We speak freely of her whom we have lost, and mix her name with our ordinary conversation. This is the rule of nature. All primitive people speak of their dead, and I think virtuously and wisely. The idea of blotting the names of those who are gone out of the language and familiar discourse of those to whom they were dearest, is one of the rules of ultra-civilisation which, in so many instances, strangle natural feeling by way of avoiding a painful sensation. The Highlanders speak of their dead children as freely as of their living members; how poor Colin or Robert would have acted in such or such a situation. It is a generous and manly tone of feeling; and so far as it may be adopted without affectation or contradicting the general habits of society, I reckon on observing it.

"*May* 20.—To-night, I trust, will bring Charles or Lockhart, or both; at least I must hear from them. A letter from Violet Lockhart gave us the painful intelligence that she had not mentioned to Sophia the dangerous state in which her mother was. Most kindly meant, but certainly not so well judged. I have always thought that truth, even when painful, is a great duty on such occasions, and it is seldom that concealment is justifiable. Sophia's baby was christened on Sunday 14th May, at Brighton, by the name of Walter Scott. May God give him life and health to wear it with credit to himself and those belonging to him. Melancholy to think that the next morning after this ceremony deprived him of so near a relation!

"*May* 21.—Our sad preparations for to-morrow continue. A letter from Lockhart; doubtful if Sophia's health will let him be here. If things permit he comes to-night. From Charles not a word; but I think I may expect him. I wish to-morrow were over; not that I fear it, for my nerves are pretty good, but it will be a day of many recollections.

"*May* 22.—Charles arrived last night, much affected, of course. Anne had a return of her fainting-fits on seeing him, and again upon seeing Mr. Ramsay,* the gentleman who performs the service. I heard him do so with the utmost propriety for my late friend, Lady Alvanley,† the arrangement of whose funeral devolved upon me. How little I could guess when, where, and with respect to whom I should next hear those solemn words. Well, I am not apt to shrink from that which is my duty, merely because it is painful; but I wish this day over. A kind of cloud of stupidity hangs about me, as if all were unreal that men seem to be doing and talking about——

"*May* 23.—About an hour before the mournful ceremony of yesterday, Walter arrived, having travelled express from Ireland on receiving the news. He was much affected, poor fellow, and no wonder. Poor Charlotte nursed him, and perhaps for that reason she was over partial to him. The whole scene floats as a sort of dream before me—the beautiful day, the grey ruins covered and hidden among clouds of foliage and flourish, where the grave, even in the lap of beauty, lay lurking and gaped for its prey. Then the grave looks, the hasty important bustle of men with spades and mattocks—the train of carriages—the coffin containing the creature that was so long the dearest on earth to me, and whom I was to consign to the very spot which in pleasure-parties we so frequently visited. It seems still as if this could not be really so. But it is so—and duty to God and to my children must teach me patience. Poor Anne has had longer fits since our arrival from Dryburg than before, but yesterday was the crisis. She desired to hear prayers read by Mr. Ramsay, who performed the duty in the most solemn manner. But her strength could not carry it through. She fainted before the service was concluded.

"*May* 24.—Slept wretchedly, or rather waked wretchedly all night, and was very sick and bilious in consequence, and scarce able to hold up my head with pain. A walk, however, with my sons did me a deal of good; indeed their society is the greatest support the world can afford me. Their ideas of every thing are so just and honourable, kind towards their sisters, and affectionate to me, that I must be grateful to God for sparing them to me, and continue to battle with the world for their sakes, if not for my own.

"*May* 25.—I had sound sleep to-night, and waked with little or nothing of the strange dreamy feeling, which had made me for some days feel like one bewildered in a country where mist or snow has disguised those features of the landscape which are best known to him.—This evening Walter left us, being anxious to return to his wife as well as to his regiment.

"*May* 26.—A rough morning makes me think of St. George's Channel, which Walter must cross to-night or to-morrow to get to Athlone. The wind is almost due east, however, and the Channel at the narrowest point between Port-Patrick and Donaghadee. His absence is a great blank in our circle, especially I think to his sister Anne, to whom he shows invariably much kindness. But indeed they do so without exception each towards the other; and in weal or woe, have shown themselves a family of love. I will go to town on Monday and resume my labours. Being now of a grave nature, they cannot go against the general temper of my feelings, and in other respects the exertion, as far as I am concerned, will do me good; besides, I must re-establish my fortune for the sake of the children, and of my own character. I have not leisure to indulge the disabling and discouraging thoughts that press on me. Were an enemy coming upon my house, would I not do my best to fight, although oppressed in spirits, and shall a similar despondency prevent me from mental exertion? It shall not, by Heaven! This day and to-morrow I give to the currency of the ideas which have of late occupied my mind, and with Monday they shall be mingled at least with other thoughts and cares.—Last night Charles and I walked late on the terrace at Kæside, when the clouds seemed accumulating in the wildest masses both on the Eildon Hills and other mountains in the distance. This rough morning reads the riddle. Dull, drooping, cheerless, has this day been. I cared not to carrying my own gloom to the girls, and so sate in my own room, dawdling with old papers, which awakened as many stings as if they had been the nest of fifty scorpions. Then the solitude seemed so absolute—my poor Charlotte would have been in the room half-a-score of times to see if the fire burned, and to ask a hundred kind questions. Well, that is over—and if it cannot be forgotten, must be remembered with patience.

"*May* 27.—A sleepless night. It is true, I should be up and doing, and a sleepless night sometimes furnishes good ideas. Alas! I have no companion now with whom I can communicate to relieve the loneliness of these watches of the night. But I must not fail myself and my family—and the necessity of exertion becomes apparent. I must try a *hors d'œuvre*, something that can go on between the necessary intervals of Nap. Mrs. Murray Keith's Tale of the Deserter, with her interview

* The Rev. E. B. Ramsay, A. M. Oxon.—of the Scottish Episcopal Communion, St. John's Chapel, Edinburgh.

† Lady Alvanley died at Edinburgh, 17th January, 1825,—and was buried in the chapel of Holyrood.

with the lad's mother, may be made most affecting, but will hardly endure much expansion.* The framework may be a Highland tour, under the guardianship of the sort of postilion whom Mrs. M. K. described to me—a species of *conducteur* who regulated the motions of his company, made their halts, and was their Cicerone.

"*May* 28.—I wrote a few pages yesterday, and then walked. I believe the description of the old Scottish lady may do, but the change has been unceasingly rung upon Scottish subjects of late, and it strikes me that the introductory matter may be considered as an imitation of Washington Irving—yet not so neither. In short, I will go on. To-day make a dozen of close pages ready, and take J. B.'s advice. I intend the work as an *olla podrida*, into which any odds and ends of narrative or description may be thrown. I wrote easily. I think the exertion has done me good. I slept sound last night, and at waking, as is usual with me, I found I had some clear views and thoughts upon the subject of this trifling work. I wonder if others find so strongly as I do the truth of the Latin proverb, *Aurora musis amica*.

"*Edinburgh, May* 30.—Returned to town last night with Charles. This morning resume ordinary habits of rising early, working in the morning, and attending the Court. All will come easily round. But it is at first as if men looked strange on me, and bite their lip when they ring my hand, and indicated suppressed feelings. It is natural this should be—undoubtedly it has been so with me. Yet it is strange to find one's self resemble a cloud, which darkens gaiety wherever it interposes its chilling shade. Will it be better when, left to my own feelings, I see the whole world pipe and dance around me? I think it will. Their sympathy intrudes on my private affliction.—I finished correcting the proofs for the Quarterly; it is but a flimsy article, but then the circumstances were most untoward.—This has been a melancholy day—most melancholy. I am afraid poor Charles found me weeping. I do not know what other folks feel, but with me the hysterical passion that impels tears is a terrible violence—a sort of throttling sensation—then succeeded by a state of dreaming stupidity, in which I ask if my poor Charlotte can actually be dead. I think I feel my loss more than at the first blow. Poor Charles wishes to come back to study here when his term ends at Oxford. I can see the motive.

"*May* 31.—The melancholy horrors of yesterday must not return. To encourage that dreamy state of incapacity is to resign all authority over the mind, and I have been used to say—

'My mind to me a kingdom is.'

I am rightful monarch; and, God to aid, I will not be dethroned by any rebellious passion that may rear its standard against me. Such are morning thoughts, strong as carle-hemp—says Burns—

'Come, firm Resolve, take thou the van,
Thou stalk of carle-hemp in man.'

Charles went by the steam-boat this morning at six. We parted last night mournfully on both sides. Poor boy, this is his first serious sorrow. Wrote this morning a Memorial on the Claim, which Constable's people prefer as to the copyrights of Woodstock and Napoleon. My argument amounts to this, that being no longer accountable as publishers, they cannot claim the character of such, or assert any right arising out of the contracts entered into while they held that capacity.—I also finished a few trifling memoranda on a book called the Omen, at Blackwood's request."†

* *The Highland Widow.* Waverley Novels.

† See Blackwood's Magazine, July 1828, or Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works.

CHAPTER LXXI.

WOODSTOCK—DESCRIPTION OF THE BOYER—MRS. BROWN'S LODGINGS—EXTRACT FROM A DIARY OF CAPTAIN BASIL HALL—BUONAPARTE RESUMED, AND CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE RESUMED—UNIFORM LABOUR DURING SUMMER AND AUTUMN—EXTRACTS FROM SIR WALTER'S JOURNAL—JUNE—OCTOBER, 1826.

THE price received for Woodstock shows what eager competition had been called forth among the booksellers when, after the lapse of several years, Constable's monopoly of Sir Walter's novels was abolished by their common calamity. The interest excited, not only in Scotland and England, but all over civilized Europe, by the news of Scott's misfortunes, must also have had its influence in quickening this commercial rivalry. The reader need hardly be told, that the first meeting of James Ballantyne and Company's creditors witnessed the transformation, a month before darkly prophesied, of the "Great Unknown" into the "Too-well-known." Even for those who had long ceased to entertain any doubt as to the main source at least of the Waverley romances, there would have been something stirring in the first confession of the author; but it in fact included the avowal, that he had stood alone in the work of creation; and when the mighty claim came in the same breath with the announcement of personal ruin, the effect on the community of Edinburgh was electrical. It is, in my opinion, not the least striking feature in the foregoing Diary, that it contains no allusion (save the ominous one of 18th December) to this long withheld revelation. He notes his painful anticipation of returning to the Parliament-House—*mostrari digito*—as an insolvent. It does not seem even to have occurred to him, that when he appeared there the morning after his creditors had heard his confession, there could not be many men in the place but must gaze on his familiar features with a mixture of curiosity, admiration, and sympathy, of which a hero in the moment of victory might have been proud—which might have swelled the heart of a martyr as he was bound to the stake.—The universal feeling was, I believe, much what the late amiable and accomplished Earl of Dudley expressed to Mr. Morritt when these news reached them at Brighton. "Scott ruined!" said he, "the author of Waverley ruined! Good God, let every man to whom he has given months of delight give him a sixpence, and he will rise to-morrow morning richer than Rothschild!"

It is no wonder that the book, which it was known he had been writing during this crisis of distress, should have been expected with solicitude. Shall we find him, asked thousands, to have been master truly of his genius in the moment of this ordeal? Shall we trace any thing of his own experiences in the construction of his imaginary personages and events?

I know not how others interpreted various passages in Woodstock, but there were not a few that carried deep meaning for such of Scott's own friends as were acquainted with, not his pecuniary misfortune alone, but the drooping health of his wife, and the consolation afforded him by the dutiful devotion of his daughter Anne, in whose character and demeanour a change had occurred exactly similar to that painted in poor Alice Lee:—"A light joyous air, with something of a humorous expression, which seemed to be looking for amusement, had vanished before the touch of affliction, and a calm melancholy supplied its place, which seemed on the watch to administer comfort to others." In several *mottoes*, and other scraps of verse, the curious reader will find similar traces of the facts and feelings recorded in the author's Diary.

As to the novel itself, though none can pretend to class it in the very highest rank of his works, since we feel throughout the effects of the great fundamental error, likened by a contemporary critic to that of the writer who should lay his scene at Rome immediately after the battle of Philippi, and intro-

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duce Brutus as the survivor in that conflict, and Cicero as his companion in victory; yet even this censor is forced to allow that Woodstock displays certain excellences, not exemplified in all the author's fictions, and which attest, more remarkably than any others could have done, the complete self-possession of the mind when composing it. Its great merit, Mr. Senior thinks, is that it combines an extraordinary variety of incident with perfect *unity of action!* For the rest, after condemning, in my view far too broadly, the old Shakspearian Cavalier Sir Henry Lee, he says—

"The Cromwell and Charles II. are inaccurate as portraits, but, as imaginary characters, they are admirable. Charles is perhaps somewhat too stiff, and Cromwell too sentimental; but these impressions never struck us till our office forced us to pervert the work from its proper end, and to read for the purpose of criticism instead of enjoyment. We are not sure, however, that we do not prefer Tomkins to either of them; his cunning, profligacy, hypocrisy, and enthusiasm are combined into a character as spirited as it is original. Wildrake, Rochecliffe, Desborough, Holdenough, and Bletson are composed of fewer materials, and therefore exhibit less power in the author; but they are natural and forcible, particularly Holdenough. There are few subjects which Sir Walter seems more to delight in painting than the meliorating influence of religious feelings on an imperfect temper, even though somewhat alloyed by superstition and enthusiasm.—Woodstock is a picture full of false costume and incorrect design, but splendidly grouped and coloured; and we envy those whose imperfect knowledge of the real events has enabled them to enjoy its beauties without being offended by its inaccuracies."

There is one character of considerable importance which the reviewer does not allude to. If he had happened to have the slightest tincture of his author's fondness for dogs, he would not have failed to say something of the elaborate and affectionate portraiture of old Maida, under the name of Bevis.

The success of this novel was great: large as the price was, its publishers had no reason to repent their bargain; and of course the rapid receipt of such a sum as £8,000, the product of hardly three months' labour, highly gratified the body of creditors, whose debtor had devoted to them whatever labour his health should henceforth permit him to perform. We have seen that he very soon began another work of fiction; and it will appear that he from the first designed the "Chronicles of the Canongate" to be published by Mr. Robert Cadell. That gentleman's connexion with Constable was from circumstances of which the reader may have traced various little indications not likely to be renewed after the catastrophe of their old copartnership. They were now endeavoring to establish themselves in separate businesses; and each was, of course, eager to secure the countenance of Sir Walter. He did not hesitate a moment. He conceived that Constable had acted in such a manner by him, especially in urging him to borrow large sums of money for his support after all chance of recovery was over, that he had more than forfeited all claims on his confidence; and Mr. Cadell's frank conduct in warning Ballantyne and him against Constable's last mad proposal about a guarantee for £20,000, had produced a strong impression in his favour.

Sir Walter's Diary has given us some pleasing glimpses of the kind of feeling displayed by Ballantyne towards him, and by him towards Ballantyne, during these dark months. In justice to both, I shall here insert one of the notes addressed by Scott, while Woodstock was at press, to his critical typographer. It has reference to a request, that the success of Malachi Malagrowther might be followed up by a set of essays on Irish Absenteeism in the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*:—the editorship of which paper, with the *literary* management of the printing-house, had been continued to Mr. Ballantyne, upon a moderate salary, by his creditors' trustees. I may observe that when the general superintendence of the printing-house came into the hands of regular men of business, it was found (notwithstanding the loss of Constable's great employment) a lucrative one: the creditors, after paying James his salary, cleared in one year £1,200 from the concern, which had for many before been a source of nothing but perplexity to its founders. No hints of mutual complaint or recrimination ever dropt from either of the fallen partners. The printer, like Scott, submitted without a murmur of that sort, or indeed of any sort, to his reverses: he withdrew to a very small house in a sequestered suburban situation, and altered all his domestic habits and arrangements with decision and fortitude. Here he received many communications such as the following:—

To Mr. James Ballantyne.

"North St. David Street.

"Dear James,

"I cannot see to read my manuscript in the way you propose—I would give a thousand pounds I could; but like the officer of the Customs, when the Board desired him to read a coquet of his own,—I am coquet-*writer*, not coquet-*reader*—and you must be thankful that I can perform even that part of the duty.

"We must in some sort, stand or fall *together*; and I do not wish you to think that I am forgetting your interest in my own—though I sincerely believe the former is what you least think of. But I am afraid I must decline the political task you invite me to. It would cost me a fortnight's hard work to do any thing to purpose, for I have no information on the subject whatever. In short, as the Earl of Essex said on a certain occasion, 'Frankly, it may not be.' I hope next winter will afford me an opportunity to do something, which, as Falstaff says, 'may do you good.'

Ever yours,

W. S."

The date of this note (North St. David's Street) reminds me of a passage in Captain Basil Hall's Diary. He called at Mrs. Brown's lodging-house one morning—and on his return home wrote as follows:—

"A hundred and fifty years hence, when his works have become old classical authorities, it may interest some fervent lover of his writings to know what this great genius was about on Saturday the 10th of June, 1826—five months after the total ruin of his pecuniary fortunes, and twenty-six days after the death of his wife.'

"In the days of his good luck he used to live at No. 39 in North Castle Street, in a house befitting a rich baronet; but on reaching the door, I found the plate on it covered with rust (so soon is glory obscured,) the windows shuttered up, dusty, and comfortless; and from the side of one projected a board, with this inscription, "To Sell;" the stairs were unwashed, and not a footmark told of the ancient hospitality which reigned within.. In all nations with which I am acquainted the fashionable world move westward, in imitation, perhaps, of the great tide of civilization; and *vice versa*, those persons who decline in fortune, which is mostly equivalent to declining in fashion, shape their course eastward. Accordingly by an involuntary impulse, I turned my head that way, and enquiring at the clubs in Prince's Street, learned that he now resided in St. David Street. No. 6.

"I was rather glad to recognise my old friend the Abbotsford butler, who answered the door—the saying about heroes and valets-de-chambre comes to one's recollection on such occasions, and nothing, we may be sure, is more likely to be satisfactory to a man whose fortune is reduced than the staunch adherence of a mere servant, whose wages must be altered for the worse. At the top of the stair we saw a small tray, with a single plate and glasses for one solitary person's dinner. Some few months ago Sir Walter was surrounded by his family, and wherever he moved, his headquarters were the focus of fashion. Travellers from all nations crowded round, and, like the recorded honours of Lord Chatham, 'thickened over him.' Lady and Miss Scott were his constant companions; the Lockharts were his neighbours both in town and in Roxburghshire; his eldest son was his frequent guest; and in short, what with his own family and the clouds of tourists, who, like so many hordes of Cossacks, pressed upon him, there was not, perhaps, out of a palace, any man so attended, I had almost said overpowered, by company. His wife is now dead—his son-in-law and favourite daughter gone to London, and his grandchild, I fear, just staggering, poor little fellow, on the edge of the grave, which, perhaps, is the securest refuge for him—his eldest son is married, and at a distance, and report speaks of no probability of the title descending; in short, all are dispersed, and the tourists, those "curiosos impertinentes," drive past Abbotsford gate, and curse their folly in having delayed for

a year too late their long projected jaunt to the north. Mean-while not to mince the matter, the great man had, somehow or other, managed to involve himself with printers, publishers, bankers, gas-makers, wool-staplers, and all the fraternity of speculators, accommodation-bill manufacturers, land-jobbers, and so on, till at a season of distrust in money matters, the hour of reckoning came, like a thief in the night; and as our friend, like the unthrifty virgins, had no oil in his lamp, all his affairs went to wreck and ruin, and landed him, after the gale was over, in the predicament of Robinson Crusoe, with little more than a shirt to his back. But like that able navigator, he is not cast away upon a barren rock. The tide has ebbed, indeed, and left him on the beach, but the hull of his fortunes is above water still, and it will go hard, indeed, with him if he does not shape a raft that shall bring to shore much of the cargo that an ordinary mind would leave in despair, to be swept away by the next change of the moon. The distinction between man and the rest of the living creation, certainly, is in nothing more remarkable, than in the power which he possesses over them, of turning to varied account the means with which the world is stocked. But it has always struck me, that there is a far greater distinction between man and man than between many men and most other animals; and it is from a familiarity with the practical operation of this marvellous difference that I venture to predict, that our Crusoe will cultivate his own island, and build himself a bark in which, in process of time, he will sail back to his friends and fortune in greater triumph than if he had never been driven amongst the breakers.

"Sir Walter Scott, then, was sitting at a writing-desk covered with papers, and on the top was a pile of bound volumes of the Moniteur,—one, which he was leaning over as my brother and I entered, was open on a chair, and two others were lying on the floor. As he rose to receive us he closed the volume which he had been extracting from, and came forward to shake hands. He was, of course, in deep mourning, with weepers and the other trappings of woe, but his countenance, though certainly a little woe-begonish, was not cast into any very deep furrows. His tone and manner were as friendly as heretofore, and when he saw that we had no intention of making any attempt at sympathy or moanification, but spoke to him as of old, he gradually contracted the length of his countenance, and allowed the corners of his mouth to curl almost imperceptibly upwards, and a renewed lustre came into his eye, if not exactly indicative of cheerfulness, at all events of well-regulated, patient, Christian resignation. My meaning will be misunderstood if it be imagined from this picture that I suspected any hypocrisy, or an affectation of grief in the first instance. I have no doubt, indeed, that he feels, and most acutely, the bereavements which have come upon him; but we may very fairly suppose, that among the many visiters he must have, there may be some who cannot understand that it is proper, decent, or even possible to hide those finer emotions deep in the heart.—He immediately began to converse in his usual style—the chief topic being Captain Denham (whom I had recently seen in London,) and his book of African Travels, which Sir Walter had evidently read with much attention. * * * * After sitting a quarter of an hour, we came away, well pleased to see our friend quite unbroken in spirit—and though bowed down a little by the blast, and here and there a branch the less, as sturdy in the trunk as ever, and very possibly all the better for the discipline—better, I mean, for the public, inasmuch as he has now a vast additional stimulus for exertion—and one which all the world must admit to be thoroughly noble and generous."

A week before this visit took place, Sir Walter had sufficiently mastered himself to resume his literary tasks; and he thenceforth worked with determined resolution on the Life of Napoleon, interlaying a day or two of the Chronicles of the Canongate, whenever he had got before the press with his historical MS., or felt the want of the only repose he ever cared for—a change of labour. In resuming his own Diary, I shall make extracts rather less largely than before, because many entries merely reflect the life of painful exertion to which he had now submitted himself, without giving us any interesting glimpses either of his feelings or opinions. I hope I have kept enough to satisfy all proper curiosity on these last points.

EXTRACTS FROM DIARY—JUNE, 1826.

"*Edinburgh, June* 4.—I wrote a good task yesterday, and to-day a great one, scarce stirring from the desk. I am not sure that it is right to work so hard; but a man must take himself, as well as other people, when in the humour. I doubt if men of method, who can lay aside or take up the pen just at the hours appointed, will ever be better than poor creatures. Lady Louisa Stuart used to tell me of Mr. Hoole, the translator of Tasso and Ariosto, and in that capacity a noble transmuter of gold into lead, that he was a clerk in the India-House, with long ruffles and a snuff-coloured suit of clothes, who occasionally visited her father, John Earl of Bute. She sometimes conversed with him, and was amused to find that he did exactly so many couplets day by day, neither more nor less; and habit had made it light to him, however heavy it might seem to the reader. Well, but if I lay down the pen, as the pain in my breast hints that I should, what am I to do? If I think, why I shall weep—and that's nonsense; and I have no friend now—none—to relieve my tediousness for half-an-hour of the gloaming. Let me be grateful—I have good news from Abbotsford.

"*June* 7.—Again a day of hard work—busy at half-past eight. I went to the Dean of Faculty's to a consultation about Constable,* and sat with said Dean and Mr. J. S. More and J. Gibson. I find they have as high hope of success as lawyers ought to express; and I think I know how our profession speak when sincere; but I cannot interest myself deeply in it. When I had come home from such a business, I used to carry the news to poor Charlotte, who dressed her face in sadness or mirth as she saw the news affect me; this hangs lightly about me. I had almost forgot the appointment, if J. G. had not sent me a card; I passed a piper in the street as I went to the Dean's, and could not help giving him a shilling to play *Pibroch a Donuil Dhu* for luck's sake; what a child I am!

"*June* 8.—Bilious and headach this morning. A dog howl'd all night and left me little sleep,—poor cur! I dare say he had his distresses, as I have mine. I was obliged to make Dalgliesh shut the windows when he appeared at half-past six, as usual, and did not rise till nine. I have often deserved a headach in my younger days without having one, and Nature is, I suppose, paying off old scores. Ay, but then the want of the affectionate care that used to be ready, with lowered voice and stealthy pace, to smoothe the pillow and offer condolence and assistance,—gone—gone—for ever—ever—ever. Well, there is another world, and we'll meet free from the mortal sorrows and frailties which beset us here; amen, so be it. Let me change the topic with hand and head, and the heart must follow. I finished four pages to-day, headach, laziness and all.

"*June* 9.—Corrected a stubborn proof this morning. These battles have been the death of many a man—I think they will be mine. Well, but it clears to windward; so we will fag on. Slept well last night. By the way, how intolerably selfish this Journal makes me seem—so much attention to one's naturals and non-naturals? Lord Mackenzie† called, and we had much chat about parish business. The late regulations for preparing cases in the Outer-House do not work well. One effect of running causes faster through the Courts below is, that they go by scores to appeal, and Lord Gifford has hitherto decided them with such judgment, and so much rapidity, as to give great satisfaction. The consequence will in time be, that the Scottish Supreme Court will be in effect situated in London. Then down falls as national objects of respect and veneration, the Scottish Bench, the Scottish Bar, the Scottish Law herself, and—and ——'Here is an end of an auld sang.'‡ Were I as I have been, I would fight knee-deep in blood ere it

* This alludes to the claim advanced by the creditors of Constable and Co. to the copyright of Woodstock and the Life of Napoleon.

† The eldest son of the Man of Feeling.

‡ Speech of Lord Chancellor Seafirld on the ratification of the Scotch Union. See *Miscellaneous Prose Works*.

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came to that. I shall always be proud of Malachi as having headed back the Southron, or helped to do so in one instance at least.

"*June* 11.—Bad dreams. Woke, thinking my old and inseparable friend beside me; and it was only when I was fully awake that I could persuade myself that she was dark, low, and distant, and that my bed was widowed. I believe the phenomena of dreaming are in a great measure occasioned by the *double touch* which takes place when one hand is crossed in sleep upon another. Each gives and receives the impression of touch to and from the other, and this complicated sensation our sleeping fancy ascribes to the agency of another being, when it is in fact produced by our own limbs rolling on each other. Well, here goes—*incumbite remis*.

"*June* 12.—Finished volume third of Napoleon. I resumed it on the 1st of June, the earliest period that I could bend my mind to it after my great loss. Since that time I have lived, to be sure, the life of a hermit, except attending the Court five days in the week for about three hours on an average. Except at that time I have been reading or writing on the subject of Boney, and have finished last night, and sent to printer this morning, the last sheet of fifty-two written since 1st June. It is an awful screed; but grief makes me a housekeeper, and to labour is my only resource.

"*June* 14.—To-day I began with a page and a half before breakfast. This is always the best way. You stand like a child going to be bathed, shivering and shaking till the first pitcherful is flung about your ears, and then are as blythe as a water-wagtail. I am just come home from Court; and now, my friend Nap, have at you with a downright blow! Methinks I would fain make peace with my conscience by doing six pages to-night. Bought a little bit of Gruyere cheese, instead of our dame's choke-dog concern. When did I ever purchase any thing for my own eating? But I will say no more of that. And now to the bread-mill—

"*June* 16.—Yesterday safe in the Court till nearly four. I had, of course, only time for my task. I fear I shall have little more to-day, for I have accepted to dine at Hector's. I got, yesterday, a present of two engravings from Sir Henry Raeburn's portrait of me, which (poor fellow!) was the last he ever painted, and certainly not the worst.* I had the pleasure to give one to young Davidoff for his uncle, the celebrated Black Captain, of the campaign of 1812. Curious that he should be interested in getting the resemblance of a person whose mode of attaining some distinction has been very different. But I am sensible, that if there be any thing good about my poetry or prose either, it is a hurried frankness of composition which pleases soldiers, sailors, and young people of bold and active disposition. I have been no sigher in shades—no writer of

> 'Songs and sonnets and rustical roundelays,
> Framed on fancies, and whistled on reeds.'

"*Abbotsford, Saturday, June* 17.—Left Edinburgh to-day, after Parliament-House. My two girls met me at Torsonce, which was a pleasant surprise, and we returned in the sociable all together. Found every thing right and well at Abbotsford under the new regime. I again took possession of the family bedroom and my widowed couch. This was a sore trial, but it was necessary not to blink such a resolution. Indeed, I do not like to have it thought that there is any way in which I can be beaten.†

"*June* 19.—This morning wrote till half twelve—good day's work.—at Canongate Chronicles. Methinks I can make this answer. Then drove to Huntly-Burn, and called at Chiefswood. Walked home. The country crying for rain; yet, on the whole, the weather delicious, dry, and warm, with a fine air of wind. The young woods are rising in a kind of profusion I never saw elsewhere. Let me once clear off these encumbrances, and they shall wave broader and deeper yet.

"*June* 21.—For a party of pleasure I have attended to business well. Twenty pages of Croftangry, five printed pages each, attest my diligence, and I have had a delightful variation by the company of the two Annes. Regulated my little expenses here.

"*Edinburgh, June* 22.—Returned to my Patmos. Heard good news from Lockhart. Wife well, and John Hugh better. He mentions poor Southey testifying much interest for me, even to tears. It is odd—am I so hard-hearted a man? I could not have wept for him, though in distress I would have gone any length to serve him. I sometimes think I do not deserve people's good opinion, for certainly my feelings are rather guided by reflection than impulse. But every body has his own mode of expressing interest, and mine is stoical even in bitterest grief. I hope I am not the worse for wanting the tenderness that I see others possess, and which is so amiable. I think it does not cool my wish to be of use when I can. But the truth is I am better at enduring or acting, than at consoling. From childhood's earliest hour, my heart rebelled against the influence of external circumstances in myself and others—*non est tanti!* To-day, I was detained in the Court from half-past ten till near four, yet I finished and sent off a packet to Cadell, which will finish one-third of the Chronicles, vol. 1st. Henry Scott came in while I was at dinner, and sat while I eat my beef-steak. A gourmand would think me much at a loss, coming back to my ploughman's meal of boiled beef and Scotch broth, from the rather *récherché* table at Abbotsford, but I have no philosophy in my carelessness on that score. It is natural, though I am no ascetic, as my father was.

"*June* 23.—I received to-day £10 from Blackwood for the article on *The Omen*. Time was I would not have taken these small tithes of mint and cummin, but scornful dogs will eat dirty puddings, and I, with many depending on me, must do the best I can with my time; God help me.

"*Blair-Adam June* 24.—Left Edinburgh yesterday after the Court, and came over here with the Lord Chief Baron and William Clerk, to spend as usual a day or two at the Chief-Commissioner's. His Lordship's family misfortunes and my own make our holiday this year of a more quiet description than usual, and a sensible degree of melancholy hangs on the re-union of our party. It was wise, however, not to omit it, for to slacken your hold on life in any agreeable point of connexion, is the sooner to reduce yourself to the indifference and passive vegetation of old age.

"*June* 25.—Another melting day; we have lounged away the morning creeping about the place, sitting a great deal, and walking as little as might be on account of the heat. Blair-Adam has been successively in possession of three generations of persons attached to and skilled in the art of embellishment, and may be fairly taken as a place where art and taste have done a great deal to improve nature. A long ridge of varied ground sloping to the foot of Benarty, and which originally was of a bare mossy boggy character, has been clothed by the son, father, and grandfather; while the undulations and hollows, which seventy or eighty years since must have looked only like wrinkles in the black morasses, being now drained and limed, are skirted with deep woods, particularly of spruce, which thrives wonderfully, and covered with excellent grass. We drove in the droskie, and walked in the evening.

"*June* 26.—Another day of unmitigated heat; thermometer 82; must be higher in Edinburgh, where I return to-night, when the decline of the

* See *ante*, p. 368.

† This entry reminds me of Hannah More's account of Mrs. Garrick's conduct after her husband's funeral. "She told me," says Mrs. More, "that she prayed with great composure, then went and kissed the dear bed, and got into it with a sad pleasure."—See *Memoirs of Mrs. More*, vol. i. p. 155.

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sun makes travelling practicable. It will be well for my works to be there—not quite so well for me; there is a difference between the clever nice arrangement of Blair-Adam and Mrs. Brown's accommodations, though he who is ensured against worse has no right to complain of them. But the studious neatness of poor Charlotte has perhaps made me fastidious. She loved to see things clean, even to Oriental scrupulosity. So oddly do our deep recollections of other kinds correspond with the most petty occurrences of our life. Lord Chief Baron told us a story of the ruling passion strong in death. A Mr. * * *, a Master in Chancery, was on his deathbed—a very wealthy man. Some occasion of great urgency occurred in which it was necessary to make an affidavit, and the attorney, missing one or two other Masters whom he enquired after, ventured to ask if Mr. * * * would be able to receive the deposition. The proposal seemed to give him momentary strength; his clerk was sent for, and the oath taken in due form. The Master was lifted up in bed, and with difficulty subscribed the paper; as he sank down again, he made a signal to his clerk—'Wallace.'—'Sir?'—'Your ear—lower—lower. Have you got the *half-crown?*' He was dead before morning.

"*Edinburgh, June* 27.—Returned to Edinburgh late last night, and had a most sweltering night of it. This day also cruel hot. However, I made a task, or nearly so, and read a good deal about the Egyptian expedition. I have also corrected proofs, and prepared for a great start, by filling myself with facts and ideas.

"*June* 29.—I walked out for an hour last night, and made one or two calls—the evening was delightful—

> 'Day its sultry fires had wasted,
> Calm and cool the moonbeam rose,
> Even a captive's bosom tasted
> Half oblivion of his woes.'

I wonder often how Tom Campbell, with so much real genius, has not maintained a greater figure in the public eye than he has done of late. The Magazine* seems to have paralyzed him. The author, not only of the Pleasures of Hope, but of Hohenlinden, Lochiel, &c., should have been at the very top of the tree. Somehow he wants audacity, fears the public, and what is worse, fears the shadow of his own reputation. He is a great corrector too, which succeeds as ill in composition as in education. Many a clever boy is flogged into a dunce, and many an original composition corrected into mediocrity. Tom ought to have done a great deal more. His youthful promise was great. John Leyden introduced me to him. They afterwards quarrelled. When I repeated Hohenlinden to Leyden, he said, 'Dash it, man, tell the fellow that I hate him, but, dash him, he has written the finest verses that have been published these fifty years.' I did mine errand as faithfully as one of Homer's messengers, and had for answer, 'Tell Leyden that I detest him, but I know the value of his critical approbation.' This feud was therefore in the way of being taken up. 'When Leyden comes back from India,' said Tom Campbell, 'what cannibals he will have eaten, and what tigers he will have torn to pieces!'

"Gave a poor poetess £1. Gibson writes me that £2300 is offered for the poor house; it is worth £300 more, but I will not oppose my own opinion and convenience to good and well-meant counsel: so farewell, poor No. 39. What a portion of my life has been spent there! It has sheltered me from the prime of life to its decline; and now I must bid good-by to it. I have bid good-by to my poor wife, so long its courteous and kind mistress. And I need not care about the empty rooms; yet it gives me a turn. Never mind; all in the day's work.

"*June* 30.—Here is another dreadful warm day, fit for nobody but the flies. I was detained in Court till four; dreadfully close, and obliged to drink water for refreshment, which formerly I used to scorn, even in the moors, with a burning August sun, the heat of exercise, and a hundred springs gushing around me. Corrected proofs, &c., on my return.

"*Abbotsford July* 2.—I worked a little this morning, then had a long and warm walk. Captain and Mrs. Hamilton, from Chiefswood, the present inhabitants of Lockhart's cottage, dined with us, which made the evening pleasant. He is a fine soldierly-looking man*—his wife a sweet good-humoured little woman. Since we were to lose the Lockharts, we could scarce have had more agreeable neighbours.

"*Edinburgh, July* 6.—Returned last night, and suffered, as usual, from the incursions of the black horse. Mr. B—— C—— writes to condole with me. I think our acquaintance scarce warranted this; but it is well meant, and modestly done. I cannot conceive the idea of forcing myself on strangers in distress, and I have half a mind to turn sharp round on some of my consolers.

"*July* 8.—Wrote a good task this morning. I may be mistaken; but I do think the tale of Elspat M'Tavisht in my bettermost manner—but J. B. roars for chivalry. He does not quite understand that every thing may be overdone in this world, or sufficiently estimate the necessity of novelty. The Highlanders have been off the field now for some time. Returning from the Court, looked into a fine show of wild beasts, and saw Nero the great lion, whom they had the brutal cruelty to bait with bull-dogs, against whom the noble creature disdained to exert his strength. He was lying like a prince in a large cage, where you might be admitted if you wish. I had a month's mind—but was afraid of the newspapers. I could be afraid of nothing else, for never did a creature seem more gentle and yet majestic. I longed to caress him. Wallace, the other Lion, born in Scotland, seemed much less trustworthy. He handled the dogs as his namesake did the southron.

"*July* 10.—Dined with John Swinton *en famille*. He told me an odd circumstance. Coming from Berwickshire in the mail-coach, he met with a passenger who seemed more like a military man than any thing else. They talked on all sorts of subjects, at length on politics. Malachi's letters were mentioned, when the stranger observed they were much more seditious than some expressions for which he had three or four years ago been nearly sent to Botany Bay. And perceiving John Swinton's surprise at this avowal, he added, I am Kinloch of Kinloch. This gentleman had got engaged in the Radical business (the only real gentleman by the way who did,) and harangued the weavers of Dundee with such exphasis, that he would have been tried and sent to Botany Bay, had he not fled abroad. He was outlawed, and only restored to his estates on a composition with Government. It seems to have escaped Mr. Kinloch, that the man who places a lighted coal in the middle of combustibles and upon the floor, acts a little differently from him who places the same quantity of burning fuel in a fire grate.

"*July* 13.—Dined yesterday with Lord Abercromby at a party he gave to Lord Melville and some old friends, who formed the Contemporary Club. Lord M. and I met with considerable feeling on both sides, and all our feuds were forgotten and forgiven; I conclude so at least, because one or two people, whom I know to be sharp observers of the weather-glass on occasion of such squalls, have been earnest with me to meet him at parties—which I am well assured they would not have been (had I been Horace come to life again) were they not sure the breeze was over. For myself, I am happy that our usual state of friendship should be restored.

* Mr. Campbell was then Editor of the New Monthly Magazine, but he soon gave it up.

* Thomas Hamilton, Esq.—the author of Cyril Thornton—Men and Manners in America—Annals of the Peninsular Campaigns, &c. &c.

† The Highland Widow.

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though I could not have some down proud stomach to make advances, which in, among friends, always the duty of the richer and more powerful of the two. To-day I leave Mrs. Brown's lodgings. I have done a monstrous sight of work here notwithstanding the indolence of this last week, which must and shall be amended.

So good-by, Mrs. Brown,
I am going out of town,
Over dale, over down,
Where bugs bite not,
Where lodgers fight not,
Where below you chairmen drink not,
Where beside you gutters stink not;
But all is fresh, and clear, and gay,
And merry lambkins sport and play;
And they toss with rakes uncominonly short hay,
Which looks as if it had been sown only the other day,
And where oats are at twenty-five shillings a-boll, they say,
But all's one for that, since I must and will away.

"*July* 14.—*Abbotsford.* Any body would think, from the fal-de-ral conclusion of my journal of yesterday, that I left town in a very gay humour—*cujus contrarium verum est.* But nature has given me a kind of buoyancy, I know not what to call it, that mingled even with my deepest afflictions and most gloomy hours. I have a secret pride—I fancy it will be so most truly termed, which impels me to mix with my distresses strange snatches of mirth 'which have no mirth in them.'

"*July* 16.—Sleepy, stupid, indolent—finished arranging the books, and after that was totally useless—unless it can be called study that I slumbered for three or four hours over a variorum edition of the Gill's-Hill tragedy.* Admirable escape for low spirits—for, not to mention the brutality of so extraordinary a murder, it led John Bull into one of his most uncommon fits of gambols, until at last he became so maudlin as to weep for the pitiless assassin, Thurtell, and treasure up the leaves and twigs of the hedge and shrubs in the fatal garden as valuable relics, nay, thronged the minor theatres to see the roan horse and yellow gig in which his victim was transported from one house to the other. I have not stept over the threshold to-day, so very stupid have I been.

"*July* 17.—*Desidia tandem valedixi.*—Our time is like our money. When we change a guinea, the shillings escape as things of small account; when we break a day by idleness in the morning, the rest of the hours lose their importance in our eye. I set stoutly about seven this morning to Boney—

And long ere dinner time, I have
Full eight close pages wrote;
What, Duty, hast thou now to crave?
Well done Sir Walter Scott!

"*July* 21.—To Mertoun. Lord, and Lady Minto and several other guests were there, besides their own large family. So my lodging was a little room which I had not occupied since I was a bachelor, but often before in my frequent intercourse with this kind and hospitable family. Feeling myself returned to that celibacy which renders many accommodations indifferent which but lately were indispensable, my imagination drew a melancholy contrast between the young man entering the world on fire for fame, and busied in imagining means of coming by it, and the aged widower, *blasé* on the point of literary reputation, deprived of the social comforts of a married state, and looking back to regret instead of looking forward to hope. This brought bad sleep and unpleasing dreams. But if I cannot hope to be what I have been, I will not, if I can help it, suffer vain repining to make me worse than I may be. We left Mertoun after breakfast, and the two Annes and I visited Lady Raeburn at Lessudden. My aunt is now in her ninetieth year—so clean, so nice, so well arranged in every respect, that it makes old age lovely. She talks both of late and former events with perfect possession of her faculties, and has only failed in her limbs. A great deal of kind feeling has survived, in spite of the frost of years. Home to dinner and worked all the afternoon among the Moniteurs—to little purpose, for my principal acquisition was a headach.

"*July* 24—At dinner-time to-day came Dr. Jamieson* of the Scottish Dictionary, an excellent good man, and full of auld Scottish cracks, which amuse me well enough, but are *cariare* to the young people.

"*July* 26.—This day went to Selkirk, to hold a court. The Doctor chose to go with me. Action and reaction—Scots proverb—'The unreat (*i. e.* pendulum) of a clock gangs aye as far the ae gait as the t'other.'

"*July* 27.—Up and at it this morning, and finished four pages. An unpleasant letter from London, as if I might be troubled by some of the creditors there, if I should go up to get materials for Nap. I have no wish to go—none at all. I would even like to put off my visit, so far as John Lockhart and my daughter are concerned, and see them when the meeting could be more pleasant. But then, having an offer to see the correspondence from St. Helena, I can make no doubt that I ought to go. However, if it is to infer any danger to my personal freedom, English wind shall not blow on me. It is monstrous hard to prevent me doing what is certainly the best for all parties.

"*July* 28.—I am well nigh choked with the sulphurous heat of the weather—and my hand is as nervous as a paralytic's. Read through and corrected Saint Ronan's Well. I am no judge, but I think the language of this piece rather good. Then I must allow the fashionable portraits are not the true thing. I am too much out of the way. The story is horribly contorted and unnatural, and the catastrophe is melancholy, which should always be avoided. No matter, I have corrected it for the press.† Walter's account of his various quarters per last despatch. *Query if original.

'Loughrin is a blackguard place,
To Gort I give my curse;
Athlone itself is bad enough,
But Ballinrobe is worse.
I cannot tell which is the worst,
They're all so very bad,
But of all towns I ever saw,
Bad luck to Kinnegad.'

"*August* 1.—Yesterday evening I took to arranging old plays, and scrambled through two. One, called Michaelmas Term, full of traits of manners; and another a sort of bouncing tragedy, called the Hector of Germany, or the Palsgrave. The last, worthless in the extreme, is like many of the plays in the beginning of the 17th century, written to a good tune. The dramatic poets of that time seem to have possessed as joint-stock a highly poetical and abstract tone of language, so that the worst of them remind you of the very best. The audience must have had a much stronger sense of poetry in those days than in ours, since language was received and applauded at the Fortune or the Red Bull, which could not now be understood by any general audience in Great Britain. Now to work.

"*August* 2.—I finished before dinner five leaves, and I would crow a little about it, but here comes Duty like an old housekeeper to an idle chambermaid. Hear her very words.

"*Duty.* Oh! you crow, do you? Pray, can you deny that your sitting so quiet at work was owing

* The murder of Weare by Thurtell and Co. at Gill's Hill, in Hertfordshire. Sir Walter collected printed trials with great assiduity, and took care always to have the contemporary ballads and prints bound up with them. He admired particularly this verse of Mr. Hook's broadside—

"They cut his throat from ear to ear,
His brains they battered in;
His name was Mr. William Weare,
He dwelt in Lyon's Inn."

* The venerable lexicographer often had lodgings near Abbotsford in the angling season, being still very fond of that sport.

† This Novel, was passing through the press in 8vo, 12mo, and 18mo, to complete collective editions in these sizes.

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to its raining heavily all the forenoon, and indeed till dinner-time, so that nothing would have stirred out that could help it save a duck or a goose? I trow, if it had been a fine day, by noon there would have been aching of the head, throbbing, shaking, and so forth, to make an apology for going out.

"*Egomet Ipse.* And whose head ever throbbed to go out when it rained, Mrs. Duty?

"*Duty.* *Answer not to me with a fool-born jest*, as your friend Erskine used to say to you when you escaped from his good advice under the fire of some silly pun. You smoke a cigar after dinner, and I never check you—drink tea, too, which is loss of time; and then, instead of writing me one other page, or correcting those you have written out, you roflock into the woods till you have not a dry thread about you; and here you sit writing down my words in your foolish journal instead of minding my advice.

"*Ego.* Why, Mrs. Duty, I would as gladly be friends with you as Crabbe's tradesman fellow with his conscience;* but you should have some consideration with human frailty.

"*Duty.* Reckon not on that. But, however, good night for the present. I would recommend to you to think no thoughts in which I am not mingled—to read no books in which I have no concern—to write three sheets of botheration all the six days of the week *per diem*, and on the seventh to send them to the printer. Thus advising, I heartily bid you farewell.

"*Ego.* Farewell, madam (*exit* Duty)———and be d———d to ye for an unreasonable bitch! 'The devil must be in this greedy gled!' as the Earl of Angus said to his hawk; 'will she never be satisfied?'†

"*August* 3.—Wrote half a task in the morning. From eleven till half-past eight in Selkirk taking precognitions about a *row*, and came home famished and tired. Now, Mrs. Duty, do you think there is no other Duty of the family but yourself? Or can the Sheriff-depute neglect his Duty, that the author may mind *his*? The thing cannot be; the people of Selkirk must have justice as well as the people of England books. So the two Duties may go pull caps about it. My conscience is clear.

"*August* 6.—Wrote to-day a very good day's work. Walked to Chiefswood, and saw old Mrs. Tytler, a friend when life was young. Her husband, Lord Woodhouselee, was a kind, amiable, and accomplished man; and when we lived at Lasswade Cottage, soon after my marriage, we saw a great deal of the family, who were very kind to us as newly entered on the world. How many early stories did the old lady's presence recall. She might almost be my mother; yet there we sat, like two people of another generation, talking of things and people the rest knew nothing of. When a certain period of life is over, the difference of years, even when considerable, becomes of much less consequence.

"*August* 10.—Rose early, and wrote hard till two, when I went with Anne to Minto. I must not let her quite forego the custom of good society. We found the Scotts of Harden, &c., and had a very pleasant party. I like Lady M. particularly, but missed my facetious and lively friend, Lady Anna Maria. It is the fashion of some silly women and silly men to abuse her as a bluestocking. If to have good sense and good-humour, mixed with a strong power of observing, and an equally strong one of expressing—if of this the result must be *blue*, she shall be as blue as they will. Such cant is the refuge of fools who fear those who can turn them into ridicule: it is a common trick to revenge supposed raillery with good substantial calumny. Slept at Minto.

"*August* 11.—I was up as usual, and wrote about two leaves, meaning to finish my task at home; but found my Sheriff-substitute here on my return, which took up the evening. But I shall finish the volume in less than a month after beginning it. The same exertion would bring the book out at Martinmas, but December is a better time.

"*August* 14.—Finished Vol. IV. yesterday evening—*Deo gratias*. This morning I was seized with a fit of the clevers and finished my task by twelve o'clock, and hope to add something in the evening. I was guilty, however, of some waywardness, for I began Vol. V. of Boney instead of carrying on the Canongate as I proposed. The reason, however, was that I might not forget the information I had acquired about the treaty of Amiens.

"*August* 16.—Walter and Jane arrived last night. God be praised for restoring to me my dear children in good health, which has made me happier than any thing that has happened these several months. If we had Lockhart and Sophia these would be a meeting of the beings dearest to me in life. Walked to ————, where I find a certain lady on a visit—so youthy, so beautiful, so strong in voice—with sense and learning—above all, so fond of good conversation, that, in compassion to my eyes, ears, and understanding, off I bolted in the middle of a tremendous shower of rain, and rather chose to be wet to the skin than to be bethumped with words at that rate.—In the evening we had music from the girls, and the voice of the harp and viol were heard in my halls once more, which have been so *long* deprived of mirth. It is with a mixed sensation I hear these sounds. I look on my children and am happy; and yet every now and then a pang shoots across my heart.

"*August* 19.—This morning wrote none excepting extracts, &c., being under the necessity of reading and collating a great deal, which lasted till one o'clock or thereabouts, when Dr. and Mrs. Brewster and their young people came to spend a day of happiness at the Lake. We were met there by Captain and Mrs. Hamilton, and a full party. Since the days of Seged, Emperor of Ethiopia, these days of appointed sport and happiness have seldom answered; but we came off indifferently well. We did not indeed catch much fish; but we lounged about in a delightful day, eat and drank—and the children, who are very fine infantry, were clamorously enjoying themselves. We sounded the loch in two or three different places—the deepest may be sixty feet. I was accustomed to think it much more, but your deepest pools, like your deepest politicians and philosophers, often turn out more shallow than was expected.

"*August* 23, *Bittock's-bridge*.—Set off early with Walter, Charles, and ladies, in the sociable, to make a trip to Drumlanrig. We breakfasted at Mr. Boyd's, Broadmeadows, and were received with Yarrow hospitality. From thence climbed the Yarrow, and skirted Saint Mary's Lake, and ascended the Birkhill path, under the moist and misty influence of the *genius loci*. Never mind, my companions were merry and cheerful. When old people can be with the young without fatiguing them or themselves, their tempers derive the same benefits which some fantastic physicians of old supposed accrued to their constitutions from the breath of the young and healthy. You have not—cannot again have their gaiety or pleasure in seeing sights, but still it reflects itself upon you, and you are cheered and comforted. Our luncheon eaten in the herd's cottage; but the poor woman saddened me unawares, by asking for poor Charlotte, whom she had often seen there with me. She put me in mind that I had come twice over those hills and bogs with a wheel-carriage, before the road, now an excellent one, was made. I knew it was true, but, on my soul, looking where we must have gone, I could hardly believe I had been such a fool. For riding, pass if you will; but to put one's neck in such a venture with a wheel-carriage was too silly.

"*Drumlanrig, August* 24.—What visions does

* See Crabbe's Tale of "The Struggles of Conscience."
† See Tales of a Grandfather, and Miscellaneous Prose Works.

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not this magnificent old house bring back to me! The exterior is much improved since I first knew it. It was then in the state of dilapidation to which it had been abandoned by the celebrated old Q——, and was indeed scarce wind and water tight. Then the whole wood had been felled, and the outraged castle stood in the midst of waste and desolation, excepting a few scattered old stumps, not judged worth the cutting. Now, the whole has been, ten or twelve years since, completely replanted, and the scattered seniors look as graceful as fathers surrounded by their children. The face of this immense estate has been scarcely less wonderfully changed. The scrambling tenants, who held a precarious tenure of lease under the Duke of Queensberry, at the risk (as actually took place) of losing their possession at his death, have given room to skilful men, working their farms regularly, and enjoying comfortable houses, at a rent which is enough to forbid idleness, but not to overpower industry.

"*August* 25.—The Duke has grown up into a graceful and apparently strong young man, and received us most kindly. I think he will be well qualified to sustain his difficult and important task. The heart is excellent, so are the talents,—good sense and knowledge of the world, picked up at one of the great English schools, (and it is one of their most important results,) will prevent him from being deceived; and with perfect good-nature, he has a natural sense of his own situation which will keep him from associating with unworthy companions. God bless him! his father and I loved each other well, and his beautiful mother had as much of the angel as is permitted to walk this earth. I see the balcony from which they welcomed poor Charlotte and me, long ere the ascent was surmounted, streaming out their white handkerchiefs from the battlements. There were *four* merry people that day—now one sad individual is all that remains. *Singula præduntur anni.* I had a long walk today through the new plantations, the Duchess's Walk by the Nith, &c. (formed by Prior's 'Kitty young and gay;') fell in with the ladies, but their donkies outwalked me—a flock of sheep afterwards outwalked me, and I began to think, on my conscience, that a snail put in training might soon outwalk me. I must lay the old salve to the old sore, and be thankful for being able to walk at all. Nothing was written to-day, my writing-desk having been forgot at Parkgate, but Tom Crichton fetched it up to-day, so something more or less may be done to-morrow morning—and now to dress.

"*Biltock's-bridge, August* 26.—We took our departure from the friendly halls of Drumlanrig this morning, after breakfast. I trust this young nobleman will be

'A hedge about his friends,
A hackle to his foes.'

I would have him not quite so soft-natured as his grandfather, whose kindness sometimes mastered his excellent understanding. His father had a temper which better jumped with my humour. Enough of ill-nature to keep your good-nature from being abused, is no bad ingredient in their disposition who have favours to bestow.

"In coming from Parkgate here I intended to accomplish a purpose which I have for some years entertained, of visiting Lochwood, the ancient seat of the Johnstones, of which King James said, when he visited it, that the man who built it must have been a thief in his heart. It rained heavily, however, which prevented my making this excursion, and indeed I rather over-walked myself yesterday, and have occasion for rest.

'So sit down, Robin, and rest thee.'

"*Abbotsford, August* 27.—To-day we journeyed through the hills and amongst the storms; the weather rather bullying than bad. We viewed the Grey Mare's Tail, and I still felt confident in crawling along the ghastly bank, by which you approach the fall. I will certainly get some road of application to Mr. Hope Johnstone to pray him to make the place accessible. We got home before half-past four, having travelled forty miles.

"*Blair-Adam, August* 28.—Set off with Walter and Jane at seven o'clock, and reached this place in the middle of dinner-time. By some of my not unusual blunders we had come a day before we were expected. Luckily, in this ceremonious generation, there are still houses where such blunders only cause a little raillery, and Blair-Adam is one of them. My excellent friend is in high health and spirits, to which the presence of Sir Frederick adds not a little. His lady is here—a beautiful woman, whose countenance realizes all the poetic dreams of Byron. There is certainly something of full maturity of beauty which seems framed to be adoring and adored, and it is to be found in the full dark eye, luxuriant tresses, and rich complexion of Greece, and not among 'the pale unripened beauties of the north.' What sort of a mind this exquisite casket may contain, is not so easily known. She is anxious to please, and willing to be pleased, and, with her striking beauty, cannot fail to succeed.

"*August* 29.—Besides Mrs. and Admiral Adam, Mrs. Loch, and Miss Adam, I find here Mr. Impey son of that Sir Elijah celebrated in Indian history. He has himself been in India, but has, with a great deal of sense and observation, much better address than always falls to the share of the Eastern adventurer. The art of quiet, easy, entertaining conversation is, I think, chiefly known in England. In Scotland we are pedantic and wrangle, or we run away with the harrows on some topic we chance to be discursive upon. In Ireland they have too much vivacity, and are too desirous to make a show, to preserve the golden mean. They are the Gascons of Britain. George Ellis was the first converser I ever knew; his patience and good-breeding made me often ashamed of myself going off at score upon some favourite topic. Richard Sharp is so celebrated for this peculiar gift as to be generally called *Conversation Sharp.* The worst of this talent is, that it seems to lack sincerity. You never know what are the real sentiments of a good converser, or at least it is very difficult to discover in what extent he entertains them. His politeness is inconsistent with energy. For forming a good converser, good taste and extensive information and accomplishment are the principal requisites, to which must be added an easy and elegant delivery, and a well-toned voice. I think the higher order of genius is not favourable to this talent.

"Thorough decided downfall of rain. Nothing for it but patience and proof-sheets.

"*August* 30.—The weather scarce permitted us more license than yesterday, yet we went down to Lochore, and Walter and I perambulated the property, and discussed the necessity of a new road from the south-west, also that of planting some willows along the ditches in the low grounds. Returned to Blair-Adam to dinner.

"*Abbotsford, August* 31.—Left Blair at seven in the morning. Transacted business with Cadell and Ballantyne. Arrived here at eight o'clock at night.

"*September* 6.—Walter being to return to Ireland for three weeks, set off to-day, and has taken Charles with him. I fear this is but a wild plan, but the prospect seemed to make them so happy, that I could not find in my heart to say 'No.' So away they went this morning to be as happy as they can. Youth is a fine carver and gilder. I had a letter from Jem Ballantyne, plague on him! full of remonstrance, deep and solemn, upon the carelessness of Buonaparte. The rogue is right, too. But, as to correcting my style, to the

'Jemmy jemmy linkum feedle'

tune of what is called fine writing, I'll be d——d if I do. Drew L.12 in favour of Charles for his Irish jaunt; same time exhorted him to make himself as expensive to Walter, in the way of eating and drinking, as he could.

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"*September* 8.—Sir Frederick Adam deeply regrets the present Greek war, as prematurely undertaken before knowledge and rational education had extended themselves sufficiently. The neighbourhood of the Ionian Islands was fast producing civilisation; and as knowledge is power, it is clear that example and opportunities of education must soon have given them an immense superiority over the Turk. This premature war has thrown all back into a state of barbarism. It was, I cannot doubt, precipitated by the agents of Russia. Sir Frederick spoke most highly of Byron, the soundness of his views, the respect in which he was held—his just ideas of the Grecian cause and character, and the practical and rational wishes he formed for them. Singular that a man whose conduct in his own personal affairs had been any thing but practical should be thus able to stand by the helm of a sinking state! Sir Frederick thinks he might have done much for them if he had lived. The rantipole friends of liberty, who go about freeing nations with the same success which Don Quixote had in redressing wrongs, have, of course, blundered every thing which they touched. Task bang-up.

"*September* 12.—I begin to fear Nap will swell to seven volumes. I had a long letter from James B., threatening me with eight; but that is impossible. The event of his becoming Emperor is the central point of his history. Now I have just attained it, and it is the centre of the third volume. Two volumes and a half may be necessary to complete the whole.—As I slept for a few minutes in my chair, to which I am more addicted than I could wish, I heard, as I thought, my poor wife call me by the familiar name of fondness which she gave me. My recollections on waking were melancholy enough. These be

'The airy tongues that syllable men's names.'

All, I believe, have some natural desire to consider these unusual impressions as bodements of good or evil to come. But alas! this is a prejudice of our own conceit. They are the empty echoes of what is past, not the foreboding voice of things to come.

"*September* 13.—Wrote my task in the morning, and thereafter had a letter from that sage Privy-counsellor ——. He proposes to me that I shall propose to the —— of ——, and offers his own right honourable intervention to bring so beautiful a business to bear. I am struck dumb—absolutely mute and speechless—and how to prevent him making me farther a fool is not easy, for he has left me no time to assure him of the absurdity of what he proposes; and if he should ever hint at such a piece of d—d impertinence, what must the lady think of my conceit or of my feelings! I will write to his present quarters, however, that he may, if possible, have warning not to continue this absurdity.*

"*September* 14.—I should not have forgotten, among the *memorabilia* of yesterday, that two young Frenchmen made their way to our sublime presence, in guerdon of a laudatory copy of French verses sent up the evening before, by way of 'Open Sesamum,' I suppose. I have not read them, nor shall I. No man that ever wrote a line despised the *pap* of praise so heartily as I do. There is nothing I scorn more, except those who think the ordinary sort of praise or censure is matter of the least consequence. People have almost always some private view of distinguishing themselves, or of gratifying their animosity—some point, in short, to carry, with which you have no relation—when they take the trouble to praise you. In general, it is their purpose to get the person praised to puff away in return. To me their rank praises no more make amends for their bad poetry than tainted butter would pass off stale fish.

"*September* 17.—Rather surprised with a letter from Lord Melville, informing me he and Mr. Peel had put me into the Commission for enquiring into the condition of the Colleges in Scotland. I know little on the subject, but I dare say as much as some of the official persons who are inserted of course. The want of efficient men is the reason alleged. I must of course do my best, though I have little hope of being useful, and the time it will occupy is half ruinous to me, to whom time is every thing. Besides, I suppose the honour is partly meant as an act of grace for Malachi.

"*Jedburgh*, *September* 19.—Circuit. Went to poor Mr. Shortreed's and regretted bitterly the distress of the family, though they endeavoured to bear it bravely and to make my reception as comfortable and cheerful as possible. My old friend R. S. gave me a ring found in a grave at the Abbey, to be kept in memory of his son. I will certainly preserve it with especial care.*

"Many trifles at circuit, chiefly owing to the cheap whisky, as they were almost all riots. One case of an assault on a deaf and dumb woman. She was herself the chief evidence; but being totally without education, and having, from her situation, very imperfect notions of a Deity and a future state, no oath could be administered. Mr. Kinniburgh, teacher of the deaf and dumb, was sworn interpreter, together with another person her neighbour, who knew the accidental or conventional signs which the poor thing had invented for herself, as Mr. K. was supposed to understand the more general or natural signs common to people in such a situation. He went through the task with much address, and it was wonderful to see them make themselves intelligible to each other by mere pantomime. Still I did not consider such evidence as much to be trusted to on a criminal case. Several previous interviews had been necessary between the interpreter and the witness, and this is very much like getting up a story. Some of the signs, brief in themselves, of which Mr. K. gave long interpretations, put me in mind of Lord Burleigh in the Critic. 'Did he mean all this by a shake of the head?' 'Yes, if he shook his head as I taught him.' The man was found not guilty. Mr. K. told us of a pupil of his whom he restored, as it may be said, to humanity, and who told him that his ideas of another world were that some great person in the skies lighted up the sun in the morning as he saw his mother light a fire, and the stars in the evening as she kindled a lamp. He said the witness had ideas of truth and falsehood, which was, I believe, true; and that she had an idea of punishment in a future state, which I doubt. He confessed she could not give any guess at its duration, whether temporary or eternal. Dined of course with Lord Mackenzie the Judge.

"*September* 20.—Waked after a restless night, in which I dreamed of poor Tom Shortreed. Breakfasted with the Rev. Dr. Somerville. This venerable gentleman is one of the oldest of the literary brotherhood,—I suppose about eighty-seven,† and except a little deafness, quite entire. Living all his life in good society as a gentleman born—and having, besides, professional calls to make among the poor—he must know, of course, much that is curious concerning the momentous changes which have passed under his eyes. He talked of them accordingly, and has written something on the subject, but has scarce the force necessary to seize on the most striking points. The bowl that rolls easiest along the green goes farthest, and has least clay sticking to it. I have often noticed that a kindly, placid good-humour is the companion of longevity, and, I suspect, frequently the leading cause of it. Quick, keen, sharp observation, with the power of contrast and illustration, disturbs this easy current

* Lady Scott had not been quite four months dead, and the entry of the preceding day shows how extremely ill-timed was this communication, from a gentleman with whom Sir Walter had never had any intimacy. This was not the only proposition of the kind that reached him during his widowhood. In the present case there was very high rank and an ample fortune.

* Mr. Thomas Shortreed, a young gentleman of elegant taste and attainments, devotedly attached to Sir Walter, and much beloved in return, had recently died.

† The Rev. Dr. Thomas Sommerville, minister of Jedburgh, author of the "History of Great Britain during the reign of Queen Anne," and other works, died 11th May, 1830, in the 90th year of his age, and 44th of his ministry.

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of thought. My good friend, the venerable Doctor will not, I think, die of that disease.

"*September* 23.—Wrought in the morning, but only at reading and proofs. That cursed battle of Jena is like to cost me more time than it did Buonaparte to gain it. I met Colonel Ferguson about one, to see his dogs run. It is a sport I have loved well, but now, I know not why, I find it little interesting. To be sure I used to gallop, and that I cannot now do. We had good sport, however, and killed five hares. I felt excited during the chase, but the feeling was but momentary. My mind was immediately turned to other remembrances, and to pondering upon the change which had taken place in my own feelings. The day was positively heavenly, and the wild hill-side, with our little coursing party, was beautiful to look at. Yet I felt like a man come from the dead looking with indifference on that which interested him while living. We dined at Huntly-Burn. Kind and comfortable as usual.

"*September* 24.—I made a rally to-day and wrote four pages or nearly. Never stirred abroad the whole day, but was made happy after dinner by the return of Charles, full of his Irish jaunt, and happy as young men are, with the change of scene. To-morrow I must go to Melville Castle. I wonder what I can do or say about these Universities. One thing occurs—the distribution of bursaries only *ex meritis*. That is, I would have the presentations continue in the present patrons, but exact that those presented should be qualified by success in their literary attainments and distinction acquired at school to hold those scholarships. This seems to be following out the idea of the founders, who, doubtless, intended the furthering of good literature. To give education to dull mediocrity is a flinging of the children's bread to dogs—it is sharping a hatchet on a razor-strop, which renders the strop useless, and does no good to the hatchet. Well, something we will do.

"*Melville Castle, September* 25.—Found Lord and Lady M. in great distress. Their son Robert is taken ill at a Russian town about 250 miles from Moscow—dangerously ill. The distance increases the extreme distress of the parents, who, however, bore it like themselves. I was glad to spend a day upon the old terms with such old friends, and believe my being with them, even in this moment of painful suspense, as it did not diminish the kindness of my reception, might rather tend to divert them from the cruel subject. Dr. Nicoll, Principal of St. Andrews, dined—a very gentlemanlike sensible man. We spoke of the visitation, of granting degrees, of public examinations, of abolishing the election of professors by the Senatus Academicus (a most pregnant source of jobs), and much beside—but all desultory. I go back to Abbotsford to-morrow morning.

"*Abbotsford, September* 29.—A sort of zeal of working has seized me, which I must avail myself of. No dejection of mind, and no tremor of nerves, for which God be humbly thanked. My spirits are neither low nor high—grave, I think, and quiet—a complete twilight of the mind. I wrote five pages, nearly a double task, yet wandered for three hours, axe in hand, superintending the thinning of the home planting. That does good too. I feel it gives steadiness to my mind. Women, it is said, go mad much seldomer than men. I fancy, if this be true, it is in some degree owing to the little manual works in which they are constantly employed, which regulate in some degree the current of ideas, as the pendulum regulates the motion of the time-piece. I do not know if this is sense or nonsense, but I am sensible that if I were in solitary confinement, without either the power of taking exercise or employing myself in study, six months would make me a madman or an idiot.

"*October* 3.—I wrote my task as usual, but, strange to tell, there is a want of paper. I expect some to-day. In the mean-time, to avoid all quarrel with Dame Duty, I cut up some other leaves into the usual statutory size. They say of a fowl that if you draw a chalk line on a table, and lay chick-a-diddle down with his bill upon it, the poor thing will imagine himself opposed by an insurmountable barrier, which he will not attempt to cross. Such like are one-half of the obstacles which serve to interrupt our best resolves, and such is my pretended want of paper. It is like Sterne's want of *sous*, when he went to relieve the *Pauvre Honteux*.

"*October* 5.—I was thinking this morning that my time glided away in a singularly monotonous manner, like one of those dark grey days which neither promise sunshine nor threaten rain; too melancholy for enjoyment, too tranquil for repining. But this day has brought a change which somewhat shakes my philosophy. I find, by a letter from J. Gibson, that I *may* go to London without danger, and if I may, I in a manner *must*, to examine the papers in the Secretary of State's office about Buonaparte when at St. Helena. The opportunity having been offered must be accepted, and yet I had much rather stay at home. Even the prospect of seeing Sophia and Lockhart must be mingled with pain, yet this is foolish too. Lady Hamilton* writes me that Pozzo di Borgo, the Russian Minister at Paris, is willing to communicate to me some particulars of Buonaparte's early life. Query—might I not go on there? In for a penny, in for a pound. I intend to take Anne with me, and the pleasure will be great to her, who deserves much at my hand.

"*October* 9.—A gracious letter from Messrs. Abud and Son, bill-brokers, &c.; assure my trustees that they will institute no legal proceedings against me for four or five weeks. And so I am permitted to spend my money and my time to improve the means of paying them their debts, for that is the only use of this journey. They are Jews; I suppose the devil baits for Jews with a pork griskin. Were I not to exert myself, I wonder where their money is to come from.

"*October* 10.—I must prepare for going to London, and perhaps to Paris. I have great unwillingness to set out on this journey; I almost think it ominous; but

> 'They that look to freits, my master dear,
> Their freits will follow them.'

I am down-hearted about leaving all my things, after I was quietly settled; it is a kind of disrooting that recalls a thousand painful ideas of former happier journeys. And to be at the mercy of these fellows—God help—but rather God bless—man must help himself.

"*October* 11.—We are ingenious self-tormentors. This journey annoys me more than any thing of the kind in my life. My wife's figure seems to stand before me, and her voice is in my ears—'Scott, do not go.' It half frightens me. Strange throbbing at my heart, and a disposition to be very sick. It is just the effect of so many feelings which had been lulled asleep by the uniformity of my life, but which awaken on any new subject of agitation. Poor, poor Charlotte!! I cannot daub it farther. I get incapable of arranging my papers too. I will go out for half an hour. God relieve me!"

CHAPTER LXXII.

JOURNEY TO LONDON AND PARIS—SCOTT'S DIARY—ROKEBY—BURLEIGH—IMITATORS OF THE WAVERLEY NOVELS—SOUTHEY'S PENINSULAR WAR—ROYAL LODGE AT WINDSOR—GEORGE IV.—ADELPHI THEATRE—TERRY—CROFTON CROKER—THOMAS PRINGLE—ALLAN CUNNINGHAM—MOORE—ROGERS—LAWRENCE, &c.—CALAIS—MONTREUIL, &c.—RUE DE

* Now Lady Jane Hamilton Dalrymple—the eldest daughter of the illustrious Admiral Lord Duncan. Her Ladyship's kindness procured several valuable communications to the author of the Life of Buonaparte.

TIVOLI POZZO DI BORGO—LORD GRANVILLE—MARSHALS MACDONALD AND MARMONT—GALLOIS—W. R. SPENCER—PRINCESS GALITZIN—CHARLES X.—DUCHESS OF ANGOULEME, &C.—ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION IN PARIS—DOVER CLIFF—THEODORE HOOKE—LYDIA WHITE—DUKE OF WELLINGTON—PEEL—CANNING—CROKER, &C. &C.—DUKE OF YORK—MADAME D'ARBLAY—STATE OF POLITICS—OXFORD—CHELTENHAM—ABBOTSFORD—WALKER STREET, EDINBURGH—OCTOBER—DECEMBER. 1826.

On the 12th of October, Sir Walter left Abbotsford for London, where he had been promised access to the papers in the Government offices; and thence he proceeded to Paris, in the hope of gathering from various eminent persons authentic views and anecdotes concerning the career of Napoleon. His Diary shows that he was successful in obtaining many valuable materials for the completion of his historical work; and reflects, with sufficient distinctness, the very brilliant reception he, on this occasion, excerienced both in London and Paris. The range of his society is strikingly (and unconsciously) exemplified in the record of one day, when we find him breakfasting at the Royal Lodge in Windsor Park, and supping on oysters and porter in "honest Dan Terry's house, like a squirrel's cage," above the Adelphi Theatre, in the Strand. There can be no doubt that this expedition was in many ways serviceable to his Life of Napoleon; and I think as little, that it was chiefly so by renerving his spirits. The deep and respectful sympathy with which his misfortunes, and gallant behaviour under them, had been regarded by all classes of men at home and abroad, was brought home to his perception in a way not to be mistaken. He was cheered and gratified, and returned to Scotland, with renewed hope and courage, for the prosecution of his marvellous course of industry.

EXTRACTS FROM DIARY.

"*Rokeby Park, October* 13.—We left Carlisle before seven, and, visiting Appleby Castle by the way, (a most interesting and curious place,) we got to Morritt's about half-past four, where we had as warm a welcome as one of the warmest hearts in the world could give an old friend. It was great pleasure to me to see Morritt happy in the middle of his family circle, undisturbed, as heretofore, by the sickness of any one dear to him. I may note that I found much pleasure in my companion's conversation, as well as in her mode of managing all her little concerns on the road. I am apt to judge of character by good-humour and alacrity in these petty concerns. I think the inconveniences of a journey seem greater to me than formerly; while, on the other hand, the pleasures it affords are rather less. The ascent of Stainmore seemed duller and longer than usual, and, on the other hand, Bowes, which used to strike me as a distinguished feature, seemed an ill-formed mass of rubbish, a great deal lower in height than I had supposed; yet I have seen it twenty times at least. On the other hand, what I lose in my own personal feelings I gain in those of my companion, who shows an intelligent curiosity and interest in what she sees. I enjoy, therefore, reflectively, *veluti in speculo*, the sort of pleasure to which I am now less accessible.—Saw in Morritt's possession the original miniature of Milton, by Cooper—a valuable thing indeed. The countenance is handsome and dignified, with a strong expression of genius.*

"*Grantham, October* 15.—Old England is no changeling. It is long since I travelled this road, having come up to town chiefly by sea of late years. One race of red-nosed innkeepers are gone, and their widows, eldest sons, or head-waiters exercise hospitality in their room with the same bustle and importance. But other things seem, externally at least, much the same. The land is better ploughed; straight ridges every where adopted in place of the old circumflex of twenty years ago. Three horses, however, or even four, are still often seen in a plough yoked one before the other. Ill habits do not go out at once.

"*Biggleswade, October* 16.—Visited Burleigh this morning; the first time I ever saw that grand place, where there are so many objects of interest and curiosity. The house is magnificent, in the style of James I.'s reign, and consequently in mixed Gothic. Of paintings I know nothing; so shall attempt to say nothing. But whether to connoisseurs, or to an ignorant admirer like myself, the Salvator Mundi, by Carlo Dolci, must seem worth a king's ransom. Lady Exeter, who was at home, had the goodness or curiosity to wish to see us. She is a beauty after my own heart; a great deal of liveliness in the face; an absence alike of form and of affected ease, and really courteous after a genuine and ladylike fashion.

"25, *Pall-Mall, October* 17.—Here am I in this capital once more, after an April-weather meeting with my daughter and Lockhart. Too much grief in our first meeting to be joyful; too much pleasure to be distressing; a giddy sensation between the painful and the pleasurable. I will call another subject!

"I read with interest, during my journey, Sir John Chiverton and Brambletye House—novels, in what I may surely claim as the style

> 'Which I was born to introduce—
> Refined it first, and show'd its use.'

They are both clever books—one in imitation of the days of chivalry—the other (by Horace Smith, one of the authors of Rejected Addresses) dated in the time of the Civil Wars, and introducing historical characters.

"I believe, were I to publish the Canongate Chronicles without my name (*nomme de guerre*, I mean,) the event might be a corollary to the fable of the peasant who made the real pig squeak against the imitator, when the sapient audience killed the poor grunter as if inferior to the biped in his own language. The peasant could, indeed, confute the long-eared multitude by showing piggy; but were I to fail as a knight with a white and maiden shield, and then vindicate my claim to attention by putting 'By the Author of Waverley' in the title, my good friend *Publicum* would defend itself by stating I had tilted so ill, that my course had not the least resemblance to former doings, when indisputably I bore away the garland. Therefore I am firmly and resolutely determined to tilt under my own cognisance. The hazard, indeed, remains of being beaten. But there is a prejudice (not an undue one neither) in favour of the original patentee; and Joe Manton's name has borne out many a sorry gun-barrel. More of this to-morrow.

Expense of journey,	£41	0	0
Anne, pocket-money,	5	0	0
Servants on journey,	2	0	0
Cash in purse (silver not reckoned,)	2	0	0
	£50	0	0

This is like to be an expensive trip; but if I can sell an early copy to a French translator, it should bring me home. Thank God, little Dohnnie Hoo, as he calls himself, is looking well, though the poor dear child is kept always in a prostrate posture.

"*October* 18.—I take up again my remarks on imitators. I am sure I mean the gentlemen no wrong by calling them so, and heartily wish they had followed a better model. But it serves to show me *veluti in speculo* my own errors, or, if you will, those of the *style*. One advantage, I think, I still have all of them. They may do their fooling with better grace; but I, like Sir Andrew Agueecheek, do it more natural. They have to read old books, and consult antiquarian collections, to get their knowledge; I write because I have long since read such works, and possess, thanks to a strong memory, the information which they have to seek for. This

* This precious miniature, executed by Cooper for Milton's favourite daughter, was long in the possession of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and bequeathed by him to the poet Mason, who was an intimate friend of Mr. Morritt's father.

* Swift.

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heads to a dragging-in historical details by head and shoulders, so that the interest of the main piece is lost in minute descriptions of events which do not affect its progress. Perhaps I have sinned in this way myself; indeed, I am but too conscious of having considered the plot only as what Bayes calls the means of bringing in fine things; so that, in respect to the descriptions, it resembled the string of the showman's box, which he pulls to exhibit, in succession, Kings, Queens, the Battle of Waterloo, Buonaparte at St. Helena, Newmarket Races, and White-headed Bob floored by Jemmy from Town. All this I may have done, but I have repented of it; and in my better efforts, while I conducted my story through the agency of historical personages, and by connecting it with historical incidents, I have endeavoured to weave them pretty closely together, and in future I will study this more. Must not let the back-ground eclipse the principal figures—the frame overpower the picture.

"Another thing in my favour is, that my contemporaries steal too openly. Mr. Smith has inserted in Brambletye House whole pages from De Foe's 'Fire and Plague of London.'

> 'Steal! foh! a fico for the phrase—
> Convey, the wise it call!'

When I *convey* an incident or so, I am at as much pains to avoid detection as if the offence could be indicted at the Old Bailey. But leaving this, hard pressed as I am by these imitators, who must put the thing out of fashion at last, I consider, like a fox at his shifts, whether there be a way to dodge them—some new device to throw them off, and have a mile or two of free ground while I have legs and wind left to use it. There is one way to give novelty; to depend for success on the interest of a well-contrived story. But, wo's me! that requires thought, consideration—the writing out a regular plan or plot—above all, the adhering to one which I never can do, for the ideas rise as I write, and bear such a disproportioned extent to that which each occupied at the first concoction, that (cocksnowns!) I shall never be able to take the trouble: and yet to make the world stare, and gain a new march ahead of them all! Well, something we still will do.

> 'Liberty's in every blow;
> Let us do or die!'

Poor Rob Burns! to tack thy fine strains of sublime patriotism! Better Tristram Shandy's vein. Hand me my cap and bells there. So now, I am equipped. I open my raree-show with

> 'Ma'am, will you walk in, and fal de ral diddle?
> And, sir, will you stalk in, and fal de ral diddle?
> And, miss, will you pop in, and fal de ral diddle?
> And, master, pray hop in, and fal de ral diddle.'

Query—How long is it since I heard that strain of dulcet mood, and where or how came I to pick it up? It is not mine, 'though by your smiling you seem to say so.' Here is a proper morning's work! But I am childish with seeing them all well and happy here; and as I can neither whistle nor sing, I must let the giddy humour run to waste on paper.

"Sallied forth in the morning; bought a hat. Met Sir William Knighton,* from whose discourse I guess that Malachi has done me no prejudice in a certain quarter; with more indications of the times, which I need not set down. Sallied again after breakfast, and visited the Piccadilly ladies. Saw also the Duchess of Buckingham, and Lady Charlotte Bury, with a most beautiful little girl. Owen Rees breakfasted, and agreed I should have what the Frenchman has offered for the advantage of translating Napoleon, which will help my expenses to town and down again.

"*October* 19.—I rose at my usual time, but could not write; so read Southey's History of the Peninsular War. It is very good indeed—honest English principle in every line; but there are many prejudices, and there is a tendency to augment a work already too long by saying all that can be said of the history of ancient times appertaining to every place mentioned. What care we whether Saragossa be derived from Cæsaria Augusta? Could he have proved it to be Numantium, there would have been a concatenation accordingly.*

"Breakfasted at Sam Roger's with Sir Thomas Lawrence; Luttrel, the great London wit; Richard Sharp, &c. One of them made merry with some part of Rose's Ariosto; proposed that the Italian should be printed on the other side, for the sake of assisting the indolent reader to understand the English; and complained of his using more than once the phrase of a lady having 'voided her saddle,' which would certainly sound extraordinary at Apothecaries' Hall. Well, well, Rose carries a dirk too. The morning was too dark for Westminster Abbey, which we had projected.

"I then went to Downing Street, and am put by Mr. Wilmot Horton into the hands of a confidential clerk, Mr. Smith, promises access to every thing. Then saw Croker, who gave me a bundle of documents. Sir George Cockburn promises his despatches and journal. In short, I have ample prospect of materials. Dined with Mrs. Coutts. Tragi-comic distress of my good friend on the marriage of her presumptive heir with a daughter of Lucien Buonaparte.

"*October* 20.—Commanded down to pass a day at Windsor. This is very kind of his Majesty.—At breakfast, Crofton Croker, author of the Irish Fairy Tales—little as a dwarf, keen-eyed as a hawk, and of easy, prepossessing manners. Something like Tom Moore. Here were also Terry, Allen Cunningham, Newton, and others. Now I must go to work.—Went down to Windsor, or rather to the Lodge in the Forest, which, though ridiculed by connoisseurs seems to be no bad specimen of a royal retirement, and is delightfully situated. A kind of cottage, too large perhaps for the style, but yet so managed, that in the walks you only see parts of it at once, and these well composed and grouping with the immense trees. His majesty received me with the same mixture of kindness and courtesy which has always distinguished his conduct towards me. There was no company besides the royal retinue—Lady Conyngham—her daughter—and two or three other ladies. After we left table, there was excellent music by the royal band, who lay ambushed in a green-house adjoining the apartment. The King made me sit beside him and talk a great deal—*too much* perhaps—for he has the art of raising one's spirits, and making you forget the *retenue* which is prudent every where, especially at court. But he converses himself with so much ease and elegance, that you lose thoughts of the prince in admiring the well-bred and accomplished gentleman. He is in many respects the model of a British monarch—has little inclination to try experiments on government otherwise than through his Ministers—sincerely, I believe, desires the good of his subjects—is kind toward the distressed, and moves and speaks 'every inch a king.' I am sure such a man is fitter for us than one who would long to head armies, or be perpetually intermeddling with *la grande politique*. A sort of reserve, which creeps on him daily, and prevents his going to places of public resort, is a disadvantage, and prevents his being so generally popular as is earnestly to be desired. This, I think, was much increased by the behaviour of the rabble in the brutal insanity of the Queen's trial, when John Bull, meaning the best in the world, made such a beastly figure.

"*October* 21.—Walked in the morning with Sir William Knighton, and had much confidential chat, not fit to be here set down, in case of accidents. He undertook most kindly to recommend Charles,

* Sir William was Private Secretary to King George IV. Sir Walter made his acquaintance in August, 1822, and ever afterwards they corresponded with each other—sometimes very confidentially.

* It is amusing to compare this criticism with Sir Walter's own anxiety to identify his daughter-in-law's place, *Lochore*, with the *Urbs Orrea* of the Roman writers. See vol. ante, lxii. p. 429.

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when he has taken his degree, to be attached to some of the diplomatic missions, which I think is best for the lad, after all. After breakfast went to Windsor Castle, and examined the improvements going on there under Mr. Wyatville, who appears to possess a great deal of taste and feeling for Gothic architecture. The old apartments, splendid enough in extent and proportion, are paltry in finishing. Instead of being lined with heart of oak, the palace of the British King is hung with paper, painted wainscot colour. There are some fine paintings, and some droll ones: Among the last are those of divers princes of the House of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, of which Queen Charlotte was descended. They are ill-coloured, orang-outang-looking figures, with black eyes and hook-noses, in old-fashioned uniforms. Returned to a hasty dinner in Pall-Mall, and then hurried away to see honest Dan Terry's theatre, called the Adelphi, where we saw the Pilot, from an American novel of that name. It is extremely popular, the dramatist having seized on the whole story, and turned the odious and ridiculous parts, assigned by the original author to the British, against the Yankees themselves. There is a quiet effrontery in this, that is of a rare and peculiar character. The Americans were so much displeased, that they attempted a row—which rendered the piece doubly attractive to the seamen at Wapping, who came up and crowded the house night after night, to support the honour of the British flag. After all, one must deprecate whatever keeps up ill-will betwixt America and the mother country; and we in particular should avoid awakening painful recollections. Our high situation enables us to contemn petty insults, and to make advances towards cordiality. I was, however, glad to see Dan's theatre as full seemingly as it could hold. The heat was dreadful, and Anne so unwell that she was obliged to be carried into Terry's house, a curious dwelling no larger than a squirrel's cage, which he has contrived to squeeze out of the vacant space of the theatre, and which is accessible by a most complicated combination of staircases and small passages. There we had rare good porter and oysters after the play, and found Anne much better.

"*October* 22.—This morning Mr. Wilmot Horton, Under Secretary of State, breakfasted. He is full of some new plan of relieving the poor's-rates, by encouraging emigration. But John Bull will think this savours of Botany-Bay. The attempt to look the poor's-rates in the face is certainly meritorious. Laboured in writing and marking extracts to be copied, from breakfast to dinner—with the exception of an hour spent in telling Johnnie the history of his namesake, Gilpin. Tom Moore and Sir Thomas Lawrence came in the evening, which made a pleasant *soirée*. Smoked my French—Egad it is time to air some of my vocabulary. It is, I find, cursedly musty.

"*October* 23.—Sam Rogers and Moore breakfasted here, and we were very merry fellows. Moore seemed disposed to go to France with us. I foresee I shall be embarrassed with more communications than I can use or trust to, coloured as they must be by the passions of those who make them. Thus I have a statement from the Dutchess d'Escars, to which the Buonapartists would, I dare say, give no credit. If Talleyrand, for example, could be communicative, he must have ten thousand reasons for perverting the truth, and yet a person receiving a direct communication from him would be almost barred from disputing it.

'Sing, tantarara, rogues all.'

"We dined at the Residentiary-house with good Dr. Hughes—Allan Cunningham, Sir Thomas Lawrence, and young Mr. Hughes. Thomas Pringle,* is returned from the Cape. He might have done well there, could he have scoured his brains of politics, but he must needs publish a Whig journal at the Cape of Good Hope!! He is a worthy creature, but conceited withal—*hinc illæ lachrymæ*. He brought me some antlers and a skin, in addition to others he had sent to Abbotsford four years since.

"*October* 24.—Laboured in the morning. At breakfast, Dr. Holland, and Cohen, whom they now call Palgrave, a mutation of names which confused my recollections. Item, Moore. I worked at the Colonial Office pretty hard. Dined with Mr. Wilmot Horton, and his beautiful wife, the original of the '*She walks in beauty*,' &c. of poor Byron.—N. B. The conversation is seldom excellent among official people. So many topics are what Otaheitians call *taboo*. We hunted down a pun or two, which were turned out, like the stag at the Epping Hunt, for the pursuit of all and sundry. Came home early, and was in bed by eleven.

"*October* 25. Kind Mr. Wilson* and his wife at breakfast; also Sir Thomas Lawrence. Lockert came in afterwards, and made a proposal to me to give up his intended life of George III. in my favour on cause shown. I declined the proposal, not being of opinion that my genius lies that way, and not relishing hunting in couples. Afterwards went to the Colonial Office, and had Robert Hay's assistance in my enquiries—then to the French Ambassador's for my passports. Picked up Sotheby, who endeavoured to saddle me for a review of his Polyglott Virgil. I fear I shall scarce convince him that I know nothing of the Latin lingo. Sir R. H. Inglis, Richard Sharp, and other friends called. We dine at Miss Dumergue's, and spend a part of our soirée at Lydia White's. To-morrow,

'For France, for France, for it is more than need.'

"*Calais*, *October* 26.—Up at five, and in the packet by six. A fine passage—save at the conclusion, while we lay on and off the harbour of Calais. But the tossing made no impression on my companion or me; we ate and drank like dragoons the whole way, and were able to manage a good supper and best part of a bottle of Chablis, at the classic Dessein's, who received us with much courtesy.

"*October* 27.—Custom-house, &c. detained us till near ten o'clock, so we had time to walk on the Boulevards, and to see the fortifications, which must be very strong, all the country round being flat and marshy. Lost, as all know, by the bloody papist bitch (one must be vernacular when on French ground) Queen Mary, of red-hot memory. I would rather she had burned a score more of bishops. If she had kept it, her sister Bess would sooner have parted with her virginity. Charles I. had no temptation to part with it—it might indeed, have been shuffled out of our hands, during the Civil Wars, but Noll would have as soon let Monsieur draw out one of his grinders—then Charles II. would hardly have dared to sell such an old possession, as he did Dunkirk; and after that the French had little chance till the Revolution. Even then, I think, we could have held a place that could be supplied from our own element the sea. *Cui bono?* None, I think, but to plague the rogues.—We dined at Cormont, and being stopped by Mr. Canning having taken up all the post-horses, could only reach Montreuil that night. I should have liked to have seen some more of this place, which is fortified; and as it stands on an elevated and rocky site, must present some fine points. But as

* Mr. Pringle was a Roxburghshire farmer's son (lame in both legs) who, in youth, attracted Sir Walter's notice by his poem called, "Scenes of Teviotdale." He was for a time Editor of Blackwood's Magazine, but the publisher and he had different politics, quarrelled, and parted. Sir Walter then gave Pringle strong recommendations to the late Lord Charles Somerset, Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, in which colony he settled, and for some years throve under the Governor's protection; but the newspaper alluded to in the text ruined his prospects at the Cape—he returned to England—became Secretary to an anti-slavery association—published a charming little volume entitled "African Sketches,"—and died, I fear in very distressed circumstances, in December 1834. He was a man of amiable feelings and elegant genius. The reader may see a fuller account of him in the Quarterly Review for December 1835.

* William Wilson, Esq. of Wandsworth Common, formerly of Wilsontown, in Lanarkshire.

† E. H. Locker, Esq. then Secretary, now one of the Commissioners, of Greenwich Hospital—an old and dear friend of Scott's.

we came in late, and left early, I can only bear witness to good treatment, good supper, good *vin de Barsac*, and excellent beds.

"*October* 28.—Breakfasted at Abbeville, and saw a very handsome Gothic church, and reached Grandvilliers at night. The house is but second-rate, though lauded by several English travellers for the moderation of its charges, as was recorded in a book presented to us by the landlady. There is no great patriotism in publishing that a traveller thinks the bills moderate—it serves usually as an intimation to mine host or hostess that John Bull will bear a little more squeezing. I gave my attestation, too, however, for the charges of the good lady resembled those elsewhere; and her anxiety to please was extreme. Folks must be harder hearted than I am to resist the *empressement*, which may, indeed be venal, yet has in its expression a touch of cordiality.

"*Paris, October* 29.—Breakfasted at Beauvais, and saw its magnificent cathedral—unfinished it has been left, and unfinished it will remain, of course,—the fashion of cathedrals being passed away. But even what exists is inimitable, the choir particularly, and the grand front. Beauvais is called the *Pucelle*, yet, so far as I can see, she wears no stays—I mean, has no fortifications. On we run, however. *Vogue la galère; et voila nous à Paris, Hotel de Windsor* (Rue Rivoli,) where we are well lodged. France, so far as I can see, which is very little, has not undergone many changes. The image of war has, indeed, passed away, and we no longer see troops crossing the country in every direction—villages either ruined or hastily fortified—inhabitants sheltered in the woods and caves to escape the rapacity of the soldiers,—all this has passed away. The inns, too, much amended. There is no occasion for that rascally practice of making a bargain—or *combien*-ing your landlady, before you unharness your horses, which formerly was matter of necessity. The general taste of the English seems to regulate the travelling—naturally enough, as the hotels, of which there are two or three in each town, chiefly subsist by them. We did not see one French equipage on the road; the natives seem to travel entirely in the diligence, and doubtless *à bon marché*; the road was thronged with English. But in her great features France is the same as ever. An oppressive air of solitude seems to hover over these rich and extended plains, while we are sensible, that whatever is the nature of the desolation, it cannot be sterility. The towns are small, and have a poor appearance, and more frequently exhibit signs of decayed splendour than of increasing prosperity. The chateau, the abode of the gentleman,—and the villa, the retreat of the thriving *negociant*,—are rarely seen till you come to Beaumont. At this place, which well deserves its name of the fair mount, the prospect improves greatly, and country-seats are seen in abundance; also woods, sometimes deep and extensive, at other times scattered in groves and single trees. Amidst these the oak seldom or never is found; England, lady of the ocean, seems to claim it exclusively as her own. Neither are there any quantity of firs. Poplars in abundance, give a formal air to the landscape. The forests chiefly consist of beeches, with some birches, and the roads are bordered by elms cruelly cropped and pollarded and switched. The demand for fire-wood occasions these mutilations. If I could waft by a wish the thinnings of Abbotsford here, it would make a little fortune of itself. But then to switch and mutilate my trees! not for a thousand francs. Ay, but sour grapes, quoth the fox.

"*October* 30.—Finding ourselves snugly settled in our hotel, we determined to remain here at fifteen francs per day. We are in the midst of what can be seen. This morning wet and surly. Salied, however, by the assistance of a hired coach, and left cards for Count Pozzo di Borgo, Lord Granville, our ambassador, and M. Gallois, author of the History of Venice. Found no one at home, not even the old pirate Galignani, at whose den I ventured to call. Showed my companion the Louvre, (which was closed unluckily,) the fronts of the palace, with its courts, and all that splendid quarter which the fame of Paris rests upon in security. We can never do the like in Britain. Royal magnificence can only be displayed by despotic power. In England, were the most splendid street or public building to be erected, the matter must be discussed in Parliament, or perhaps some sturdy cobbler holds out, and refuses to part with his stall, and the whole plan is disconcerted. Long may such impediments exist! But then we should conform to circumstances, and assume in our public works a certain sober simplicity of character, which should point out that they were dictated by utility rather than show. The affectation of an expensive style only places us at a disadvantageous contrast with other nations, and our substitution of plaster for freestone resembles the mean ambition which displays Bristol stones in default of diamonds.

"We went in the evening to the Comedie Francaise; *Rosamonde* the piece. It is the composition of a young man with a promising name—Emile de *Bonnechose*; the story that of Fair Rosamond. There were some good situations, and the actors in the French taste seemed to me admirable, particularly Mademoiselle Bourgoin. It would be absurd to criticise what I only half understood; but the piece was well received, and produced a very strong effect. Two or three ladies were carried out in hysterics; one next to our box was frightfully ill. A Monsieur *à belles moustaches*—the husband, I trust, though it is likely they were *en partie fine*—was extremely and affectionately assiduous. She was well worthy of the trouble, being very pretty indeed; the face beautiful, even amidst the involuntary convulsions. The afterpiece was *Femme Juge at Partie*, with which I was less amused than I had expected, because I found I understood the language less than I did ten or eleven years since. Well, well, I am past the age of mending.

"Some of our friends in London had pretended that at Paris I might stand some chance of being encountered by the same sort of tumultuary reception which I met in Ireland; but for this I see no ground. It is a point on which I am totally indifferent. As a literary man I cannot affect to despise public applause; as a private gentleman, I have always been embarrassed and displeased with popular clamours, even when in my favour. I know very well the breath of which such shouts are composed, and I am sensible those who applaud me to-day would be as ready to toss me to-morrow; and I would not have them think that I put such a value on their favours as would make me for an instant fear their displeasure. Now all this disclamation is sincere, and yet it sounds affected. It puts me in mind of an old woman, who, when Carlisle was taken by the Highlanders in 1745, chose to be particularly apprehensive of personal violence, and shut herself up in a closet, in order that she might escape ravishment. But no one came to disturb her solitude, and she began to be sensible that poor Donald was looking out for victuals, or seeking some small plunder, without bestowing a thought on the fair sex; by and by she popped her head out of her place of refuge with the pretty question, 'Good folks, can you tell when the ravishing is going to begin?' I am sure I shall neither hide myself to avoid applause, which probably no one will think of conferring, nor have the meanness to do any thing which can indicate any desire of ravishment. I have seen, when the late Lord Erskine entered the Edinburgh theatre, papers distributed in the boxes to mendicate a round of applause—the natural reward of a poor player.

"*October* 31.—At breakfast visited by M. Gallois, an elderly Frenchman, (always the most agreeable class,) full of information, courteous and communicative. He had seen nearly, and remarked deeply, and spoke frankly, though with due caution. He went with us to the museum, where I think the Hall of Sculpture continues to be a fine thing—that of

Pictures but tolerable, when we reflect upon 1815. A number of great French daubs, (comparatively,) by David and Gerard, cover the walls once occupied by the Italian *chefs-d'œuvre*. *Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum.* We then visited Nôtre Dame and the Palace of Justice. The latter is accounted the oldest building in Paris, being the work of St. Louis. It is, however, in the interior, adapted to the taste of Louis XIV. We drove over the Pont Neuf, and visited the fine quays, which was all we could make out to-day, as I was afraid to fatigue Anne. When we returned home, I found Count Pozzo di Borgo waiting for me, a personable man, inclined to be rather corpulent—handsome features, with all the Corsican fire in his eyes. He was quite kind and communicative. Lord Granville had also called, and sent his Secretary to invite us to dinner to-morrow. In the evening at the Odeon, where we saw *Ivanhoe*. It was superbly got up, the Norman soldiers wearing pointed helmets and what resembled much hauberks of mail, which looked very well. The number of the attendants, and the skill with which they were moved and grouped on the stage, were well worthy of notice. It was an opera, and, of course, the story sadly mangled, and the dialogue, in great part, nonsense. Yet it was strange to hear any thing like the words which I (then in an agony of pain with spasms in my stomach) dictated to William Laidlaw at Abbotsford now recited in a foreign tongue, and for the amusement of a strange people. I little thought to have survived the completing of this novel.

"*November* 1.—I suppose the ravishing is going to begin, for we have had the Dames des Halles, with a bouquet like a maypole, and a speech full of honey and oil, which cost me ten francs; also a small worshipper, who would not leave his name, but came *seulement pour avoir le plaisir, la felicité, &c. &c.* All this jargon I answer with corresponding *blarney* of my own, for have I not licked the black stone of that ancient castle? As to French, I speak it as it comes, and like Doeg in Absalom and Achitophel—

'——— dash on through thick and thin,
Through sense and nonsense, never out nor in.'

We went this morning with M. Gallois to the Church of St. Genevieve, and thence to the College Henri IV., where I saw once more my old friend Chevalier. He was unwell, swathed in a turban of nightcaps and a multiplicity of *robes de chambre*; but he had all the heart and vivacity of former times. I was truly glad to see the kind old man. We were unlucky in our day for sights, this being a high festival—All Souls' Day. We were not allowed to scale the steeple of St. Genevieve, neither could we see the animals at the Jardin des Plantes, who, though they have no souls, it is supposed, and no interest, of course, in the devotions of the day, observe it in strict retreat, like the puns of Kilkenny. I met, however, one lioness walking at large in the Jardin, and was introduced. This was Madame de Souza, the authoress of some well-known French romances of a very classical character, I am told, for I have never read them. She must have been beautiful, and is still well-looked. She is the mother of the handsome Count de Flahault, and had a very well-looking daughter with her, besides a son or two. She was very agreeable. We are to meet again. The day becoming decidedly rainy, we returned along the Boulevards by the Bridge of Austerlitz, but the weather spoiled the fine show.

"We dined at the Ambassador, Lord Granville's. He inhabits the same splendid house which Lord Castlereagh had in 1815, namely, Numero 30, Rue de Fauxbourg St. Honoré. It once belonged to Pauline Borghese, and, if its walls could speak, they might tell us mighty curious stories. Without their having any tongue, they speak to my feelings 'with most miraculous organ.' In these halls I had often seen and conversed familiarly with many of the great and powerful, who won the world by their swords, and divided it by their counsel. There I saw very much of poor Lord Castlereagh—a man of sense, presence of mind, and fortitude, which carried him through many an affair of critical moment, when finer talents would have stuck in the mire. He had been, I think, indifferently educated, and his mode of speaking being far from logical or correct, he was sometimes in danger of becoming almost ridiculous, in despite of his lofty presence, which had all the grace of the Seymours, and his determined courage. But then he was always up to the occasion, and upon important matters was an orator to convince, if not to delight his hearers. He is gone, and my friend ******** also, whose kindness this town so strongly recalls. It is remarkable they were the only persons of sense and credibility who both attested supernatural appearances on their own evidence, and both died in the same melancholy manner. I shall always tremble when any friend of mine becomes visionary. I have seen in these rooms the Emperor Alexander, Platoff, Schwartzenberg, old Blucher, Fouché, and many a marshal whose truncheon had guided armies—all now at peace, without subjects, without dominion, and where their past life, perhaps, seems but the recollection of a feverish dream. What a group would this band have made in the gloomy regions described in the Odessey! But to lesser things. We were most kindly received by Lord and Lady Granville, and met many friends, some of them having been guests at Abbotsford: among these were Lords Ashley and Morpeth; there were also Charles Ellis (Lord Seaford now,) *cum pluribus aliis*. Anne saw for the first time an entertainment after the *mode de France*, where the gentlemen left the parlour with the ladies. In diplomatic houses it is a good way of preventing political discussion, which John Bull is always apt to introduce with the second bottle. We left early, and came home at tea, much pleased with Lord and Lady Granville's kindness, though it was to be expected, as our recommendation came from Windsor.

"*November* 2.—Another gloomy day—a pize upon it!—and we have settled to go to St. Cloud, and dine, if possible, with the Drummonds at Auteuil. Besides, I expect poor Spencer* to breakfast. There is another thought which depresses me. Well—but let us jot down a little politics, as my book has a pretty firm lock. The Whigs may say what they please, but I think the Bourbons will stand. M. * * *, no great Royalist, says that the Duke of Orleans lives on the best terms with the reigning family, which is wise on his part, for the golden fruit may ripen and fall of itself, but it would be dangerous to

'Lend the crowd his arm to shake the tree.'†

The army, which was Buonaparte's strength, is now very much changed by the gradual influence of time, which has removed many, and made invalids of many more. The artisans are neutral, and if the King will govern according to the Charta, and, what is still more, according to the habits of the people, he will sit firm enough, and the constitution will gradually attain more and more reverence as age gives it authority, and distinguishes it from those temporary and ephemeral governments, which seemed only set up to be pulled down. The most dangerous point in the present state of France is that of religion. It is, no doubt, excellent in the Bourbons to desire to make France a religious country; but they begin, I think, at the wrong end. To press the observancy and ritual of religion on those who are not influenced by its doctrines, is planting the growing tree with its head downwards. Rites are sanctified by belief; but belief can never arise out of an enforced observance of ceremonies; it only makes men detest what is imposed on them

* The late Honourable William Robert Spencer, the best writer of *vers de société* in our time, and one of the most charming of companions, was exactly Sir Walter's contemporary, and by him first attracted notice by a version of Bürger's *Lenora*. Like him, too, this remarkable man fell into pecuniary distress in the disastrous year 1825, and he was now an involuntary resident in Paris, where he died in October, 1834, *ann. ætat* 65.

† Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*—Character of Shaftesbury.

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by compulsion. Then those Jesuits, who constitute, emphatically, an *imperium in imperio*, labouring first for the benefit of their own order, and next for that of the Roman See—what is it but the introduction into France of a foreign influence, whose interest may often run counter to the general welfare of the kingdom?

We have enough of ravishment. M. Meurice writes me that he is ready to hang himself that we did not find accommodation at his hotel; and Madame Mirbel came almost on her knees to have permission to take my portrait. I was cruel; but seeing her weeping ripe, consented she should come to-morrow, and work while I wrote. A Russian Princess Galitzin, too, demands to see me, in the heroic vein; "*Elle vouloit traverser les mers pour aller voir* S. W. S.," &c.—and offers me a rendezvous at my hotel. This is precious tom-foolery; however, it is better than being neglected like a fallen sky-rocket, which seemed like to be my fate last year.

"We went to St. Cloud with my old friend Mr. Drummond, now living at a pretty *maison de campagne* at Auteuil. St. Cloud, besides its unequalled view, is rich in remembrances. I did not fail to visit the *Orangerie*, out of which Boney expelled the Council of Five Hundred. I thought I saw the scoundrels jumping the windows, with the bayonet at their rumps. What a pity the house was not two stories high! I asked the Swiss some questions on the *locale*, which he answered with becoming caution, saying, however, that 'he was not present at the time.' There are also new remembrances. A separate garden, laid out as a play-ground for the royal children, is called Trocadero, from the siege of Cadiz. But the Bourbons should not take military ground—it is firing a pop-gun in answer to a battery of cannon. All within the house is deranged. Every trace of Nap. or his reign totally done away, as if traced in sand over which the tide has passed. Moreau and Pichegru's portraits hang in the royal antechamber. The former has a mean physiognomy; the latter has been a strong and stern-looking man. I looked at him, and thought of his death-struggles. In the guard-room were the heroes of La Vendée, Charette with his white bonnet, the two La Roche Jacquelines, l'Escures, in an attitude of prayer, Stofflet, the gamekeeper, with others.

"*November* 3.—Sat to Mad. Mirbel—Spencer at breakfast. Went out and had a long interview with Marshal Macdonald, the purport of which I have put down elsewhere. Visited Princess Galitzin, and also Cooper, the American novelist. This man, who has shown so much genius, has a good deal of the manners, or want of manners, peculiar to his countrymen. He proposed to me a mode of publishing in America, by entering the book as the property of a citizen. I will think of this. Every little helps, as the tod says, when, &c. At night, at the Theatre de Madame, where we saw two petit pieces, *Le Marriage de Raison*, and *Le plus beau jour de Ma Vie*—both excellently played. Afterwards, at Lady Granville's rout, which was as splendid as any I ever saw—and I have seen *beaucoup dans ce genre*. A great number of ladies of the first rank were present, and if honeyed words from pretty lips could surfeit, I had enough of them. One can swallow a great deal of whipped cream, to be sure, and it does not hurt an old stomach.

"*November* 4.—After ten I went with Anne to the Tuileries, where we saw the royal family pass through the Glass Gallery as they went to chapel. We were very much looked at in our turn, and the King, on passing out, did me the honour to say a few civil words, which produced a great sensation. Mad. la Dauphine and Mad. de Berri curtsied, smiled, and looked extremely gracious; and smiles, bows, and curtsies rained on us like odours, from all the courtiers and ladies of the train. We were conducted by an officer of the Royal Gardes du Corps, to a convenient place in the chapel, where we had the pleasure of hearing the mass performed with excellent music.

"I had a perfect view of the royal family. The King is the same in age as I knew him in youth at Holyroodhouse,—debonair and courteous in the highest degree. Mad. Dauphine resembles very much the prints of Maria Antoinette, in the profile especially. She is not, however, beautiful, her features being too strong, but they announce a great deal of character, and the princess whom Buonaparte used to call the *man* of the family. She seemed very attentive to her devotions. The Duchess of Berri seemed less immersed in the ceremony, and yawned once or twice. She is a lively-looking blonde—looks as if she were good-humoured and happy, by no means pretty, and has a cast with her eyes; splendidly adorned with diamonds, however. After this gave Mad. Mirbel a sitting, where I encountered a general officer, her uncle, who was chef de l'etat major to Buonaparte. He was very communicative, and seemed an interesting person, by no means over much prepossessed in favour of his late master, whom he judged impartially, though with affection. We came home and dined in quiet, having refused all temptations to go out in the evening; this on Anne's account as well as my own. it is not quite gospel, though Solomon says it—The eye *can* be tired with seeing, whatever he may allege in the contrary. And then there are so many compliments. I wish for a little of the old Scotch causticity. I am something like the bee that sips treacle.

"*November* 5.—I believe I must give up my journal till I leave Paris. The French are literally outrageous in their civilities bounce in at all hours, and drive one half mad with compliments. I am ungracious not to be so entirely thankful as I ought to this kind and merry people. We breakfasted with Mad. Mirbel, where were the Dukes of Fitz-James and Duras, &c. &c. a goodly company; but all's one for that. I made rather an impatient sitter, wishing to talk much more than was agreeable to Madame. Afterwards we went to the Champs Elysées, where a balloon was let off, and all sorts of frolics performed for the benefit of the *bons gens de Paris*—besides stuffing them with victuals. I wonder how such a civic festival would go off in London or Edinburgh, or especially in Dublin. To be sure, they would not introduce their shilelahs! But, in the classic taste of the French there were no such gladiatorial doings. To be sure, they have a natural good-humour and gaiety which inclines them to be pleased with themselves, and every thing about them. We dined at the ambassador's, where was a large party, Lord Morpeth, the Duke of Devonshire, and others—all very kind. Pozzo di Borgo there, and disposed to be communicative. A large soirée. Home at eleven. These hours are early, however.

November 6.—Cooper came to breakfast, but we were *obsedés partout*. Such a number of Frenchmen bounced in successively and exploded (I mean discharged) their compliments, that I could hardly find an opportunity to speak a word, or entertain Mr. Cooper at all. After this we sat again for our portraits. Mad. Mirbel took care not to have any one to divert my attention, but I contrived to amuse myself with some masons finishing a façade opposite to me, who placed their stones, not like Inigo Jones, but in the most lubberly way in the world, with the help of a large wheel, and the application of strength of hand. John Smith of Darnick, and two of his men, would have done more with a block and pulley than the whole score of them. The French

* S. W. S. stands very often in this Diary for *Sir Walter Scott*. This is done in spertive allusion to the following trait of Tom Purdie:—The morning after the news of Scott's baronetcy reached Abbotsford, Tom was not to be found in any of his usual haunts: he remained absent the whole day—and when he returned at night the mystery was thus explained. He and the head shepherd, (who, by the by, was also butcher in ordinary,) Robert Hogg, (a brother of the Bard of Ettrick,) had been spending the day on the hill busily employed in prefixing a large S. for Sir to the W. S. which previously appeared on the backs of the sheep. It was afterwards found that honest Tom had taken it upon him to order a mason to carve a similar honourable augmentation on the stones which marked the line of division between his master's moor and that of the Laird of Kippilaw.

steps far behind in machinery. We are almost eaten up with kindness, but that will have its end. I have had to parry several presents of busts, and so forth. The funny thing was the airs of my little friend. We had a most affectionate parting—wet, wet cheeks on the lady's side. Pebble-hearted, and shed as few tears as Crab of doggish memory.*

"Went to Galignani's, where the brothers, after some palaver, offered £105 for the sheets of Napoleon, to be reprinted at Paris in English. I told them I would think of it. I suppose Treuttel and Würtz had apprehended something of this kind, for they write me that they had made a bargain with my publisher (Cadell, I suppose) for the publishing of my book in all sorts of ways. I must look into this.

"Dined with Marshal Macdonald† and a splendid party; amongst others, Marshal Marmont—middle size, stout made, dark complexion, and looks sensible. The French hate him much for his conduct in 1814, but it is only making him the scape-goat. Also I saw Mons. de Molé, but especially the Marquis de Lauriston, who received me most kindly. He is personally like my cousin Colonel Russell. I learned that his brother, Louis Law,‡ my old friend, was alive, and the father of a large family. I was most kindly treated, and had my vanity much flattered by the men who had acted such important parts talking to me in the most frank manner.

"In the evening to Princess Galitsin, where were a whole covey of Princesses of Russia arrayed in *tartan*, with music and singing to boot. The person in whom I was most interested was Mad. de Beuffliers, upwards of eighty, very polite, very pleasant, and with all the acquirements of a French court lady of the time of Mad. Sevigné, or of the correspondent rather of Horace Walpole. Cooper was there, so the Scotch and American lions took the field together.—Home, and settled our affairs to depart.

"*November* 7.—Off at seven—breakfasted at Beauvais, and pushed on to Amiens. This being a forced march, we had bad lodgings, wet wood, uncomfortable supper, damp beds, and an extravagant charge. I was never colder in my life than when I waked with the sheets clinging around me like a shroud.

"*November* 8.—We started at six in the morning, having no need to be called twice, so heartily was I weary of my comfortless couch. Breakfasted at Abbeville—then pushed on to Boulogne, expecting to find the packet ready to start next morning, and so to have had the advantage of the easterly tide. But, lo ye! the packet was not to sail till next day. So, after shrugging our shoulders—being the solace *à la mode de France*—and recruiting ourselves with a pullet and a bottle of Chablis *à la mode d'Angleterre*, we set off for Calais after supper, and it was betwixt three and four in the morning before we got to Dessein's, when the house was full, or reported to be so. We could only get two wretched brick-paved garrets, as cold and moist as those of Amiens, instead of the comforts which we were received with at our arrival.§ But I was better prepared. Stripped off the sheets, and lay down in my dressing-gown, and so roughed it out—*tant bien que mal*.

"*November* 9.—At four in the morning we were called—at six we got on board the packet, where I found a sensible and conversible man, a very pleasant circumstance. At Dover Mr. Ward came with the lieutenant-governor of the castle, and wished us to visit that ancient fortress. I regretted much that our time was short, and the weather did not admit of our seeing views, so we could only thank the gentlemen in declining their civility. The castle, partly ruinous, seems to have been very fine. The Cliff, to which Shakspeare gave his immortal name, is, as all the world knows, a great deal lower than his description implies. Our Dover friends, *justly* jealous of the reputation of their Cliff, impute this diminution of its consequence to its having fallen in repeatedly since the poet's time. I think it more likely that the imagination of Shakspeare, writing perhaps at a period long after he may have seen the rock, had described it such as he conceived it to have been. Besides, Shakspeare was born in a flat country, and Dover Cliff is at least lofty enough to have suggested the exaggerated features to his fancy. At all events, it has maintained its reputation better than the Tarpeian Rock—no man could leap from it and live. Left Dover after a hot luncheon about four o'clock, and reached London at half-past three in the morning. So, adieu to *la belle France*, and welcome merry England.

"*Pall-Mall, November* 10.—Ere I leave *la belle France*, however, it is fit I should express my gratitude for the unwontedly kind reception which I met with at all hands. It would be an unworthy piece of affectation did I not allow that I have been pleased—highly pleased—to find a species of literature intended only for my own country, has met such an extensive and favourable reception in a foreign land, where there was so much *à priori* to oppose its progress. For my work I think I have done a good deal; but, above all, I have been confirmed strongly in the impressions I had previously formed of the character of Nap., and may attempt to draw him with a firmer hand.

"The succession of new people and unusual incidents has had a favourable effect on my mind, which was becoming rutted like an ill kept highway. My thoughts have for some time flowed in another and pleasanter channel than through the melancholy course into which my solitary and deprived state had long driven them, and which gave often pain to be endured without complaint, and without sympathy. 'For this relief,' as Marcellus says in Hamlet, 'much thanks.'

"To-day I visited the public offices, and prosecuted my researches. Left enquiries for the Duke of York, who has recovered from a most desperate state. His legs had been threatened with mortification; but he was saved by a critical discharge;—also visited the Duke of Wellington, Lord Melville, and others, besides the ladies in Piccadilly. Dined and spent the evening quietly in Pall-Mall.

"*November* 11.—Croker came to breakfast, and we were soon after joined by Theodore Hook, *alias* (*on dit*) John Bull—he has got as fat as the actual monarch of the herd. Lockhart sat still with us, and we had, as Gil Blas says, a delicious morning, spent in abusing our neighbours, at which my three neighbours are no novices any more than I am myself, though (like Puss in Boots, who only caught mice for his amusement), I am only a chamber counsel in matters of scandal. The fact is, I have refrained, as much as human frailty will permit, from all satirical composition. Here is an ample subject for a little black-balling in the case of Joseph Hume, the great accountant, who has managed the Greek loan so egregiously. I do not lack personal provocation (see 13th March last), yet I won't attack him—at present at least—but *qu'il se garde de moi*:

> 'I'm not a king, nor nae sic thing,
> My word it may not stand;
> But Joseph may a buffet bide,
> Come he beneath my brand.'

"At dinner we had a little blow-out on Sophia's part. Lord Dudley, Mr. Hay, Under Secretary of State, Sir Thomas Lawrence, &c. *Mistress*, as she now calls herself, Joanna Baillie, and her sister,

* See the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act II. Scene 3.

† The Marshal had visited Scotland in 1825—and the District then saw a good deal of him under the roof of his kinsman, Mr. Macdonald Buchanan.

‡ Lauriston, the ancient seat of the Laws, so famous in French history, is very near Edinburgh, and the estate was in their possession at the time of the Revolution. Two or three cadets of the family were of the first emigration, and one of them (M. Louis Law) was a frequent guest of the poet's father, and afterwards corresponded during many years with himself. I am not sure whether it was M. Louis Law whose French designation so much amused the people of Edinburgh. One brother of the Marquis de Lauriston, however, was styled *Le Chevalier de Mutton-hole*—this being the name of a village on the Scotch property.

§ A room in Dessein's hotel is now inscribed "Chambre de Walter Scott"—another has long been marked "Chambre de Byron."

came in the evening. The whole went off pleasantly.

"*November* 12.—Went to sit to Sir T. L. to finish the picture for his Majesty, which every one says is a very fine one. I think so myself; and wonder how Sir Thomas has made so much out of an old weather-beaten block. But I believe the hard features of old Dons like myself are more within the compass of the artist's skill than the lovely face and delicate complexion of females. Came home after a heavy shower. I had a long conversation about * * with * * * *—all that was whispered is true—a sign how much better our domestics are acquainted with the private affairs of our neighbours than we are. A dreadful tale of incest and seduction, and nearly of blood also—horrible beyond expression in its complications and events—'And yet the end is not;'—and this man was amiable, and seemed the soul of honour—laughed, too, and was the soul of society. It is a mercy our own thoughts are concealed from each other. Oh! if, at our social table, we could see what passes in each bosom around, we would seek dens and caverns to shun human society! To see the projector trembling for his falling speculations; the voluptuary rueing the event of his debauchery; the miser wearing out his soul for the loss of a guinea—all—all bent upon vain hopes and vainer regrets—we should not need to go to the hall of the Caliph Vathek to see men's hearts broiling under their black veils. Lord keep us from all temptation, for we cannot be our own shepherd!

"We dined to-day at Lady Stafford's at Westhill. Lord S. looks very poorly, but better than I expected. No company, excepting Sam Rogers and Mr. Thomas Grenville, a very amiable and accomplished man whom I knew better about twenty years since. Age has touched him, as it has doubtless affected me. The great lady received us with the most cordial kindness, and expressed herself, I am sure sincerely, desirous to be of service to Sophia.

"*November* 13.—I consider Charles's business as settled by a private intimation which I had to that effect from Sir W. K., so I need negociate no farther, but wait the event. Breakfasted at home, and somebody with us, but the whirl of visits so great that I have already forgot the party. Lockhart and I dined at an official person's, where there was a little too much of that sort of flippant wit, or rather smartness, which becomes the parochial Joe Miller of boards and offices. You must not be grave, because it might lead to improper discussions; and to laugh without a joke is a hard task. Your professed wags are treasures to this species of company. Gil Blas was right in eschewing the literary society of his friend Fabricio; but nevertheless one or two of the mess could greatly have improved the conversation of his *Commis*. Went to poor Lydia White's, and found her extended on a couch, frightfully swelled, unable to stir, rouged, jesting, and dying. She has a good heart, and is really a clever creature, but unhappily, or rather happily, she has set up the whole staff of her rest in keeping literary society about her. The world has not neglected her. It is not always so bad as it is called. She can always make up her circle, and generally has some people of real talent and distinction. She is wealthy, to be sure, and gives petit dinners, but not in a style to carry the point *à force d'argent*. In her case the world is good-natured, and, perhaps it is more frequently so than is generally supposed.

"*November* 14.—We breakfasted at honest Allan Cunningham's—honest Allan—a leal and true Scotsman of the old cast. A man of genius, besides, who only requires the tact of knowing when and where to stop, to attain the universal praise which ought to follow it. I look upon the alteration of 'It's hame and its hame,' and 'A wet sheet and a flowing sea,' as among the best songs going. His prose has often admirable passages, but he is obscure, and overlays his meaning, which will not do nowadays, when he who runs must read.

"Dined at Croker's, at Kensington, with his family, the Speaker, and the facetious Theodore Hook.

"We came away rather early, that Anne and I might visit Mrs. Arbuthnot to meet the Duke of Wellington. In all my life I never saw him better. He has a dozen of campaigns in his body—and tough ones. Anne was delighted with the frank manners of this unequalled pride of British war, and me he received with all his usual kindness. He talked away about Buonaparte, Russia, and France.

"*November* 15.—I went to the Colonial Office, where I laboured hard. Dined with the Duke of Wellington. Anne could not look enough at the *vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*. The party were Mr. and Mrs. Peel and Mr. and Mrs. Arbuthnot, Vesey Fitzgerald, Banks, and Croker, with Lady Bathurst and Lady Georgiana. One gentleman took much of the conversation, and gave us, with unnecessary emphasis, and at superfluous length, his opinion of a late gambling transaction. This spoiled the evening. I am sorry for the occurrence though, for Lord * * * is fetlock deep in it, and it looks like a vile bog. This misfortune, with the foolish incident at * * *, will not be suffered to fall to the ground, but will be used as a counterpoise to the Greek loan. Peel asked me, in private, my opinion of three candidates for the Scotch gown, and I gave it him candidly. We shall see if it has weight. I begin to tire of my gaieties; and the late hours and constant feasting disagree with me. I wish for a sheep's-head and whisky-toddy against all the French cookery and champagne in the world. Well, I suppose I might have been a Judge of Session by this time—attained, in short, the grand goal proposed to the ambition of a Scottish lawyer. It is better, however, as it is, while, at least, I can maintain my literary reputation.

"*November* 16.—Breakfasted with Rogers, with my daughters and Lockhart. R. was exceedingly entertaining, in his dry, quiet, sarcastic manner. At eleven to the Duke of Wellington, who gave me a bundle of remarks on Buonaparte's Russian campaign, written in his carriage during his late mission to St. Petersburgh. It is furiously scrawled, and the Russian names hard to distinguish, but it *shall* do me yeoman's service. Thence I passed to the Colonial Office, where I concluded my extracts. Lockhart and I dined with Croker at the Admiralty *au grand couvert*. No less than five Cabinet Ministers were present—Canning, Huskisson, Melville, Peel, and Wellington, with sub-secretaries by the bushel. The cheer was excellent, but the presence of too many men of distinguished rank and power always freezes the conversation. Each lamp shines brightest when placed by itself; when too close, they neutralize each other.*

"*November* 17.—Sir John Malcolm at breakfast. Saw the Duke of York. The change on H. R. H. is most wonderful. From a big, burly, stout man, with a thick and sometimes an inarticulate mode of speaking, he has sunk into a thin-faced slender-looking old man, who seems diminished in his very size. I could hardly believe I saw the same person, though I was received with his usual kindness. He speaks much more distinctly than formerly; his complexion is clearer; in short, H. R. H. seems, on the whole, more healthy after this crisis than when in the stall-fed state, for such it seemed to be, in which I remember him. God grant it; his life is of infinite value to the King and country—it is a breakwater behind the throne.

"*November* 18.—Was introduced by Rogers to Mad. D'Arblay, the celebrated authoress of Evelina and Cecilia,—an elderly lady, with no remains of personal beauty, but with a simple and gentle man-

* In returning from this dinner Sir Walter said, "I have seen some of these great men at the same table *for the last time*."

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ner, a pleasing expression of countenance, and apparently quick feelings. She told me she had wished to see two persons—myself, of course, being one, the other George Canning. This was really a compliment to be pleased with—a nice little handsome pat of butter, made up by a neat handed Phillis of a dairy-maid, instead of the grease, fit only for cart-wheels, which one is dosed with by the pound.

"Mad. D'Arblay told us that the common story of Dr. Burney, her father, having brought home her own first work, and recommended it to her perusal, was erroneous. Her father was in the secret of Evelina being printed. But the following circumstances may have given rise to the story:—Dr. Burney was at Streatham soon after the publication, where he found Mrs. Thrale recovering from her confinement, low at the moment, and out of spirits. While they were talking together, Johnson, who sat beside in a kind of reverie, suddenly broke out—'You should read this new work, madam—you should read Evelina; every one says it is excellent and they are right.' The delighted father obtained a commission from Mrs. Thrale to purchase his daughter's work, and retired the happiest of men. Mad. D'Arblay said she was wild with joy at this decisive evidence of her literary success, and that she could only give vent to her rapture by dancing and skipping round a mulberry-tree in the garden. She was very young at this time. I trust I shall see this lady again.

"Dined at Mr. Peel's with Lord Liverpool, Duke of Wellington, Croker, &c. The conversation very good, Peel taking the lead in his own house, which he will not do elsewhere. * * * Should have been at the play, but sat too long at Peel's. So ends my campaign amongst these magnificoes and potent seigniors, with whom I have found, as usual, the warmest acceptation.

"*November* 20.—I ended this morning my sittings to Lawrence, and am heartily sorry there should be another picture of me except that which he has finished. The person is remarkably like, and conveys the idea of the stout blunt carle that cares for few things and fears nothing. He has represented the author as in the act of composition, yet has effectually discharged all affectation from the manner and attitude. He dined with us at Peel's yesterday, where, by the way, we saw the celebrated Chapeau de Paille, which is not a Chapeau de Paille at all. I also saw this morning the Duke of Wellington and the Duke of York; the former so communicative, that I regretted extremely the length of time,* but have agreed on a correspondence with him. *Trop d'honneur pour moi.* The Duke of York seems still mending, and spoke of state affairs as a high Tory. Were his health good, his spirit is as strong as ever. H. R. H. has a devout horror of the Liberals. Having the Duke of Wellington, the Chancellor, and (perhaps) a still greater person on his side, he might make a great fight when they split, as split they will. But Canning, Huskisson, and a mitigated party of Liberaux will probably beat them. Canning's wit and eloquence are almost invincible. But then the Church, justly alarmed for their property, which is plainly struck at, and the bulk of the landed interest, will scarce brook even a mild infusion of Whiggery into the Administration. Well, time will show.

"We visited our friends Peel, Lord Gwydir, Mr. Arbuthnot, &c. and left our tickets of adieu. In no instance, during my former visits to London, did I ever meet with such general attention and respect on all sides.

"Lady Louisa Stuart dined—also Wright and Mr. and Mrs. Christie. Dr. and Mrs. Hughes came in the evening; so ended pleasantly our last night in London.

"*Oxford*, *November* 20.—Left London after a comfortable breakfast, and an adieu to the Lockhart family. If I had had but comfortable hopes of their poor, pale, prostrate child, so clever and so interesting, I should have parted easily on this occasion, but these misgivings overcloud the prospect. We reached Oxford by six o'clock, and found Charles and his friend young Surtees waiting for us, with a good fire in the chimney, and a good dinner ready to be placed on the table. We had struggled through a cold, sulky, drizzly day which deprived of all charms even the beautiful country near Henley. So we came from cold and darkness into light, and warmth, and society. *N. B.*—We had neither daylight nor moonlight to see the view of Oxford, from the Maudlin bridge, which I used to think one of the most beautiful in the world.

"The expense of travelling has mounted high. I am too old to rough it, and scrub it nor could I have saved fifty pounds by doing so. I have gained, however, in health and spirits, in a new stock of ideas, new combinations, and new views. My self-consequence is raised, I hope not unduly, by the many flattering circumstances attending my reception in the two capitals, and I feel confident in proportion. In Scotland I shall find time for labour and for economy.

"*Cheltenham*, *November* 21.—Breakfasted with Charles in his chambers at Brazen-nose, where he had every thing very neat. How pleasant it is for a father to sit at his child's board! It is like the aged man reclining under the shadow of the oak which he has planted. My poor plant has some storms to undergo, but were this expedition conducive to to no more than his entrance into life under suitable auspices, I should consider the toil and the expense well bestowed. We then sallied out to see the lions. Remembering the ecstatic feelings with which I visited Oxford more than twenty-five years since, I was surprised at the comparative indifference with which I revisited the same scenes. Reginald Heber, then composing his Prize Poem, and imping his wings for a long flight of honourable distinction, is now dead in a foreign land—Hodgson* and other able men all entombed. The towers and halls remain, but the voices which fill them are of modern days. Besides, the eye becomes saturated with sights, as the full soul loathes the honeycomb. I admired indeed, but my admiration was void of the enthusiasm which I formerly felt. I remember particularly having felt, while in the Bodleian, like the Persian magician who visited the enchanted library in the bowels of the mountain, and willingly suffered himself to be enclosed in its recesses, while less eager sages retired in alarm. Now I had some base thoughts concerning luncheon, which was most munificently supplied by Surtees, at his rooms in University College, with the aid of the best ale I ever drank in my life, the real wine of Ceres, and worth that of Bacchus. Dr. Jenkyns,† the vice-chancellor, did me the honour to call, but I saw him not. Before three set out for Cheltenham, a long and uninteresting drive, which we achieved by nine o'clock. My sister-in-law, Mrs. Thomas Scott, and her daughter, instantly came to the hotel, and seem in excellent health and spirits.

"*Nov.* 22.—Breakfasted and dined with Mrs. Scott, and leaving Cheltenham at seven, pushed on to Worcester to sleep. *Nov.* 23.—Breakfasted at Birmingham and slept at Macclesfield. As we came in between ten and eleven, the people of the inn expressed surprise at our travelling so late, as the general distress of the manufacturers has rendered many of the lower classes desperately outrageous. *Nov.* 24.—Breakfasted at Manchester—pressed on—and by dint of exertion reached Kendal to sleep; thus getting out of the region of the stern, sullen, unwashed artificers, whom you see lounging sulkily along the streets in Lancashire. God's justice is requiting, and will yet farther requite, those who have blown up this country into a state of unsubstantial opulence, at the expense of the health and morals of the lower classes.

* Sir Walter no doubt means that he regretted not having seen the Duke at an earlier period of his historical labours.

* Dr. Frodsham Hodgson, the late excellent Master of Brazen-nose College.

† Dr. Richard Jenkyns, Master of Baliol College.

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"*Abbotsford, November* 26.—Consulting my purse, found my good £60 diminished to Quarter less Ten. In purse, £8. Naturally reflected how much expense has increased since I first travelled. My uncle's servant, during the jaunts we made together while I was a boy, used to have his option of a shilling per diem for board wages, and usually preferred it to having his charges borne. A servant nowadays to be comfortable on the road should have 4s. or 4s. 6d. board wages, which before 1790 would have maintained his master. But if this be pitiful, it is still more so to find the alteration in my own temper. When young, on returning from such a trip as I have just had, my mind would have loved to dwell on all I had seen that was rich and rare, or have been placing, perhaps, in order, the various additions with which I had supplied my stock of information—and now, like a stupid boy blundering over an arithmetical question half obliterated on his slate, I go stumbling on upon the audit of pounds, shillings, and pence. Well,—the skirmish has cost me £200. I wished for information—and I have had to pay for it."———

On proceeding to Edinburgh to resume his official duties, Sir Walter established himself in a furnished house in Walker Street, it being impossible for him to leave his daughter alone in the country, and the aspect of his affairs being so much ameliorated that he did not think it necessary to carry the young lady to such a place as Mrs. Brown's lodgings. During the six ensuing months, however, he led much the same life of toil and seclusion from company which that of Abbotsford had been during the preceding autumn—very rarely dining abroad, except with one or two intimate friends, *en famille*—still more rarely receiving even a single guest at home; and, when there was no such interruption, giving his night as well as his morning to the desk.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON, AND CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE IN PROGRESS—REVIEWALS OF MACKENZIE'S EDITION OF HOME, AND OF HOFFMAN'S TALES—RHEUMATIC ATTACKS—THEATRICAL FUND DINNER—AVOWAL OF THE SOLE AUTHORSHIP OF THE WAVERLEY NOVELS—LETTER FROM GOETHE—DEATHS OF THE DUKE OF YORK—MR. GIFFORD—SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, ETC.—MR. CANNING MINISTER—COMPLETION OF THE LIFE OF BUONAPARTE—REMINISCENCES OF AN AMANUENSIS—GOETHE'S REMARKS ON THE WORK—ITS PECUNIARY RESULTS—DECEMBER, 1826—JUNE, 1827.

DURING the winter of 1826-7, Sir Walter suffered great pain (enough to have disturbed effectually any other man's labours, whether official or literary) from successive attacks of rheumatism, which seems to have been fixed on him by the wet sheets of one of his French inns; and his Diary contains, besides, various indications that his constitution was already shaking under the fatigue to which he had subjected it. Formerly, however great the quantity of work he put through his hands, his evenings were almost always reserved for the light reading of an elbow chair, or the enjoyment of his family and friends. Now he seemed to grudge every minute that was not spent at the desk. The little that he read of new books, or for mere amusement, was done by snatches in the course of his meals; and to walk, when he could walk at all, to the Parliament House, and back again through the Prince's Street Gardens, was his only exercise, and his only relaxation. Every ailment, of whatever sort, ended only in aggravating his lameness; and, perhaps, the severest test his philosophy encountered, was the feeling of bodily helplessness that from week to week crept upon him. The winter, to make bad worse, was a very cold and stormy one. The growing sluggishness of his blood showed itself in chilblains, not only on the feet but the fingers, and his handwriting becomes more and more cramped and confused. I shall not pain the reader by extracting merely medical entries from his Diary; but the following give characteristic sketches of his temperament and reflections:—

"*December* 16.—Another bad night. I remember I used to think a slight illness was a luxurious thing. My pillow was then softened by the hand of affection, and the little cares put in exercise to soothe the languor or pain, were more flattering and pleasing than the consequences of the illness were disagreeable. It was a new scene to be watched and attended, and I used to think that the *malade imaginaire* gained something by his humour. It is different in the latter stages—the old post-chaise gets more shattered and out of order at every turn; windows will not be pulled up, doors refuse to open, or being open will not shut again—which last is rather my case. There is some new subject of complaint every moment—your sicknesses come thicker and thicker—your comforting and sympathizing friends fewer and fewer—for why should they sorrow for the course of nature? The recollection of youth, health, and uninterrupted powers of activity, neither improved nor enjoyed, is a poor strain of comfort. The best is, the long halt will arrive at last, and cure all. This was a day of labour, agreeably varied by a pain which rendered it scarce possible to sit upright. My journal is getting a vile chirurgical aspect. I begin to be afraid of the odd consequences complaints in the *post equitem* are said to produce. I shall tire of my journal. In my better days I had stories to tell; but death has closed the long dark avenue upon loves and friendships, and I look at them as through the grated door of a burial-place filled with monuments of those who were once dear to me, with no insincere wish that it may open for me at no distant period, provided such be the will of God. My pains were those of the heart, and had something flattering in their character; if in the head, it was from the blow of a bludgeon gallantly received, and well paid back. I think I shall not live to the usual verge of human existence; I shall never see the threescore and ten, and shall be summed up at a discount. No help for it, and no matter either.

"*December* 18.—Sir Adam Ferguson breakfasted—one of the few old friends left out of the number of my youthful companions. In youth we have many companions, few friends perhaps; in age companionship is ended, except rarely, and by appointment. Old men, by a kind of instinct, seek younger associates, who listen to their stories, honour their gray hairs while present, and mimic and laugh at them when their backs are turned. At least that was the way in our day, and I warrant our chicks of the present brood crow to the same tune. Of all the friends that I have left here, there is none who has any decided attachment to literature. So either I must talk on that subject to young people—in other words, turn proser—or I must turn tea-table talker and converse with ladies. I am too old and too proud for either character, so I'll live alone and be contented. Lockhart's departure for London was a loss to me in this way."

He spent a few days at Abbotsford at Christmas, and several weeks during the spring vacation; but the frequent Saturday excursions were now out of the question—if for no other reason, on account of the quantity of books which he must have by him while working at his Napoleon. He says, on the 30th of December—"Wrote hard. Last day of an eventful year; much evil—and some good, but especially the courage to endure what Fortune sends without becoming a pipe for her fingers.* It is *not* the last day of the year; but to-morrow being Sunday, we hold our festival to-day.—The Fergusons came, and we had the usual appliances of mirth and good cheer. Yet our party, like the chariot-wheels of Pharoah in the Red Sea, dragged heavily.—It must be allowed that the regular recurrence of annual festivals among the same individuals has, as life advances, something in it that is melancholy.

* *Hamlet*, Act III. Scene 2.

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We meet like the survivors of some perilous expedition, wounded and weakened ourselves, and looking through diminished ranks to think of those who are no more. Or they are like the feast of the Caribs, in which they held that the pale and speechless phantoms of the deceased appeared and mingled with the living. Yet where shall we fly from vain repining?—or why should we give up the comfort of seeing our friends, because they can no longer be to us, or we to them, what we once were to each other?

"*January* 1, 1827.—God make this a happy new year to the King and country, and to all honest men.

"I went to dine as usual at the kind house of Huntly-Burn; but the cloud still had its influence. The effect of grief upon persons who, like myself and Sir Adam, are highly susceptible of humour, has, I think, been finely touched by Wordsworth in the character of the merry village teacher Matthew, whom Jeffrey profanely calls "a half crazy sentimental person."* But, with my friend Jeffrey's pardon, I think he loves to see imagination beat when it is bitted and managed, and ridden upon the *grand pas*. He does not make allowance for starts and sallies, and bounds, when Pegasus is beautiful to behold, though sometimes perilous to his rider. Not that I think the amiable bard of Rydale shows judgment in choosing such subjects as the popular mind cannot sympathize in. It is unwise and unjust to himself. I do not compare myself, in point of imagination, with Wordsworth, far from it; for his is naturally exquisite, and highly cultivated from constant exercise. But I can see as many castles in the clouds as any man, as many genii in the curling smoke of a steam-engine, as perfect a Persepolis in the embers of a sea-coal fire. My life has been spent in such day-dreams. But I cry no roast-meat. There are times a man should remember what Rosseau used to say, *Tait-toi, Jean Jacques, car on ne t'entend pas!*

"Talking of Wordsworth, he told Anne a story, the object of which, as she understood it, was to show that Crabbe had no imagination. Crabbe, Sir George Beaumont, and Wordsworth were sitting together in Murray's room in Albemarle Street. Sir George, after sealing a letter, blew out the candle which had enabled him to do so, and exchanging a look with Wordsworth, began to admire in silence the undulating thread of smoke which slowly arose from the expiring wick, when Crabbe put on the extinguisher. Anne laughed at the instance, and inquired if the taper was wax, and being answered in the negative, seemed to think that there was no call on Mr. Crabbe to sacrifice his sense of smell to their admiration of beautiful and evanescent forms. In two other men, I should have said, 'Why, it is affectations,' with Sir Hugh Evans;† but Sir George is the man in the world most void of affectation; and then he is an exquisite painter, and no doubt saw where the *incident* would have succeeded in painting. The error is not in you yourself receiving deep impressions from slight hints, but in supposing that precisely the same sort of impression must arise in the mind of men, otherwise of kindred feeling, or that the common-place folk of the world can derive such inductions at any time, or under any circumstances.

"*January* 13.—The Fergusons, with my neighbours Mr. Scrope and Mr. Bainbridge, eat a haunch of venison from Drummond Castle, and seemed happy. We had music and a little dancing, and enjoyed in others the buoyancy of spirit that we no longer possess ourselves. Yet I do not think the young people of this age so gay as we were. There is a turn for persiflage, a fear of ridicule among them, which stifles the honest emotions of gaiety and lightness of spirit; and people, when they give in the least to the expansion of their natural feelings, are always kept under by the fear of becoming ludicrous. To restrain your feelings and check your enthusiasm in the cause even of pleasure, is now a rule among people of fashion, as much as it used to be among philosophers.

"*Edinburgh January*, 15.—Off we came, and in despite of rheumatism I got through the journey tolerably. Coming through Galashiels, we met the Laird of Torwoodlee, who, on hearing how long I had been confined, asked how I bore it, observing that he had *once* in his life—Torwoodlee must be between 60 and 70—been confined for five days to the house, and was like to hang himself. I regret God's free air as much as any man, but I could amuse myself were it in the Bastile.

"*February* 19.—Very cold weather. What says Dean Swift?—

> 'When frost and snow come both together,
> Then sit by the fire and save shoe leather.'

I read and wrote at the bitter account of the French retreat from Moscow, in 1812, till the little room and coal fire seemed snug by the comparison. I felt cold in its rigour in my childhood and boyhood, but not since. In youth and middle life I was yet less sensible to it than now—but I remember thinking it worse than hunger. Uninterrupted to-day and did eight leaves.*

"*March* 3.—Very severe weather, and home covered with snow. White as a frosted plum-cake, by jingo. No matter; I am not sorry to find I can stand a brush of weather yet. I like to see Arthur's Seat and the stern old Castle with their white watch-cloaks on. But, as Byron said to Moore, d—— n it, Tom, don't be poetical. I settled to Boney, and wrote right long and well.

"*Abbotsford, March* 12.—Away we set, and came safely to Abbotsford amid all the dulness of a great thaw, which has set the rivers a streaming in full tide. The wind is high, but for my part

> 'I like this rocking of the battlements.'†

I was received by old Tom and the dogs with the unsophisticated feelings of good-will. I have been trying to read a new novel which I had heard praised. It is called *Almacks*, and the author has so well succeeded in describing the cold selfish fopperies of the time, that the copy is almost as dull as the orignal. I think I shall take up my bundle of Sheriff-Court processes instead of Almacks, as the more entertaining avocation of the two.

March 13.—Before breakfast, prepared and forwarded the processes to Selkirk. Had a pleasant walk to the thicket, though my ideas were olla-podrida-ish. I expect this will not be a day of work but of idleness, for my books are not come. Would to God I could make it light, thoughtless idleness, such as I used to have when the silly smart fancies ran in my brain like the bubbles in a glass of champagne,—as brilliant to my thinking, as intoxicating, as evanescent. But the wine is somewhat on the lees. Perhaps it was but indifferent cider after all. Yet I am happy in this place, where every thing looks friendly, from old Tom to young Nym.‡ After all, he has little to complain of who has left so many things that like him.

"*March* 21.—Wrote till twelve, then out upon the heights, though the day was stormy, and faced the gale bravely. Tom Purdie was not with me. He would have obliged me to keep the sheltered ground. There is a touch of the old spirit in me yet, that bids me brave the tempest,—the spirit that, in spite of manifold infirmities, made me a roaring boy in my youth, a desperate climber, a bold rider, a deep drinker, and a stout player at single stick, of all which valuable qualities there are now but slender remains. I worked hard when I came in, and finished five pages.

"*March* 26.—Despatched packets. Colonel and Captain Ferguson arrived to breakfast. I had previously determined to give myself a day to write letters; and this day will do as well as another. I

* See *Edinburgh Review*, No. xxiii. p.135.

† *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act I. Scene 1.

* One page of his MS. answers to from four to five of the close-printed pages of the original edition of his Buonaparte.

† Zanga, in "*The Revenge*."

‡ Nimrod—a stag-hound.

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cannot keep up with the world without shying a letter now and then. It is true the greatest happiness I could think of would be to be rid of the world entirely. Excepting my own family, I have little pleasure in the world, less business in it, and am heartily careless about all its concerns.

"*April* 24.—Still deep snow—a foot thick in the court-yard, I dare say. Severe welcome for the poor lambs now coming into the world. But what signifies whether they die just now, or a little while after to be united with sallad at luncheon time? It signifies a good deal too. There is a period, though a short one, when they dance among the gowans, and seem happy. As for your aged sheep or wether, the sooner they pass to the *Norman* side of the vocabulary, the better. They are like some old dowager ladies and gentlemen of my acquaintance—no one cares about them till they come to be *cut up*, and then we see how the tallow lies on the kidneys and the chine.

"*May* 13.—A most idle and dissipated day. I did not rise till half-past eight o'clock. Col. and Capt. Ferguson came to breakfast. I walked halfway home with them, then turned back and spent the day, which was delightful, wandering from place to place in the woods, sometimes reading the new and interesting volumes of *Cyril Thornton*, sometimes 'chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancies' which alternated in my mind, idly stirred by the succession of a thousand vague thoughts and fears, the gay strangely mingled with those of dismal melancholy; tears which seemed ready to flow unbidden; smiles which approached to those of insanity; all that wild variety of mood which solitude engenders. I scribbled some verses, or rather composed them in my memory. The contrast at leaving Abbotsford to former departures, is of an agitating and violent description. Assorting papers, and so forth. I never could help admiring the concatenation between Ahithopel's setting his house in order and hanging himself.* The one seems to follow the other as a matter of course. But what frightens and disgusts me is those fearful letters from those who have been long dead, to those who linger on their wayfare through the valley of tears. Those fine lines of Spencer came into my head—

> "The shade of youthful hope is there,
> That lingered long, and latest died;
> Ambition all dissolved to air,
> With phantom honours by his side.
>
> "What empty shadows glimmer nigh?
> They once were Friendship, Truth, and Love!
> Oh die to thought, to Memory die,
> Since lifeless to my heart ye prove."†

Ay, and can I forget the Author—the frightful moral of his own vision? What is this world?—a dream within a dream—as we grow older each step is an awakening. The youth awakes, as he thinks, from childhood—the full-grown man despises the pursuits of youth as visionary—the old man looks on manhood as a feverish dream. The grave the last sleep? No; it is the last and final awakening.

"*Edinburgh*, *May* 15.—It is impossible not to compare this return to Edinburgh with others in more happy times. But we should rather recollect under what distress of mind I took up my lodgings in Mrs. Brown's last summer. Went to court and resumed old habits. Heard the true history of ——.‡ Imagination renders us liable to be the victims of occasional low spirits. All belonging to this gifted, as it is called, but often unhappy class, must have felt that but for the dictates of religion, or the natural recoil of the mind from the idea of dissolution, there have been times when they would have been willing to throw away life as a child does a broken toy. I am sure I know one who has often felt so. 'O God! what are we?—Lords of nature?—Why a tile drops from a house-top, which an elephant would not feel more than the fall of a sheet of pasteboard, and there lies his lordship. Or something of inconceivably minute origin, the pressure of a bone, or the inflammation of a particle of the brain takes place, and the emblem of the Deity destroys himself or some one else. We hold our health and our reason on terms slighter than one would desire, were it in their choice, to hold an Irish cabin."

These are melancholy entries. Most of those from which they have been selected begin with R. for Rheumatism, or RR. for Rheumatism Redoubled, and then mark the number of leaves sent to James Ballantyne—the proof-sheets corrected for press—or the calculations on which he reluctantly made up his mind to extend the Life of Buonaparte from six to seven, from seven to eight, and finally from eight to nine thick and closely printed volumes.

During the early months of 1827, however, he executed various minor tracts also; for the Quarterly Review, an article on Mackenzie's Life and Works of John Home, author of Douglas, which is, in fact, a rich chapter of Scott's own early reminiscences, and gives many interesting sketches of the literary society of Scotland in the age of which Mackenzie was the last honoured relic; and for the Foreign Review, then newly started under the editorship of Mr. R. P. Gillies, an ingenious and elaborate paper on the writings of the German Novelist Hoffman. This article, it is proper to observe, was a benefaction to Mr. Gillies, whose pecuniary affairs rendered such assistance very desirable. Scott's generosity in this matter—for it was exactly giving a poor brother author £100 at the expense of considerable time and drudgery to himself—I think it necessary to mention; the date of the exertion requires it of me. But such, in fact, had been in numberless instances his method of serving literary persons, who had little or no claim on him, except that they were of that class. I have not conceived it delicate to specify many instances of this kind; but I am at liberty to state, that when he wrote his first article for the Encyclopedia Supplement, and the Editor of that work, Mr. Macvey Napier (a Whig in politics, and with whom he had hardly any personal acquaintance,) brought him £100 as his remuneration, Sir Walter said, "Now tell me frankly, if I don't take this money, does it go into your pocket or your publisher's, for it is impossible for me to accept a penny of it from a literary brother." Mr. Napier assured him that the arrangements of the work were such, that the Editor had nothing to do with the fund destined for contributions:—Scott then pocketed his due, with the observation, that "he had trees to plant, and no conscience as to the purse of his fat friend"—to wit, Constable.

At this period, Sir Walter's Diary very seldom mentions any thing that could be called a dinner-party. He and his daughter partook generally once in every week the family meal of Mr. and Mrs. Skene of Rubislaw; and they did the like occasionally with a few other old friends, chiefly those of the Clerks' table. When an exception occurs, it is easy to see that the scene of social gaiety was doubly grateful from its rarity. Thus one entry, referring to a party at Mr. J. A. Murray's (now Lord Advocate for Scotland,) says,—"Went to dine with John Murray, where met his brother (Henderland,) Jeffrey, Cockburn, Rutherford, and others of that file. Very pleasant—capital good cheer and excellent wine—much laugh and fun. I do not know how it is, but when I am out with a party of my Opposition friends, the day is often merrier than when with our own set. Is it because they are cleverer? Jeffrey and Harry Cockburn are to be sure very extraordinary men; yet it is not owing to that entirely. I believe both parties meet with the feeling of something like novelty. We have not worn out our jests in daily contact. There is also a disposition on such occasions to be courteous, and of course to be pleased."

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* 2d Sam. xvii. 23.

† Poems by the late Honourable W. R. Spencer, London, 1835, 145. See *ante*, p. 428.

‡ Sir Walter had this morning heard of the suicide of a man of warm imagination, to whom, at an earlier period, he was much attached.

Another evening, spent in Rose Court with his old friend, Mr. Clerk, seems to have given him especial delight. He says,—"This being a blank day at the Court, I wrote hard till dressing time, when I went to Will Clerk's to dinner. As a bachelor, and keeping a small establishment, he does not do these things often, but they are proportionally pleasant when they come round. He had trusted Sir Adam to bespeak his dinner, who did it *con amore*, so we had excellent cheer, and the wines were various and capital. As I before hinted, it is not every day that M'Nab mounts on horseback,* and so our landlord had a little of that solicitude that the party should go off well, which is very flattering to the guests. We had a very pleasant evening. The Chief Commissioner was there, Admiral Adam, J. A. Murray, Tom Thomson, &c. &c.—Sir Adam predominating at the head, and dancing what he calls his merry-andrada in great style. In short we really laughed, and real laughter is a thing as rare as real tears. I must say, too, there was a *heart*, a kindly feeling prevailed over the party. Can London give such a dinner?—it may, but I never saw one—they are too cold and critical to be easily pleased.——I hope the Bannatyne Club will be really useful and creditable. Thomson is superintending a capital edition of Sir James Melville's Memoirs. It is brave to see how he wags his Scots tongue, and what a difference there is in the form and firmness of the language, compared to the mincing English edition in which he has hitherto been alone known."

No wonder that it should be a sweet relief from Buonaparte and Blucher to see M'Nab on horseback, and Sir Adam Ferguson in his merry-andrada exaltation, and laugh over old Scotch stories with the Chief-Commissioner, and hear Mr. Thomas Thomson report progress as to the doings of the Bannatyne Club. But I apprehend every reader will see that Sir Walter was misled by his own modesty, when he doubted whether London could afford symposia of the same sort. He forgets that he had never mixed in the society of London except in the capacity of a stranger, a rare visiter, the unrivalled literary marvel of the time, and that every party at which he dined was got up expressly on his account, and constituted, whoever might be the landlord, on the natural principle of bringing together as many as the table could hold—to see and hear Sir Walter Scott. Hence, if he dined with a Minister of State, he was likely to find himself seated with half the Cabinet—if with a Bishop, half the Bench had been collected. As a matter of course, every man was anxious to gratify on so rare an occasion as many as he could of those who, in case they were uninvited, would be likely to reproach him for the omission. The result was a crowding together of too many rival eminences; and he very seldom, indeed, witnessed the delightful result so constantly produced in London by the intermingling of distinguished persons of various classes, full of facts and views new to each other—and neither chilled nor perplexed by the pernicious and degrading trickery of lionizing. But, besides, it was unfair to institute any comparison between the society of comparative strangers and that of old friends dear from boyhood. He could not have his Clerks and Fergusons both in Edinburgh and in London. Enough, however, of commentary on a very plain text.

That season was further enlivened by one public dinner, and this, though very briefly noticed in Scott's Diary, occupied a large space in public attention at the time, and, I believe I may add, several columns in every newspaper printed in Europe. His good friend William Murray, manager of the Edinburgh Theatre, invited him to preside at the first festival of a charitable fund then instituted for the behoof of decayed performers. He agreed, and says in his Journal—"There are 300 tickets given out. I fear it will be uncomfortable; and whatever the stoics may say, a bad dinner throws cold water on charity. I have agreed to preside, a situation in which I have been rather felicitous, not by much superiority of art or wisdom, far less of eloquence; but by two or three simple rules, which I put down here for the benefit of my posterity.

"1st, Always hurry the bottle round for five or six rounds, without prosing yourself or permitting others to prose. A slight filip of wine inclines people to be pleased, and removes the nervousness which prevents men from speaking—disposes them, in short, to be amusing and to be amused.

"2d, Push on, keep moving, as Young Rapid says.* Do not think of saying fine things—nobody cares for them any more than for fine music, which is often too liberally bestowed on such occasions. Speak at all ventures, and attempt the *mot pour rire*. You will find people satisfied with wonderfully indifferent jokes, if you can but hit the taste of the company, which depends much on its character. Even a very high party, primed with all the cold irony and *non est tanti* feelings or no feelings of fashionable folks may be stormed by a jovial, rough, round, and ready preses. Choose your text with discretion—the sermon may be as you like. Should a drunkard or an ass break in with any thing out of joint, if you can parry it with a jest, good and well—if not, do not exert your serious authority, unless it is very bad. The authority even of a chairman ought to be very cautiously exercised. With patience you will have the support of every one.

"3dly, When you have drunk a few glasses to play the good-fellow, and banish modesty—(if you are unlucky enough to have such a troublesome companion)—then beware of the cup too much. Nothing is so ridiculous as a drunken preses.

"Lastly, always speak short, and *Skeoch doch na skiel*—cut a tale with a drink.

> This is the purpose and intent
> Of gude Schir Walter's testament."†

This dinner took place on Friday the 23d February. Sir Walter took the chair, being supported by the Earl of Fife, Lord Meadowbank, Sir John Hope of Pinkie, Admiral Adam, Robert Dundas of Arniston, Peter Robertson, and many other personal friends. Lord Meadowbank had come on short notice, and was asked abruptly on his arrival to take a toast which had been destined for a noble person who had not been able to appear. He knew that this was the first public dinner at which the object of this toast had appeared since his misfortunes, and taking him aside in the anteroom, asked him whether he would consider it indelicate to hazard a distinct reference to the parentage of the Waverley Novels, as to which there had, in point of fact, ceased to be any obscurity from the hour of Constable's failure. Sir Walter smiled, and said, "Do just as you like—only don't say much about so old a story."—In the course of the evening the Judge rose accordingly and said—‡

"I would beg leave to propose a toast—the health of one of the Patrons, a great and distinguished individual, whose name must always stand by itself, and which, in an assembly such as this, or in any other assembly of Scotsmen, must ever be received, I will not say with ordinary feelings of pleasure or of delight, but with those of rapture and enthusiasm. In doing this I feel that I stand in a somewhat new situation. Whoever had been called upon to propose the health of my Hon. friend some time ago, would have found himself enabled, from the mystery in which certain matters were involved, to gratify himself and his auditors by allusions sure to find a responding chord in their own feelings, and to deal in the language, the sincere language, of panegyric, without intruding on the modesty of the great individual to whom I refer. But it is no longer possible, consistently with the respect due to my auditors, to use upon this subject

* That singular personage, the late M'Nab of *that ilk*, spent his life almost entirely in a district where a boat was the usual conveyance. I suspect, however, there is an allusion to some particular anecdote which I have not recovered.

* Morton's comedy of *A Cure for the Heart-Ache*.

† Sir Walter parodies the conclusion of King Robert the Bruce's "Maxims, or Political Testament." See Hailes's Annals, A. D. 1311.—or Fordun's Scoti-chronicon.—XII. 10.

‡ By the favour of a friend, who took notes at this dinner, I am enabled to give a better report of these speeches than that of the contemporary newspapers.

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terms either of mystification, or of obscure or indirect allusion. The clouds have been dispelled—the *darkness visible* has been cleared away—and the Great Unknown—the minstrel of our native land—the mighty magician who has rolled back the current of time, and conjured up before our living senses the men and the manners of days which have long passed away, stands revealed to the eyes and the hearts of his affectionate and admiring countrymen. If I were capable of imagining all that belongs to this mighty subject—were I able to give utterance to all that as a man, as a Scotsman, and as a friend, I must feel regarding it, yet knowing, as I well do, that this illustrious individual is not more distinguished for his towering talents than for those feelings which render such allusions ungrateful to himself, however sparingly introduced, I would on that account still refrain from doing what would otherwise be no less pleasing to myself than to those who hear me. But this I hope I may be allowed to say—(my auditors would not pardon me were I to say less)—we owe to him, as a people, a large and heavy debt of gratitude. He it is who has opened to foreigners the grand and characteristic beauties of our country. It is to him that we owe that our gallant ancestors and illustrious patriots—who fought and bled in order to obtain and secure that independence and that liberty we now enjoy—have obtained a fame no longer confined to the boundaries of a remote and comparatively obscure country—it is *He* who has called down upon their struggles for glory and freedom the admiration of foreign lands. He it is who has conferred a new reputation on our national character, and bestowed on Scotland an imperishable name, were it only by her having given birth to himself. I propose the health of Sir Walter Scott."

Long before Lord Meadowbank ceased speaking, the company had got upon chairs and tables, and the storm of applause that ensued was deafening. When they recovered from the first fever of their raptures, Sir Walter spoke as follows:—

"I certainly did not think, in coming here to-day, that I should have the task of acknowledging, before 300 gentlemen, a secret which, considering that it was communicated to more than twenty people, has been remarkably well kept. I am now at the bar of my country, and may be understood to be on trial before Lord Meadowbank as an offender; and so quietly did all who were *airt and pairt* conduct themselves, that I am sure that, were the *panel* now to stand on his defence, every impartial jury would bring in a verdict of *Not Proven*. I am willing, however, to plead *guilty*—nor shall I detain the Court by a long explanation why my confession has been so long deferred. Perhaps caprice might have a considerable share in the matter. I have now to say, however, that the merits of these works, if they had any, and their faults, are all entirely imputable to myself. Like another Scottish criminal of more consequence, one Macbeth,

> 'I am afraid to think what I have done;
> Look on't again, I dare not.'

"I have thus far unbosomed myself, and I know that my confession will be reported to the public. I mean, then, seriously to state, that when I say I am the author, I mean the total and undivided author. With the exception of quotations, there is not a single word that was not derived from myself, or suggested in the course of my reading. The wand is now broken, and the book buried. You will allow me further to say, with Prospero, it is your breath that has filled my sails, and to crave one single toast in the capacity of the author of these novels. I would fain dedicate a bumper to the health of one who has represented several of those characters, of which I had endeavoured to give the skeleton, with a truth and liveliness for which I may well be grateful. I beg leave to propose the health of my friend Bailie Nicol Jarvie—and I am sure, that when the author of Waverley and Rob Roy drinks to Nicol Jarvie, it will be received with the just applause to which that gentleman has always been accustomed,—nay, that you will take care that on the present occasion it shall be PRO—DI—GI—OUS!" (Long and vehement applause.)

MR. MACKAY.—"My conscience! My worthy father the deacon could never have believed that his son would hae sic a compliment paid to him by the Great Unknown!"

SIR WALTER SCOTT.—"The Small Known now, Mr. Bailie. &c. &c.

Shortly after resuming his chair, Sir Walter (I am told) sent a slip of paper to Mr. Robertson, begging him to "confess something too,—why not the murder of Begbie?" (See *ante*, p. 185.) But if Peter complied with the hint, it was long after the senior dignitaries had left the room.

The "sensation" produced by this scene was, in newspaper phrase, "unprecedented." Sir Walter's Diary merely says—"*February* 24.—I carried my own instructions into effect the best I could, and if our jests were not good, our laughter was abundant. I think I will hardly take the chair again when the company is so miscellaneous; though they all behaved perfectly well. Meadowbank taxed me with the novels, and to end that farce at once, I pleaded guilty, so that splore is ended. As to the collection—it has been much cry and little woo, as the deil said when he shore the sow. I got away at ten at night. The performers performed very like gentlemen, especially Will Murray.——*March* 2.—Clerk walked home with me from the Court. I was scarce able to keep up with him; could once have done it well enough. Funny thing at the Theatre last night. Among the discourse in High Life below Stairs, one of the ladies' ladies asks who wrote Shakspeare. One says 'Ben Jonson,' another 'Finis.' 'No,' said Will Murray, 'it is Sir Walter Scott, he confessed it at a public meeting the other day.'"

The reader may, perhaps, expect that I should endeavour to name the "upwards of twenty persons" whom Sir Walter alluded to on this occasion as having been put into the secret of the Waverley Novels, previously, and without reference, to the catastrophe of 1826. I am by no means sure that I can give the complete list: but in addition to the immediate members of the author's own family—(including his mother and his brother Thomas)—there were Constable, Cadell, the two Ballantynes, Terry, Laidlaw, Mr. Train, and Mr. G. H. Gordon; Charles Duke of Buccleuch, Lady Louisa Stuart, Lord Montagu, Lord and Lady Polwarth, Lord Kinnedder, Sir Adam Ferguson, Mr. Morritt, Mr. and Mrs. Skene, Mr. William Clerk, Mr. Hay Donaldson, Mr. John Richardson, and Mr. Thomas Moore.

The entries in Scott's Diary on contemporary literature are at this time very few; nor are there many on the public events of the day, though the period was a very stirring one. He seems, in fact, to have very rarely seen, even when in town, any newspaper except the Edinburgh Weekly Journal. At his age, it is not wonderful that when that sheet reached him it for the most part contained the announcement of a death which interested his feelings; and several of the following passages refer to incidents of this melancholy class:—

"*January* 9.—This morning received the long-expected news of the Duke of York's death. I am sorry both on public and private accounts. His R. H. was, while he occupied the situation of next in succession, a *Break-water* behind the throne. I fear his brother of Clarence's opinions may be different, and that he may hoist a standard under which men of desperate hopes and evil designs will rendezvous. I am sorry, too, on my own account. The Duke of York was uniformly kind to me, and though I never tasked his friendship, yet I find a powerful friend is gone. His virtues were honour, good sense, integrity, and by exertion of these qualities, he raised the British army from a very low ebb to be the pride and dread of Europe. His errors were those of a sanguine and social temper—he could not resist the temptation of deep play, which was fatally allied with a disposition to the bottle. This last is incident to his complaint, which vinous influences soothes for the time, while it insidiously increases it in the end.

"*January* 17.—I observe in the papers my old friend Gifford's funeral. He was a man of rare attainments and many excellent qualities. His Juvenal is one of the best versions ever made of a classical author, and his satire of the Baviad and Maeviad squabashed at one blow a set of coxcombs, who might have humbugged the world long enough. As a commentator he was capital, could he but have suppressed his rancours against those who had pre

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ceded him in the task; but a misconstruction, or misinterpretation, nay, the misplacing of a comma was, in Gifford's eyes, a crime worthy of the most severe animadversion. The same fault of extreme severity went through his critical labours, and in general he flagellated with so little pity, that people lost their sense of the criminal's guilt in dislike of the savage pleasure which the executioner seemed to take in inflicting the punishment. This lack of temper probably arose from indifferent health, for he was very valetudinary, and realized two verses, wherein he says Fortune assigned him—

> —— 'One eye not over good,
> Two sides that to their cost have stood
> A ten years' hectic cough,
> Aches, stitches, all the various ills
> That swell the devilish doctor's bills,
> And sweep poor mortals off.'

But he might also justly claim, as his gift, the moral qualities expressed in the next fine stanza—

> —— 'A soul
> That spurns the crowd's malign control
> A firm contempt of wrong;
> Spirits above affliction's power,
> And skill to soothe the lingering hour
> With no inglorious song.'

He was a little man, dumpled up together, and so ill made as to seem almost deformed, but with a singular expression of talent in his countenance. Though so little of an athlete, he nevertheless beat off Dr. Wolcott, when that celebrated person, the most unsparing calumniator of his time, chose to be offended with Gifford for satirizing him in his turn. Peter Pindar made a most vehement attack, but Gifford had the best of the affray,* and remained, I think, in triumphant possession of the field of action, and of the assailant's cane. G. had one singular custom. He used always to have a duenna of a housekeeper to sit in his study with him while he wrote. This female companion died when I was in London, and his distress was extreme. I afterwards heard he got her place supplied. I believe there was no scandal in all this.

"This is another vile day of darkness and rain, with a heavy yellow mist that might become Charing Cross—one of the benefits of our extended city; for that in our atmosphere was unknown till the extent of the buildings below Queen Street.

January 28.—Hear of Miss White's death. Poor Lydia! she gave a dinner on the Friday before, and had written with her own hand invitations for another party. Twenty years ago she used to tease me with her youthful affectations—her dressing like the Queen of Chimney-sweeps on May-day morning, &c.—and sometimes with letting her wit run wild. But she *was* a woman of wit, and had a feeling and kind heart. Poor Lydia! I saw the Duke of York and her in London, when Death, it seems, was brandishing his dart over them.

'The view o't gave them little fright.'

"*February* 10.—I got a present of Lord Francis Gower's printed but unpublished Tale of the Mill. It is a fine tale of terror in itself, and very happily brought out. He has certainly a true taste for poetry. I do not know why, but from my childhood I have seen something fearful, or melancholy at least, about a mill. Whether I had been frightened at the machinery when very young, of which, I think, I have some shadowy remembrance—whether I had heard the stories of the Miller of Thirlestone, and similar molendinar tragedies, I cannot tell; but not even recollections of the Lass of Patie's Mill, or the Miller of Mansfield, or 'he who dwelt on the river Dee,' have ever got over my inclination to connect gloom with a mill, especially when the sun is setting. So I entered into the spirit of the terror with which Lord Francis has invested his haunted spot.

"*February* 14.—'Death's gi'en the art an unco devel.'† Sir George Beaumont's dead; by far the most sensible and pleasing man I ever knew, kind, too, in his nature, and generous—gentle in society, and of those mild manners which tend to soften the causticity of the general London tone of persiflage and personal satire. As an amateur painter, he was of the very highest distinction; and though I know nothing of the matter, yet I should hold him a perfect critic on painting, for he always made his criticisms intelligible, and used no slang. I am very sorry—as much as it is in my nature to be for one whom I could see but seldom. He was the great friend of Wordsworth, and understood his poetry, which is a rare thing, for it is more easy to see his peculiarities than to feel his great merit, or follow his abstract ideas.

"A woman of rather the better class, a farmer's wife, was tried a few days ago for poisoning her maid-servant. There seems to have been little doubt of her guilt, but the motive was peculiar. The unfortunate girl had an intrigue with her son, which this Mrs. Smith (I think that is the name) was desirous to conceal, from some ill-advised Puritanic notions, and also for fear of her husband. She could find no better way of hiding the shame than giving the girl (with her own knowledge and consent, I believe) potions to cause abortion, which she afterwards changed for arsenic, as the more effectual silencing medicine. In the course of the trial one of the jury fell down in an epileptic fit, and on his recovery was far too much disordered to permit the trial to proceed. With only fourteen jurymen, it was impossible to go on. The Advocate says she shall be tried anew, since she has not *tholed an assize*. *Sic Paulus ait—et recte quidem.* But, having been half-tried, I think she should have some benefit of it, as far as saving her life, if convicted on the second indictment. Lord Advocate declares, however, that she shall be hanged, as certainly she deserves. Yet it looks something like hanging up a man who has been recovered by the surgeons, which has always been accounted harsh justice.

"*February.* 20.—At Court, and waited to see the poisoning woman tried. She is clearly guilty, but as one or two witnesses said the poor wench hinted an intention to poison herself, the jury gave that bastard verdict, *Not proven*. I hate that Caledonian *medium quid*. One who is not *proved guilty*, is innocent in the eyes of law. It was a face to do or die, or perhaps to do to die. Thin features, which had been handsome, a flashing eye, an acute and aquiline nose, lips much marked as arguing decision, and I think, bad temper—they were thin, and habitually compressed, rather turned down at the corners, as one of a rather melancholy disposition. There was an awful crowd; but, sitting within the bar, I had the pleasure of seeing much at my ease; the constables knocking the other folks about, which was of course very entertaining.

"I have a letter from Baron Von Goethe, which I must have read to me; for though I know German, I have forgot their written hand. I make it a rule seldom to read, and never to answer foreign letters from literary folks. It leads to nothing but the battledore and shuttle-cock intercourse of compliments, as light as cork and feathers. But Goethe is different, and a wonderful fellow, the Ariosto at once, and almost the Voltaire of Germany. Who could have told me thirty years ago I should correspond and be on something like an equal footing with the author of the Goetz? Ay, and who could have told me fifty things else that have befallen me?"

Goethe's letter (as nearly as the Editor can render it) runs thus:

To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., Edinburgh.

"Weimar, January 12th, 1827.

"Mr. H——, well known to me as a collector of objects of art, has given me a likeness, I hope authentic and accurate, of the late Lord Byron, and it awakens anew the sorrow which I could not but feel for the loss of one whom all the world prized, and I in particular: since how could I fail to be delighted with the many expressions of partiality for me which his writings contain?

* See Epistle to Peter Pindar, Gifford's *Baviad and Maviad*, pp. 181-191, ed. 1812.

† 'Death's gi'en the lodge an unco devel,
Tam Sampson's dead."—*Burns.*

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"Mean-time the best consolation for us, the survivors, is to look around us, and consider, that as the departed is not *alone*, but has joined the noble spiritual company of high-hearted men, capable of love, friendship, and confidence, that had left this sphere before him, so we have still kindred spirits on earth, with whom, though not visible any more than the blessed shades of past ages, we have a right to feel a brotherlike connexion—which is indeed our richest inheritance.

"And so, as Mr. H—— informs me he expects to be soon in Edinburgh, I thus acquit myself, mine honoured sir, of a duty which I had long ago felt to be incumbent on me—to acknowledge the lively interest I have during many years taken in your wonderful pictures of human life. I have not wanted external stimulants enough to keep my attention awake on this subject, since not only have translations abounded in the German, but the works are largely read here in the original, and valued according as different men are capable of comprehending their spirit and genius.

"Can I remember that such a man in his youth made himself acquainted with my writings, and even (unless I have been misinformed) introduced them in part to the knowledge of his own nation, and yet defer any longer, at my now very advanced years, to express my sense of such an honour? It becomes me, on the contrary, not to lose the opportunity now offered of paying for a continuance of your kindly regard, and telling you how much a direct assurance of good-will from your own hand would gratify my old age.

"With high and grateful respect, I salute you,

J. W. v. GOETHE."

This letter might well delight Scott. His answer to it I have not seen, but Goethe, in writing soon afterwards to his friend Mr. Thomas Carlyle, (the translator of his Wilhelm Meister,) described it as "cheering and warm-hearted."

I now insert a few entries from Sir Walter's Diary, intermixed with extracts from his letters to myself and Mr. Morritt, which will give the reader sufficient information as to the completion of his Life of Buonaparte, and also as to his impressions on hearing of the illness of Lord Liverpool, the consequent dissolution of his Cabinet, and the formation of a new Ministry under Mr. Canning.

DIARY—"*February* 21.—Lord Liverpool is ill of an apoplexy. I am sorry for it. He will be missed Who will be got for Premier? If Peel would consent to be made a peer he would do; but I doubt his ambition will prefer the House of Commons. Wrought a good deal.

"*April* 16.—A day of work and exercise. In the evening a letter from L. with the wonderful news that the Ministry has broken up, and apparently for no cause that any one can explain. The old grudge, I suppose, which has gone on like a crack in the side of a house, enlarging from day to day, till down goes the whole——"

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq., Wimbledon.

. . . . . "Your letter has given me the vertigo—my head turns round like a chariot-wheel, and I am on the point of asking

'Why, how now? Am I Giles, or am I not?'

The Duke of Wellington out?—bad news at home, and worse abroad. Lord Anglesea in his situation?—does not much mend the matter. Duke of Clarence in the Navy?—wild work. Lord Melville, I suppose, falls of course—perhaps *cum toto sequelâ*, about which *sequela*, unless Sir W. Rae and the Solicitor, I care little. The whole is glamour to one who reads no papers, and has none to read. I must get one, though, if this work is to go on, for it is quite bursting in ignorance. Canning is haughty and prejudiced—but, I think, honourable as well as able—*novus verrons*. I fear Croker will shake, and heartily sorry I should feel for that." . . . . .

DIARY—"*April* 25.—I have now got Bony pegg'd up in the knotty entrails of Saint Helena, and may make a short pause. So I finish the review of John Home's works, which, after all, are poorer than I thought them. Good blank verse, and stately sentiment, but something luke-warmish, excepting Douglas, which is certainly a master-piece. Even that does not stand the closet. Its merits are for the stage; and it is certainly one of the best acting plays going. Perhaps a play to act well should no be too poetical.

"*April* 26.—The snow still profusely distributed, and the surface, as our hair used to be in youth, after we had played at some active game, half black, half white, all in large patches. I finished the criticism on Home, adding a string of Jacobite anecdotes, like that which boys put to a kite's tail. Received a great cargo of papers from Bernadotte, some curious, and would have been inestimable two months back, but now my task is almost done. Add then my feelings for poor Count Itterberg, the lineal and legitimate, make me averse to have much to do with this child of the revolution."

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq.

"April 26.

. . . . . "The news you send is certainly the most wonderful of my time, in a party point of view, especially as I can't but think all has turned on personal likings and dislikings. I hope they won't let in the Whigs at the breach, for I suppose, if Lansdowne come in, he must be admitted with a tail on, and Lauderdale will have the weight in Scotland. How our tough Tories may like that, I wot not; but they will do much to keep the key of the corn-chest within reach. The Advocate has not used me extremely kindly, but I shall be sorry if he suffers in this State tempest. For me, I remain, like the Lilliputian poet—'In amaze—Lost I gaze'—or rather as some other bard sings—

"So folks beholding at a distance
Seven men flung out of a casement,
They never stir to their assistance,
But just afford them their amazement."*

—You ask why the wheels of Napoleon tarry; not by my fault, I swear;

'We daily are jogging,
While whistling and flogging,
While whistling and flogging,
The coachman drives on,
With a hey hoy, gee up gee ho. &c. &c. &c.

To use a more classical simile

'Wilds immeasurably spread
Seem lengthening as I go.'†

I have just got some very curious papers from Sweden. I have wrought myself blind between writing and collating, and, except about three or four hours for food and exercise, I have not till to-day *devauled* from my task. . . . .

O, Bony, I'll owe you a curse, if Hereafter
To my vision your tyrannous spectre shall show,
But I doubt you'll be pinned on old Nick's reddest rafter,
While the vulgar of Tophet howl back from below.

I shall, however, displease Ultras such as Croker, on the subject of Bony, who was certainly a great man, though far from a good man, and still farther from a good king. But the stupidest Roitelet in Europe has his ambition and selfishness, and where will you find his talents? I own I think Ultra-writing only disgusts people, unless it is in the way of a downright invective, and that in history you had much better keep the safe side, and avoid colouring too highly. After all, I suspect, were Croker in presence of Bony to-morrow, he might exclaim, as Captain T. did at one of the Elba levees, 'Well, Bony's a d——d good fellow after all.'"

To the Same.

"Abbotsford, May 10, 1827.

. . . . . "To speak seriously of these political movements, I cannot say that I approve of the dissidents. I understand Peel had from the King *carte blanche* for an Anti-Catholic Administration, and that he could not accept it because there was not strength enough to form such. What is this but saying in plain words that the Catholics had the country and the Question? And because they are defeated in a single question, and one which, were it to entail no farther consequences, is of wonderful little import, they have abandoned the King's service—given up the citadel because an exterior work was carried, and marched out into Opposition. I can't think this was right. They ought either to have made a stand without Canning,

* *Crazy Tales*, by John Hall Stevenson.
† Goldsmith's *Hermit*.

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or a stand with him; for to abdicate as they have done was the way to subject the country to all the future experiments which this Catholic Emancipation may lead those that now carry it to attempt, and which may prove worse, far worse, than any thing connected with the Question itself. Thus says the old Scotch Tory. But *I* for one do not believe it was the question of Emancipation, or any public question, which carried them out. I believe the predominant motive in the bosom of every one of them was personal hostility to Canning, and that with more prudence, less arbitrary manners, and more attention to the feelings of his colleagues, he would have stepped *nem. con.* into the situation of Prime Minister, for which his eloquence and talent naturally point him out. They objected to the man more than the statesman, and the Duke of Wellington, more frank than the rest, almost owns that the quarrel was personal. Now, acting upon that, which was, I am convinced, the *real* ground, I cannot think the dissidents acted well and wisely. It is very possible that they might not have been able to go on with Canning; but I think they were bound, as loyal subjects and patriots, to ascertain that continuing in the Cabinet with him as Premier was impossible, before they took a step which may change the whole policy, perhaps eventually the whole destiny of the realm, and lead to the prevalence of those principles which the dissidents have uniformly represented as destructive to the interests of Britain. I think they were bound to have made a trial before throwing Canning, and alas! both the King and the country, into the hand of the Whigs. These are the sort of truths more visible to the lookers-on than to those who play.

"As for Canning, with his immense talent, wit, and eloquence, he unhappily wants prudence and patience, and in his eager desire to scramble to the highest point, is not sufficiently select as to his assistants. The Queen's affair is an example of this—Lord Castlereagh's was another. In both he threw himself back by an over-eager desire to press forward, and something of the kind must have been employed now. It cannot be denied that he has placed himself (perhaps more from compulsion than choice) in a situation which greatly endangers his character. Still, however, he has that character to maintain, and unluckily it is all we have to rest upon as things go. The sons of Zerdiah would be otherwise too many for us. It is possible, though I doubt it, that the Whigs will be satisfied with their share of *orts* and *grains*, and content themselves with feeding out of the trough without overturning it. My feeling, were I in the House of Commons, would lead me to stand up and declare that I supported Canning so far, and so far only, as he continued to preserve and maintain the principles which he had hitherto professed—that my allegiance could not be irredeemably pledged to him, because his camp was filled with those against whom I had formerly waged battle under his command—that, however, it should not be mere apprehension of evil that would make me start off—reserving to myself to do what should be called for when he crisis arrived. I think if a number of intelligent and able men were to hold by Canning on these grounds, they might yet enable him to collect a Tory force around him, sufficient to check at least, if not on all points to resist the course of innovation. If my old friend is wise he will wish to organize such a force, for nothing is more certain than that if the champion of Anti-Jacobinism should stoop to become the tool of the Whigs, it is not all his brilliancy of talents, eloquence and wit, which can support him in such a glaring want of consistency. *Meliora spero.* I do not think Canning can rely on his Whig confederates, and some door of reconciliation may open itself as unexpectedly as the present confusion has arisen."

DIARY.—"*May* 11.—The Boar of the Forest called this morning to converse about trying to get him on the pecuniary list of the Royal Literary Society. Certainly he deserves it, if genius and necessity can do so. But I do not belong to the society, nor do I propose to enter it as a coadjutor. I do not like your royal academies of this kind; they almost always fall into jobs, and the members are seldom those who do credit to the literature of a country. It affected, too, to comprehend those men of letters who are specially attached to the Crown, and though I love and honour my King as much as any of them can, yet I hold it best, in this free country, to preserve the exterior of independence, that my loyalty may be the more impressive, and tell more effectually. Yet I wish sincerely to help poor Hogg, and have written to Lockhart about it. It may be my own desolate feelings—it may be the apprehension of evil from this political hocus-pocus; but I have seldom felt more moody and uncomfortable than while writing these lines. I have walked, too, but without effect. W. Laidlaw, whose very ingenious mind is delighted with all novelties, talked nonsense about the new government, in which men are to resign principle, I fear, on both sides.

"Parliament House a queer sight. Looked as if people were singing to each other the noble song of 'The sky's falling—chickie diddle.' Thinks I to myself, I'll keep a calm sough.

> 'Betwixt both sides I unconcerned stand by—
> Hurt can I laugh, and harmless need I cry?'

"*May* 15.—I dined at a great dinner given by Sir George Clerk to his electors, the freeholders of Mid-Lothian; a great attendance of Whig and Tory, huzzaing each other's toasts. *If* is a good peace-maker, but quarter-day is a better. I have a guess the best gamecocks would call a truce, if a handful or two of oats were scattered among them.

"*May* 27.—I got ducked in coming home from the Court. Made a hard day of it. Scarce stirred from one room to another, but by bed-time finished a handsome handful of copy. I have quoted Gourgaud's evidence; I suppose he will be in a rare passion, and may be addicted to vengeance, like a long-moustached son of a French bitch as he is.

> 'Frenchman, Devil, or Don,
> Damn him let him come on,
> He shan't scare a son of the Island.'*

"*May* 28.—Another day of uninterrupted study; two such would finish the work with a murrain. What shall I have to think of when I lie down at night and awake in the morning? What will be my plague and my pastime—my curse and my blessing—as ideas come and the pulse rises, or as they flag and something like a snow-haze covers my whole imagination?—I have my Highland Tales—and then—never mind—sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.—Letter from John touching public affairs; don't half like them, and am afraid we shall have the Whig alliance turn out like the calling in of the Saxons. I told this to Jeffrey, who said they would convert us as the Saxons did the British. I shall die in my Paganism for one. I don't like a bone of them as a party. Ugly reports of the King's health; God pity this poor country should that be so, but I hope it is a thing devised by the enemy.

"*June* 3.—Wrought hard. I thought I had but a trifle to do, but new things cast up; we get beyond the Life, however, for I have killed him to-day. The newspapers are very saucy; the *Sun* says I have got £4,000 for suffering a Frenchman to look over my manuscript. Here is a proper fellow for you! I wonder what he thinks Frenchmen are made of—walking money-bags, doubtless. 'Now,' as Sir Fretful Plagiary says, 'another person would be vexed at this,' but I care not one brass farthing.

"*June* 5.—Proofs. Parliament-House till two. Commenced the character of Buonaparte. To-morrow being a Teind-day, I may hope to get it finished.

"*June* 10.—Rose with the odd consciousness of being free of my daily task. I have heard that the fish-women go to church of a Sunday with their creels new washed, and a few stones in them for ballast, just because they cannot walk steadily without their usual load. I feel something like them, and rather inclined to take up some light task, than to be altogether idle. I have my proof-sheets, to be sure; but what are these to a whole day? A good thought came in my head to write Stories for little Johnnie Lockhart, from the History of Scotland, like those taken from the History of England. But I will not write mine quite so simply as Croker has done. I am persuaded both children and the lower class of readers hate books which are written *down* to their capacity, and love those that are composed more for their elders and betters. I will make, if possible, a book that a child shall

* Sir W. *varies* a verse of "*The right little Island.*"

understand, yet a man will feel some temptation to peruse should he chance to take it up. It will require, however, a simplicity of style not quite my own. The grand and interesting consists in ideas, not in words. A clever thing of this kind might have a race."

To John B. S. Morritt, Esq., Portland Place, London.

"Edinburgh, June 10, 1827.

"My dear Morritt,

"Napoleon has been an absolute millstone about my neck, not permitting me for many a long day to think my own thoughts, to work my own work, or to write my own letters—which last clause of prohibition has rendered me thus long your debtor. I am now finished—*valeat quod valere potest*—and as usual not very anxious about the opinion of the public, as I have never been able to see that such anxiety has any effect in mollifying the minds of the readers, while it renders that of the author very uncomfortable—so *vogue la galère*.

"How are you, as a moderate pro-Catholic, satisfied with this strange alliance in the Cabinet? I own I look upon it with doubt, at best, and with apprehensions. At the same time I cannot approve of the late Ministers leaving the King's councils in such a hurry. They could hardly suppose that Canning's fame, talent, and firm disposition would be satisfied with less than the condition of Premier, and such being the case—

> 'To fly the boar before the boar pursued,
> Was to incense the boar to follow them.'*

On the other hand, his allying himself so closely and so hastily with the party against whom he had maintained war from youth to age seems to me, at this distance, to argue one of two things;—either that the Minister has been hoodwinked by ambition and anger—or that he looks upon the attachment of those gentlemen to the opinions which he has always opposed as so slight, unsubstantial, and unreal, that they will not insist upon them, or any of them, provided they are gratified personally with a certain portion of the benefits of place and revenue. Now, not being disposed to think over well of the Whigs, I cannot suppose that a large class of British statesmen, not deficient certainly in talents, can be willing to renounce all the political maxims and measures which they have been insisting upon for thirty years, merely to become placeholders under Canning. The supposition is too profligate. But then if they come in the same Whigs we have known them, where, how, or when are they to execute their favourite notions of Reform of Parliament? and what sort of amendments will they be which are to be brought forward when the proper time comes? or how is Canning to conduct himself when the Saxons, whom he has called in for his assistance, draw out to fight for a share of the power which they have assisted him to obtain? When such strange and unwonted bedfellows are packed up together, will they not kick and struggle for the better share of the coverlid and blankets? Perhaps you will say that I look gloomily on all this, and have forgotten the way of the world, which sooner or later shows that the principles of statesmen are regulated by their advance towards, or retreat from power; and that from men who are always acting upon the emergencies of the moment, it is in vain to expect consistency. Perfect consistency, I agree, we cannot look for—it is inconsistent with humanity. But that gross inconsistency which induces men to clasp to their bosom the man whom they most hated, and to hold up to admiration the principles which they have most forcibly opposed, may gain a temporary triumph, but will never found a strong Ministry or a settled Government. My old friend Canning, with his talents and oratory, ought not, I think, to have leagued himself with any party, but might have awaited, well assured that the general voice must have carried him into full possession of power. I am sorry he has acted otherwise, and argue no good from it, though when or how the evil is to come I cannot pretend to say.

"My best compliments wait on your fireside. I conclude you see Lady Louisa Stewart very often, which is a happiness to be envied. . . . . .

Ever yours, most kindly,

WALTER SCOTT."

I received, some years ago, from a very modest and intelligent young man, the late Mr. Robert Hogg (a nephew of the Ettrick Shepherd,) employed in 1827 as a *reader* in Ballantyne's printing-office, a letter for which this is perhaps the most proper place.

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq.

"Edinburgh, 16th February, 1833.

"Sir,

"Having been for a few days employed by Sir Walter Scott, when he was finishing his Life of Buonaparte, to copy papers connected with that work, and to write occasionally to his dictation, it may perhaps be in my power to mention some circumstances relative to Sir Walter's habits of composition, which could not fall under the observation of any one except a person in the same situation with myself, and which are therefore not unlikely to pass altogether without notice.

"When, at Sir Walter's request, I waited upon him to be informed of the business in which he needed my assistance, after stating it, he asked me if I was an early riser, and added that it would be no great hardship for me, being a young man, to attend him the next morning at six o'clock. I was punctual, and found Sir Walter already busy writing. He appointed my tasks, and again sat down at his own desk. We continued to write during the regular work hours till six o'clock in the evening, without interruption, except to take breakfast and dinner, which were served in the room beside us, so that no time was lost;—we rose from our desks when every thing was ready, and resumed our labours when the meals were over. I need not tell you that during these intervals Sir Walter conversed with me as if I had been on a level of perfect equality with himself.

"I had no notion it was possible for any man to undergo the fatigue of composition for so long a time at once, and Sir Walter acknowledged he did not usually subject himself to so much exertion, though it seemed to be only the manual part of the operation that occasioned him any inconvenience. Once or twice he desired me to relieve him, and dictated while I wrote with as much rapidity as I was able. I have performed the same service to several other persons, most of whom walked up and down the apartment while excogitating what was to be committed to writing; they sometimes stopt too, and, like those who fall in a leap and return upon their course to take the advantage of another race, endeavoured to hit upon something additional by perusing over my shoulder what was already set down,—mending a phrase perhaps, or recasting a sentence, till they should recover their wind. None of these aids were necessary to Sir Walter: his thoughts flowed easily and felicitously, without any difficulty to lay hold of them or to find appropriate language; which was evident by the absence of all solicitude (*miseria cogitanti*) from his countenance. He sat in his chair, from which he rose now and then, took a volume from the bookcase, consulted it, and restored it to the shelf—all without intermission in the current of ideas, which continued to be delivered with no less readiness than if his mind had been wholly occupied with the words he was uttering. It soon became apparent to me, however, that he was carrying on two distinct trains of thought, one of which was already arranged and in the act of being spoken, while at the same time he was in advance considering what was afterward to be said. This I discovered by his sometimes introducing a word which was wholly out of place—*entertained* instead of *denied*, for example,—but which I presently found to belong to the next sentence, perhaps four or five lines farther on, which he had been preparing at the very moment that he gave me the words of the one that preceded it. Extemporaneous orators, of course, and no doubt many writers, think as rapidly as was done by Sir Walter; but the mind is wholly occupied with what the lips are uttering or the pen is tracing. I do not remember any other instance in which it could be said that two threads were kept hold of at once—connected with each other indeed, but grasped at different points. I was, as I have said, two or three days beside Sir Walter, and had repeated opportunities of observing the same thing,—I am, Sir, respectfully your obliged humble servant,

ROBERT HOGG."

The Life of Buonaparte, then, was at last published about the middle of June 1827. Two years had elapsed since Scott began it; but, by a careful comparison of dates, I have arrived at the conclusion that, his expeditions to Ireland and Paris, and the composition of novels and critical miscellanies being duly allowed for, the historical task occupied hardly more than twelve months. The book was closely printed; in fact those nine volumes contain as much letter-press as Waverley, Guy Mannering, the Antiquary, the Monastery, and the Legend of Montrose, all put together. If it had been printed on the original model of those novels, the Life of Buonaparte would have filled from thirteen to four-

* *King Richard III.* Act III. Sc. 2.

teen volumes!—the work of one twelve-month—done in the midst of pain, sorrow, and ruin.

The magnitude of the theme, and the copious detail with which it was treated, appear to have frightened the critics of the time. None of our great Reviews grappled with the work at all; nor am I so presumptuous as to undertake what they shrunk from. The general curiosity with which it was expected, and the satisfaction with which high and candid minds perused it, cannot I believe be better described than in the words of the author's most illustrious literary contemporary.

"Walter Scott," says Goethe, "passed his childhood among the stirring scenes of the American War, and was a youth of seventeen or eighteen when the French Revolution broke out. Now well advanced in the fifties, having all along been favourably placed for observation, he proposes to lay before us his views and recollections of the important events through which he has lived. The richest, the easiest, the most celebrated narrator of the century, undertakes to write the history of his own time.

"What expectations the announcement of such a work must have excited in me, will be understood by any one who remembers that I, twenty years older than Scott, conversed with Paoli in the twentieth year of my age, and with Napoleon himself in the sixtieth.

"Through that long series of years, coming more or less into contact with the great doings of the world, I failed not to think seriously on what was passing around me, and, after my own fashion, to connect so many extraordinary mutations into something like arrangement and interdependence.

"What could now be more delightful to me than leisurely and calmly to sit down and listen to the discourse of such a man, while clearly, truly, and with all the skill of a great artist, he recalls to me the incidents on which through life I have meditated, and the influence of which is still daily in operation?"—*Kunst und Alterthum.*

The lofty impartiality with which Scott treats the personal character of Buonaparte was, of course, sure to make all ultra-politicians at home and abroad condemn his representation; and an equally general and better founded exception was taken to the lavish imagery of his historical style. He despised the former clamour—to the latter he bowed submissive. He could not, whatever character he might wish to assume, cease to be one of the greatest of poets. Metaphorical illustrations, which men born with prose in their souls hunt for painfully, and find only to murder, were to him the natural and necessary offspring and playthings of ever-teeming fancy. He could not write a note to his printer—he could not speak to himself in his Diary—without introducing them. Few will say that his historical style is, on the whole, excellent; none that it is perfect; but it is completely unaffected, and therefore excites nothing of the unpleasant feeling with which we consider the elaborate artifices of a far greater historian—the greatest that our literature can boast—Gibbon. The rapidity of the execution infers many inaccuracies as to minor matters of fact; but it is nevertheless true that no inaccuracy in the smallest degree affecting the character of the book as a fair record of great events, has to this hour been detected even by the malevolent ingenuity of Jacobin and Buonapartist pamphleteers. Even the most hostile examiners were obliged to acknowledge that the gigantic career of their idol had been traced, in its leading features, with wonderful truth and spirit. No civilian, it was universally admitted, had ever before described modern battles and campaigns with any approach to his daring and comprehensive felicity. The public, ever unwilling to concede a new species of honor to a name already covered with distinction, listened eagerly for a while to the indignant reclamations of nobodies, whose share in mighty transactions had been omitted, or slightly misrepresented; but, ere long, all these pompous rectifications were summed up—and found to constitute nothing but a contemptible monument of self-deluding vanity. The work, devoured at first with breathless delight, had a shade thrown over it for a time by the pertinacious blustering of these angry Lilliputians; but it has now emerged, slowly and surely, from the mist of suspicion—and few, whose opinions deserve much attention, hesitate to avow their conviction that, whoever may be the Polybius of the modern Hannibal, posterity will recognise his Livy in Scott.

"Woodstock, as we have seen, placed upwards of £8,000 in the hands of Sir Walter's creditors. The Napoleon (first and second editions) produced for them a sum which it even now startles me to mention—£18,000. As by the time the historical work was published, nearly half of the First Series of Chronicles of the Canongate had been written, it is obvious that the amount to which Scott's literary industry, from the close of 1825, to the 10th of June, 1827, had diminished his debt, cannot be stated at less than £28,000. Had health been spared him, how soon must he have freed himself from all his encumbrances!

CHAPTER LXXIV.

EXCURSION TO ST. ANDREWS—DEATHS OF LADY DIANA SCOTT—CONSTABLE—AND CANNING—EXTRACT FROM MR. ADOLPHUS'S MEMORANDA—AFFAIR OF GENERAL GOURGAUD—LETTER TO MR. CLERK—BLYTHSWOOD—COREHOUSE—DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S VISIT TO DURHAM—DINNER IN THE CASTLE—SUNDERLAND—RAVENSWORTH—ALNWICK—VERSES TO SIR CUTHBERT SHARP—AFFAIR OF ABUD AND CO.—PUBLICATION OF THE CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE, SERIES FIRST—AND OF THE FIRST TALES OF A GRANDFATHER—ESSAY ON PLANTING, &C.—MISCELLANEOUS PROSE WORKS COLLECTED—SALE OF THE WAVERLEY COPYRIGHTS—DIVIDEND TO CREDITORS—JUNE—DECEMBER—1827.

My wife and I spent the summer of 1827, partly at a sea-bathing place near Edinburgh, and partly in Roxburghshire; and I shall, in my account of the sequel of this year, draw, as it may happen on Sir Walter's Diary, his letters, the memoranda of friendly visiters, or my own recollections. The arrival of his daughter and her children at Portobello was a source of constant refreshment to him during June; for every other day he came down and dined there, and strolled about afterwards on the beach; thus interrupting, beneficially for his health, and I doubt not for the result of his labours also, the new custom of regular night-work, or, as he called it, of serving double-tides. When the Court released him, and he returned to Abbotsford, his family did what they could to keep him to his ancient evening habits; but nothing was so useful as the presence of his invalid grandson. The poor child was at this time so far restored as to be able to sit his pony again; and Sir Walter, who had, as the reader observed, conceived, the very day he finished Napoleon, the notion of putting together a series of stories on the history of Scotland, somewhat in the manner of Mr. Croker's on that of England, rode daily among the woods with his "Hugh Littlejohn," and told the tale, and ascertained that it suited the comprehension of boyhood, before he reduced it to writing. Sibyl Grey had been dismissed in consequence of the accident at the Catrail; and he had now stooped his pride to a sober, steady creature, of very humble blood; dun, with black mane and legs; by name Douce Davie, *alias* the Covenanter. This, the last of his steeds, by the way, had been previously in the possession of a jolly old laird in a neighbouring county, and acquired a distinguished reputation by its skill in carrying him home safely when dead drunk. Douce Davie, on such occasions, accommodated himself to the swerving balance of his rider with such nice discrimination, that, on the laird's death, the country people expected a vigorous competition for the sagacious animal; but the club-companions of the defunct stood off to a man, when it was understood that the Sheriff coveted the succession.

The Chronicles of the Canongate proceeded *pari passu* with these historical tales; and both works were published before the end of the year. He also

superintended, at the same time, the first collection of his Prose Miscellanies, in six volumes 8vo—several articles being remodelled and extended to adapt them for a more permanent sort of existence than had been originally thought of. Moreover, Sir Walter penned, that autumn, his beautiful and instructive paper on the Planting of Waste Lands, which is indeed no other than a precious chapter of his autobiography for the Quarterly Review.* What he wrote of new matter between June and December, fills from five to six volumes in the late uniform edition of his works; but all this was light and easy after the perilous drudgery of the preceding eighteen months.

The Blair-Adam Club, this year, had their headquarters at Charleton, in Fife—the seat of the founder's son-in-law, Mr. Anstruther Thomson; and one of their drives was to the two ancient mansions of Ely and Balcasky. "The latter," says Sir Walter in his Diary, "put me in mind of poor Philip Anstruther, dead and gone many a long year since. He was a fine, gallant, light-hearted young sailor. I remember the story of his drawing on his father for some cash, which produced an angry letter from old Sir Robert, to which Philip replied, that if he did not know how to write like a gentleman, he did not desire any more of his correspondence. Balcasky is much dilapidated; but they are restoring the house in the good old style, with its terraces and yew hedges."

Another morning was given to St. Andrews, which one of the party had never before visited. "The ruins," he says, "have been lately cleared out. They had been chiefly magnificent from their size, not their richness in ornament.† I did not go up to St. Rule's Tower, as on former occasions; this is a falling off, for when before did I remain sitting below when there was a steeple to be ascended?—But the rheumatism has begun to change that vein for some time past, though I think this is the first decided sign of acquiescence in my lot. I sat down on a grave-stone, and recollected the first visit I made to St. Andrews, now thirty-four years ago. What changes in my feelings and my fortunes have since taken place!—some for the better, many for the worse. I remembered the name I then carved in runic characters on the turf beside the castle-gate, and I asked why it should still agitate my heart. But my friends came down from the tower, and the foolish idea was chased away."

On the 22d of July his Diary bears the date of *Minto*. He then says—"We rubbed up some recollections of twenty years ago, when I was more intimate in the family, till Whig and Tory separated us for a time. By the way, nobody talks Whig or Tory just now, and the fighting men on each side go about muzzled and mute, like dogs after a proclamation about canine madness. Am I sorry for this truce or not. Half and half. It is all we have left to stir the blood, this little political brawling. But better too little of it than too much. Here I have received news of two deaths at once; Lady Die Scott, my very old friend, and Archibald Constable, the bookseller."—He adds next day—"Yes! they are both, for very different reasons, subjects of reflection. Lady Diana Scott, widow of Walter Scott of Harden, was the last person whom I recollect so much older than myself, that she kept always at the same distance in point of age, so that she scarce seemed older to me (relatively) two years ago, when in her ninety-second year, than fifty years before. She was the daughter (alone remaining) of Pope's Earl of Marchmont, and, like her father, had an acute mind, and an eager temper. She was always kind to me, remarkably so, indeed, when I was a boy.—Constable's death might have been a most important thing to me if it had happened some years ago, and I should then have lamented it much. He has lived to do me some injury; yet, excepting the last £5,000, I think most unintentionally. He was a prince of booksellers; his views sharp, powerful, and liberal; too sanguine, however, and like many bold and successful schemers, never knowing when to stand or stop, and not always calculating his means to his object with mercantile accuracy. He was very vain, for which he had some reason, having raised himself to great commercial eminence, as he might also, with good management, have attained great wealth. He knew, I think, more of the business of a bookseller, in planning and executing popular works, than any man of his time. In books themselves he had much bibliographical information, but none whatever that could be termed literary. He knew the rare volumes of his library not only by the eye, but by the touch, when blindfolded. Thomas Thomson saw him make this experiment, and that it might be complete, placed in his hand an ordinary volume instead of one of these *libra rariores*. He said he had over-estimated his memory; he could not recollect that volume. Constable was a violent tempered man with those he dared to use freedom with. He was easily overawed by people of consequence; but, as usual, took it out of those whom poverty made subservient to him. Yet he was generous, and far from bad-hearted:—in person good-looking, but very corpulent latterly; a large feeder, and deep drinker, till his health became weak. He died of water in the chest, which the natural strength of his constitution set long at defiance. I have no great reason to regret him; yet I do. If he deceived me, he also deceived himself."

Constable's spirit had been effectually broken by his downfall. To stoop from being *primus absque secundo* among the Edinburgh booksellers, to be the occupant of an obscure closet of a shop, without capital, without credit, all his mighty undertakings abandoned or gone into other hands, except indeed his Miscellany, which he had now no resources for pushing on in the fashion he once contemplated—this reverse was too much for that proud heart. He no longer opposed a determined mind to the ailments of the body, and sunk on the 21st of this month, having, as I am told, looked long ere he took to his bed at least ten years older than he was. He died in his 54th year; but into that space he had crowded vastly more than the usual average of zeal and energy, of hilarity and triumph, and perhaps of anxiety and misery.

About this time the rumour became prevalent that Mr. Canning's health was breaking up among toils and mortifications of another order, and Scott's Diary has some striking entries on this painful subject. Meeting Lord Melville casually at the seat of a common friend, towards the end of July, he says, "I was very sorry to see my very old friend, this upright statesman and honourable gentleman, deprived of his power, and his official income, which the number of his family must render a matter of importance. He was cheerful, not affectedly so, and bore his declension like a wise and brave man. Canning said the office of Premier was his by inheritance; he could not, from constitution, hold it above two years, and then it would descend to Peel. Such is ambition! Old friends forsaken—old principles changed—every effort used to give the vessel of the State a new direction, and all to be Palinurus for two years!"

Of the 10th of August—when the news of Mr. Canning's death reached Abbotsford—and the day following, are these entries;—"The death of the Premier is announced—late George Canning—the witty, the accomplished, the ambitious;—he who had toiled thirty years, and involved himself in the most harassing discussions, to attain this dizzy height; he who had held it for three months of intrigue and obloquy—and now a heap of dust, and that is all. He was an early and familiar friend of mine, through my intimacy with George Ellis. No man possessed a gayer and more playful wit in society; no one, since Pitt's time, had more commanding sarcasm in debate; in the House of Com-

* See Miscellaneous Prose Works, (edition 1836) vol. xxi.

† I believe there is no doubt that the Metropolitan Cathedral of St. Andrews had been the *longest* in Europe—a very remarkable fact, when one thinks of the smallness and poverty of the country. It is stated, with minute calculations, and much exultation, by an old Scotch writer—*Volusenus* (i. e. Wilson)—in his once celebrated treatise *De Tranquillitate Animi*.

mons he was the terror of that species of orators called the Yelpers. His lash fetched away both skin and flesh, and would have penetrated the hide of a rhinoceros. In his conduct as a statesman he had a great fault; he lent himself too willingly to intrigue. Thus he got into his quarrel with Lord Castlereagh, and lost credit with the country for want of openness. Thus, too, he got involved with the Queen's party to such an extent, that it fettered him upon that miserable occasion, and obliged him to butter Sir Robert Wilson with dear friend, and gallant general, and so forth. The last composition with the Whigs was a sacrifice of principle on both sides. I have some reason to think they counted on getting rid of him in two or three years. To me Canning was always personally most kind. I saw, with pain, a great change in his health when I met him at Colonel Bolton's, at Storrs, in 1825. In London last year I thought him looking better. My nerves have for these two or three last days been susceptible of an acute excitement from the slightest causes; the beauty of the evening, the sighing of the summer breeze, bring the tears into my eyes not unpleasantly. But I must take exercise, and case-harden myself. There is no use in encouraging these moods of the mind.

"*August* 11.—Wrote nearly five pages; then walked. A visit from Henry Scott; nothing known as yet about politics. A High Tory Administration would be a great evil at this time. There are repairs in the structure of our constitution which ought to be made at this season, and without which the people will not long be silent. A pure Whig Administration would probably play the devil by attempting a thorough repair. As to a compound, or melo-dramatic Ministry, the parts out of which such a one could be organized just now are at a terrible discount in public estimation, nor will they be at par in a hurry again. The public were generally shocked at the complete lack of principle testified on the late occasion, and by some who till then had high credit. The Duke of Wellington has risen by his firmness on the one side, Earl Grey on the other."

He received about this time, a third visit from Mr. J. L. Adolphus. The second occurred in August 1824, and since that time they had not met. I transcribe a few paragraphs from my friend's memoranda, on which I formerly drew so largely: He says—

"Calamity had borne heavily upon Sir Walter in the interval; but the painful and anxious feeling with which a friend is approached for the first time under such circumstances, gave way at once to the unassumed serenity of his manner. There were some signs of age about him which the mere lapse of time would scarcely have accounted for; but his spirits were abated only, not broken; if they had sunk, they had sunk equably and gently. It was a declining, not a clouded sun. I do not remember, at this period, hearing him make any reference to the afflictions he had suffered, except once, when, speaking of his Life of Napoleon, he said, 'he knew that it had some inaccuracies, but he believed it would be found right in all essential points;' and then added, in a quiet, but affecting tone, 'I could have done it better, if I could have written at more leisure, and with a mind more at ease.' One morning a party was made to breakfast at Chiefswood; and any one who on that occasion looked at and heard Sir Walter Scott, in the midst of his children, and grand-children, and friends, must have rejoiced to see that life still yielded him a store of pleasures, and that his heart was as open to their influence as ever.

"I was much struck by a few words which fell from him on this subject a short time afterwards. After mentioning an accident which had spoiled the promised pleasure of a visit to his daughter in London, he then added, 'I am like Seged, Lord of Ethiopia, in the Rambler, who said that he would have ten happy days, and all turned to disappointment. But, however, I have had as much happiness in my time as most men, and I must not complain now.' I said, that whatever had been his share of happiness, no man could have laboured better for it. He answered, 'I consider the capacity to labour as part of the happiness I have enjoyed.'

"Abbotsford was not much altered since 1818. I had then seen it complete even to the statue of Maida at the door, though in 1824 old Maida was still alive, and now and then raised a majestic bark from behind the house. It was one of the little scenes of Abbotsford life which should have been preserved by a painter, when Sir Walter strolled out in a sunny morning to caress poor Maida, and condole with him upon being so 'very frail;' the aged hound dragging his gaunt limbs forward, painfully, yet with some remains of dignity, to meet the hand and catch the deep affectionate tones of his master.

"The greatest observable difference which the last three years had made in the outward appearance of Abbotsford, was in the advanced growth of the plantations. Sir Walter now showed me some rails and palisades, made of their wood, with more self-complacency than I ever saw him betray on any other subject. The garden did not appear to interest him so much, and the 'mavis and merle' were, upon principle, allowed to use their discretion as to the fruit. His favourite afternoon exercise was to ramble through his grounds, conversing with those who accompanied him, and trimming his young trees with a large knife. Never have I received an invitation more gladly than when he has said, 'If you like a walk in the plantations, I will bestow my tediousness upon you after one o'clock.' His conversation at such times ran in that natural, easy, desultory course, which accords so well with the irregular movements of a walk over hill and woodland, and which he has himself described so well in his Epistle to Mr. Skene.* I remember with particular pleasure one of our walks through the romantic little ravine of the Huntly-Burn. Our progress was leisurely, for the path was somewhat difficult to him. Occasionally he would stop, and, leaning on his walking-stick and fixing his eyes on those of the hearer, pour forth some sonorous stanza of an old poem applicable to the scene, or to the last subject of the conversation. Several times we paused to admire the good taste, as it seemed, with which his great Highland staghound Nimrod always displayed himself on those prominent points of the little glen, where his figure, in combination with the scenery, had the most picturesque effect. Sir Walter accounted for this by observing that the situations were of that kind which the dog's instinct would probably draw him to if looking out for game. In speaking of the Huntly-Burn I used the word 'brook.' 'It is hardly that,' said he, 'it is just a runnel.' Emerging into a more open country, we saw a road a little below us, on each side of which were some feathery saplings. 'I like,' he said, 'that way of giving an eyelash to the road.' Independently of the recollections called up by particular objects, his eye and mind always seemed to dwell with a perfect complacency on his own portion of the vale of Tweed: he used to say that he did not know a more 'liveable' country.

"A substitute for walking, which he always very cheerfully used, and which at last became his only resource for any distant excursion, was a ride in a four-wheeled open carriage, holding four persons, but not absolutely limited to that number on an emergency. Tame as this exercise might be in comparison with riding on horseback, or with walking under propitious circumstances, yet as he was rolled along to Melrose, or Bowhill, or Yair, his spirits always freshened; the air, the sounds, the familiar yet romantic scenes, wakened up all the poetry of his thoughts, and happy were they who heard it resolve itself into words. At the sight of certain objects—for example, in passing the green foundations of the little chapel of Lindean, where the body of the 'Dark Knight of Liddesdale' was deposited, on its way to Melrose, it would, I suppose, been impossible for him, unless with a companion hopelessly unsusceptible or pre-occupied, to forbear some passing comment, some harping (if the word may be favourably used) on the tradition of the place. This was, perhaps, what he called 'bestowing his tediousness;' but if any one could think these effusions tedious because they often broke forth, such a man might have objected against the rushing of the Tweed, or the stirring of the trees in the wind, or any other natural melody, that he had heard the same thing before.

"Some days of my visit were marked by an almost perpetual confinement to the house; the rain being incessant. But the evenings were as bright and cheerful as the atmosphere of the days was dreary. Not that the gloomiest morning could ever be wearisome under a roof where, independently of the resources in society which the house afforded, the visiter might ransack a library, unique, I suppose, in some of its collections, and in all its departments interesting and characteristic of the founder. So many of the volumes were enriched with anecdotes or comments in his own hand, that to look over his books was in some degree conversing with him. And sometimes this occupation was pleasantly interrupted by a snatch of actual conversation with himself, when he entered from his own room, to consult or take

* See Poetical Works, Vol. I.

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away a book. How often have I heard with pleasure, after a long silence, the uneven stop, the point of the stick striking against the floor, and then seen the poet himself emerge from his study, with a face of thought but yet of cheerfulness, followed perhaps by Nimrod, who stretched his limbs and yawned, as if tired out with some abstruse investigation.

"On one of the rainy days I have alluded to, when walking at the usual hour became hopeless, Sir Walter asked me to sit with him while he continued his morning occupation, giving me, for my own employment, the publications of the Bannatyne Club. His study, as I recollect it, was strictly a work-room, though an elegant one. It has been fancifully decked out in pictures, but it had, I think, very few articles of mere ornament. The chief of these was the print of Stothard's Canterbury Pilgrims, which hung over the chimney-piece, and, from the place assigned to it, must have been in great favour, though Sir Walter made the characteristic criticism upon it, that if the procession were to move, the young squire who is prancing in the foreground would in another minute be over his horse's head. The shelves were stored with serviceable books; one door opened into the great library, and a hanging-stair within the room itself communicated with his bed-room. It would have been a good lesson to a desultory student, or even to a moderately active amanuensis, to see the unintermitted energy with which Sir Walter Scott applied himself to his work. I conjectured that he was at this time writing the Tales of a Grandfather. When we had sat down to our respective employments, the stillness of the room was unbroken, except by the light rattle of the rain against the windows, and the dashing trot of Sir Walter's pen over his paper; sounds not very unlike each other, and which seemed to vie together in rapidity and continuance. Sometimes, when he stopped to consult a book, a short dialogue would take place upon the subjects with which I was occupied; about Mary Queen of Scots, perhaps, or Viscount Dundee; or, again, the silence might be broken for a moment by some merry outcry in the hall, from one of the little grandchildren, which would half waken Nimrod, or Bran, or Spice, as they slept at Sir Walter's feet, and produce a growl or a stifled bark, not in anger, but by way of protest. For matters like these, work did not proceed the worse, nor, as it seemed to me, did Sir Walter feel at all discomposed by such interruptions as a message, or the entrance of a visiter. One door of his study opened into the hall, and there did not appear to be any understanding that he should not be disturbed. At the end of our morning we attempted a sortie, but had made only a little way in the shrubbery-walks overlooking the Tweed, when the rain drove us back. The river swollen and discoloured, swept by majestically, and the sight drew from Sir Walter his favourite lines—

'I've seen Tweed's silver streams, glittering in the sunny beams,
Turn drumly and dark, as they roll'd on their way.'

There could not have been a better moment for appreciating the imagery of the last line. I think it was in this short walk that he mentioned to me, with great satisfaction, the favourable prospects of his literary industry, and spoke sanguinely of retrieving his 'losses with the booksellers.'

"Those who have seen Abbotsford will remember that there is at the end of the hall, opposite to the entrance of the library, an arched door-way leading to other rooms. One night some of the party observed that, by an arrangement of light, easily to be imagined, a luminous space was formed upon the library door, in which the shadow of a person standing in the opposite archway made a very imposing appearance, the body of the hall remaining quite dark. Sir Walter had some time before told his friends of the deception of sight (mentioned in his Demonology) which made him for a moment imagine a figure of Lord Byron standing in the same hall.* The discoverers of the little phantasmagoria which I have just described, called to him to come and see *their* ghost. Whether he thought that raising ghosts at a mere door was not a comely amusement, or whether the parody upon a circumstance which had made some impression upon his own fancy was a little too strong, he certainly did not enter into the jest.

"On the subjects commonly designated as the 'marvellous,' his mind was susceptible, and it was delicate. He loved to handle them in his own manner and at his own season, not to be pressed with them, or brought to any thing like a test of belief or disbelief respecting them. There is, perhaps, in most minds, a point more or less advanced, at which incredulity on these subjects may be found to waver. Sir Walter Scott, as it seemed to me, never cared to ascertain very precisely where this point lay in his own mental constitution; still less, I suppose, did he wish the investigation to be seriously pursued by others. In no instance, however, was his colloquial eloquence more striking than when he was well launched in 'some tale of wonder.' The story came from him with an equally good grace, whether it was to receive a natural solution, to be smiled at as merely fantastical, or to take its chance of a serious reception."

* See Scott's Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft.

About the close of August Sir Walter's Diary is chiefly occupied with an affair which, as the reader of the previous chapter is aware, did not come altogether unexpectedly on him. Among the documents laid before him in the Colonial Office, when he was in London at the close of 1826, were some which represented one of Buonaparte's attendants at St. Helena, General Gourgaud, as having been guilty of gross unfairness, giving the English Government private information that the Emperor's complaints of ill-usage were utterly unfounded, and yet then, and afterwards, aiding and assisting the delusion in France as to the harshness of Sir Hudson Lowe's conduct towards his captive. Sir Walter, when using these remarkable documents, guessed that Gourgaud might be inclined to fix a personal quarrel on himself; and there now appeared in the newspapers a succession of hints that the General was seriously bent on this purpose. He applied, as "*Colonel Grogg*" would have done forty years before, to "*The Baronet.*"

DIARY.—"*August* 27.—A singular letter from a lady, requesting me to father a novel of hers. That won't pass. Cadell transmits a notice from the French papers that Gourgaud has gone, or is going, to London; and the bibliopolist is in a great funk. I lack some part of his instinct. I have done Gourgaud no wrong. I have written to Will Clerk, who has mettle in him, and will think of my honour, as well as my safety."

To William Clerk, Esq., Rose Court, Edinburgh.

"Abbotsford, 27th August, 1827.

"My dear Clerk,

"I am about to claim an especial service from you in the name of our long and intimate friendship. I understand, from a passage in the French papers, that General Gourgaud has, or is about to set out for London, to *verify* the facts averred concerning him in my history of Napoleon. Now, in case of a personal appeal to me, I have to say that his confessions to Baron Sturmer, Count Balmain, and others at St. Helena, confirmed by him in various recorded conversations with Mr. Goulburn, then Under Secretary of State—were documents of a historical nature which I found with others in the Colonial Office, and was therefore perfectly entitled to use. If his language has been misrepresented, he has certainly been very unfortunate; for it has been misrepresented by four or five different people to whom he said the same things, true or false he knows best. I also acted with delicacy towards him, leaving out whatever related to his private quarrels with Bertrand, &c., so that, in fact, he has no reason to complain of me, since it is ridiculous to suppose I was to suppress historical evidence, furnished by him voluntarily, because his present sentiments render it unpleasing for him that those which he formerly entertained should be known. Still, like a man who finds himself in a scrape, General Gourgaud may wish to fight himself out of it, and if the quarrel should be thrust on me—why, *I will not baulk him, Jackie.* He shall not dishonour the country through my sides I can assure *him.* I have, of course, no wish to bring the thing to such an arbitrement. Now, in this case, I shall have occasion for a sensible and resolute friend, and I naturally look for him in the companion of my youth, on whose firmness and sagacity I can with such perfect confidence rely. If you can do me this office of friendship, will you have the kindness to let me know where or how we can form a speedy junction, should circumstances require it.

"After all, the matter may be a Parisian *on dit.* But it is best to be prepared. The passages are in the ninth volume of the book. Pray look at them. I have an official copy of the principal communication. Of the others I have abridged extracts. Should he desire to see them, I conceive I cannot refuse to give him copies, as it is likely they may not admit him to the Colonial Office. But if he asks any apology or explanation for having made use of his name, it is my purpose to decline it and stand to consequences. I am aware I could march off upon

the privileges of literature, and so forth, but I have no taste for that species of retreat; and if a gentleman says to me I have injured him, however captious the quarrel may be, I certainly do not think, as a man of honour, I can avoid giving him satisfaction, without doing intolerable injury to my own feelings, and giving rise to the most malignant animadversions. I need not say that I shall be anxious to hear from you, and that I always am, dear Clerk, affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

DIARY.—"*September* 4.—William Clerk quite ready and willing to stand my friend if Gourgaud should come my road. He agrees with me that there is no reason why he should turn on me, but that if he does, reason or none, it is best to stand buff to him. It appears to me that what is least forgiven in a man of any mark or likelihood, is want of that article blackguardly called *pluck*. All the fine qualities of genius cannot make amends for it. We are told the genius of poets, especially, is irreconcilable with this species of grenadier accomplishment. If so, *quel chien de genre!*

"*September* 10.—Gourgaud's wrath has burst forth in a very distant clap of thunder, in which he accuses me of contriving, with the Ministry, to slander his rag of a reputation. He be d——d for a fool, to make his case worse by stirring. I shall only revenge myself by publishing the whole extracts I made from the records of the Colonial Office, in which he will find enough to make him bite his nails.

"*September* 17.—Received from James Ballantyne the proofs of my Reply, with some cautious balsam from mine honest friend, alarmed by a Highland colonel, who had described Gourgaud as a *mauvais garcon*, famous fencer, marksman, and so forth. I wrote, in answer, which is true, that I hoped all my friends would trust to my acting with proper caution and advice; but that if I were capable, in a moment of weakness, of doing any thing short of what my honour demanded, I should die the death of a poisoned rat in a hole, out of mere sense of my own degradation. God knows, that, though life is placid enough with me, I do not feel any thing to attach me to it so strongly as to occasion my avoiding any risk which duty to my character may demand from me. I set to work with the Tales of a Grandfather, second volume, and finished four pages."

To the Editor of the Edinburgh Weekly Journal.

"Abbotsford, Sept. 14, 1827.

"Sir,—I observed in the London papers which I received yesterday, a letter from General Gourgaud, which I beg you will have the goodness to reprint, with this communication and the papers accompanying it.

"It appears that the General is greatly displeased, because, availing myself of formal official documents, I have represented him in my Life of Buonaparte, as communicating to the British Government and the representatives of others of the Allied Powers, certain statements in matter, which he seems at present desirous to deny or disavow, though in what degree, or to what extent, he has not explicitly stated.

"Upon these grounds, for I can discover no other, General Gourgaud has been pleased to charge me, in the most intemperate terms, as the agent of a plot, contrived by the late British Ministers, to slander and dishonour him. I will not attempt to imitate the General either in his eloquence or his invective, but confine myself to the simple fact, that his accusation against me is as void of truth as it is of plausibility. I undertook, and carried on, the task of writing the Life of Napoleon Buonaparte, without the least intercourse with, or encouragement from, the Ministry of the time, or any person connected with them; nor was it until my task was very far advanced, that I asked and obtained permission from the Earl Bathurst, then Secretary for the Colonial Department, to consult such documents as his office afforded, concerning the residence of Napoleon at St. Helena. His Lordship's liberality, with that of Mr. Hay, the Under Secretary, permitted me, in the month of October last, personal access to the official records, when I inspected more than sixteen quarto volumes of letters, from which I made memoranda or extracts at my own discretion, unscrutinized by any feeling excepting the wish to do justice to all parties.

"The papers relating to General Gourgaud and his communications were not pointed out to me by any one. They occurred, in the course of my researches, like other pieces of information, and were of too serious and important a character, verified as they were, to be omitted in the history. The idea that, dated and authenticated as they are, they could have been false documents, framed to mislead future historians, seems as absurd, as it is positively false that they were fabricated on any understanding with me, who had not at the time of their date the slightest knowledge of their existence.

"To me, evidence, *ex facie* the most unquestionable, bore, that General Gourgaud had attested certain facts of importance to different persons, at different times and places; and it did not, I own, occur to me that what he is stated to have made the subject of grave assertion and attestation, could or ought to be received as matter of doubt, because it rested only on a verbal communication made before responsible witnesses, and was not concluded by any formal signature of the party. I have been accustomed to consider a gentleman's word as equally worthy of credit with his handwriting.

"At the same time, in availing myself of these documents, I felt it a duty to confine myself entirely to those particulars which concerned the history of Napoleon, his person and his situation at St. Helena; omitting all subordinate matters in which General Gourgaud, in his communications with our Ministers and others, referred to transactions of a more private character, personal to himself and other gentlemen residing at St. Helena. I shall observe the same degree of restraint as far as possible, out of the sincere respect I entertain for the honour and fidelity of General Gourgaud's companions in exile, who might justly complain of me for reviving the memory of petty altercations; but out of no deference to General Gourgaud, to whom I owe none. The line which General Gourgaud has adopted, obliges me now, in respect to my own character, to lay the full evidence before the public—subject only to the above restriction—that it may appear how far it bears out the account given of those transactions in my History of Napoleon. I should have been equally willing to have communicated my authorities to General Gourgaud in private, had he made such a request, according to the ordinary courtesies of society.

"I trust that, upon reference to the Life of Napoleon, I shall be found to have used the information these documents afforded with becoming respect to private feelings, and, at the same time, with the courage and candour due to the truth of history. If I were capable of failing in either respect, I should despise myself as much, if possible, as I do the resentment of General Gourgaud. The historian's task of exculpation is of course ended, when he has published authorities of apparent authenticity. If General Gourgaud shall undertake to prove that the subjoined documents are false and forged, in whole or in part, the burden of the proof will lie with himself; and something better than the assertion of the party interested will be necessary to overcome the testimony of Mr. Goulburn and the other evidence.

"There is indeed another course. General Gourgaud may represent the whole of his communications as a trick played off upon the English Ministers, in order to induce them to grant his personal liberty. But I cannot imitate the General's disregard of common civility so far as to suppose him capable of a total departure from veracity, when giving evidence upon his word of honour. In representing the Ex-Emperor's health as good, his finances as ample, his means of escape as easy and frequent, while he knew his condition to be the reverse in every particular, General Gourgaud must have been sensible, that the deceptive views thus impressed on the British Ministers must have had the natural effect of adding to the rigours of his patron's confinement. Napoleon, it must be recollected, would receive the visits of no English physician in whom Sir Hudson Lowe seemed to repose confidence, and he shunned, as much as possible, all intercourse with the British. Whom, therefore, were sir Hudson Lowe and the British Ministers to believe concerning the real state of his health and circumstances, if they were to refuse credit to his own aide-de-camp, an officer of distinction, whom no one could suppose guilty of slandering his master for the purpose of obtaining a straight passage to England for himself, instead of being subjected to the inconvenience of going round by the Cape of Good Hope? And again, when General Gourgaud, having arrived in London, and the purpose of his supposed deception being fully attained, continued to represent Napoleon as feigning poverty whilst in affluence, affecting illness whilst in health, and possessing ready means of escape whilst he was complaining of unnecessary restraint—what effect could such statements produce on Lord Bathurst and the other members of the British Ministry, except a disregard to Napoleon's remonstrances, and a rigorous increase of every precaution neces

sary to prevent his escape? They had the evidence of one of his most intimate personal attendants to justify them for acting thus; and their own responsibility to Britain, and to Europe, for the safe custody of Napoleon, would have rendered them inexcusable had they acted otherwise.

"It is no concern of mine, however, how the actual truth of the fact stands. It is sufficient to me to have shown, that I have not laid to General Gourgaud's charge a single expression for which I had not the most indubitable authority. If I have been guilty of over credulity in attaching more weight to General Gourgaud's evidence than it deserves, I am well taught not to repeat the error, and the world, too, may profit by the lesson. I am, Sir, your humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

To this letter Gourgaud made a fiery rejoinder; but Scott declined to prolong the paper war, simply stating in Ballantyne's print that "while leaving the question to the decision of the British public, he should have as little hesitation in referring it to the French nation, provided the documents he had produced were allowed to be printed in the French newspapers, *from which hitherto they had been excluded*." And he would indeed have been idle had he said more than this, for his cause had been taken up on the instant by every English Journal, of whatever politics, and *The Times* thus summed up its very effective demolition of his antagonist:—

"Sir Walter Scott did that which would have occurred to every honest man, whose fair-dealing had violent imputations cast upon it. He produced his authorities, extracted from the Colonial Office. To these General Gourgaud's present pamphlet professes to be a reply; but we do conscientiously declare, that with every readiness to acknowledge—and, indeed, with every wish to discover—something like a defence of the character of General Gourgaud, whose good name has alone been implicated—(for that of Sir Walter was abundantly cleared, even had the official documents which he consulted turned out to be as false as they appear to be unquestionable,)—the charge against the General stands precisely where it was before this ill-judged attempt at refutation was published; and in no one instance can we make out a satisfactory answer to the plain assertion, that Gourgaud had in repeated instances either betrayed Buonaparte, or sacrificed the truth. In the General's reply to Sir Walter Scott's statement, there is enough, even to satiety, of declamation against the English Government under Lord Castlereagh, of subterfuge and equivocation with regard to the words on record against himself, and of gross abuse and Billingsgate against the historian who has placarded him; but of direct and successful negative there is not one syllable. The Aide-de-camp of St. Helena shows himself to be nothing better than a cross between a blusterer and a sophist."

Sir Walter's family were, of course, relieved from considerable anxiety, when the newspapers ceased to give paragraphs about General Gourgaud; and the blowing over of this alarm was particularly acceptable to his eldest daughter, who had to turn southwards about the beginning of October. He himself certainly cared little or nothing about that (or any similar) affair; and if it had any effect at all upon his spirits, they were pleasurably excited and stimulated. He possessed a pair of pistols taken from Napoleon's carriage at Waterloo, and presented to him, I believe, by the late Honourable Colonel James Stanhope, and he said he designed to make use of them, in case the controversy should end in a rencounter, and his friend Clerk should think as well as he did of their fabric. But this was probably a jest. I may observe that I *once* saw Sir Walter shoot at a mark with pistols, and he acquitted himself well; so much so as to excite great admiration in some young officers whom he had found practising in his barn on a rainy day. With the rifle he is said by those who knew him in early life to have been a very good shot indeed.

Before Gourgaud fell quite asleep, Sir Walter made an excursion to Edinburgh to meet his friends, Mrs. Mac Lean Clephane and Lady Northampton, with whom he had some business to transact; and they, feeling, as all his intimate friends at this time did, that the kindliest thing they could do by him was to keep him as long as possible away from his desk, contrived to seduce him into escorting them as far as Greenock on their way to the Hebrides. He visited on his return his esteemed kinsman, Mr. Campbell of Blythswood, in whose park he saw, with much interest, the Argyle Stone, marking the spot where the celebrated Earl was taken prisoner in 1685. He notes in his Diary, that "the Highland drovers are still apt to break Blythswood's fences to see this Stone;" and then records the capital turtle, &c. of his friend's entertainment, and some good stories told at table, especially this: 'Prayer of the minister of the Cumbrays, two miserable islands in the mouth of the Clyde: 'O Lord bless and be gracious to the Greater and the Lesser Cumbrays, and in thy mercy do not forget the adjacent islands of Great Britain and Ireland.' This is *nos poma natamus* with a vengeance."

Another halt was at the noble seat of his early friend Cranstoun, by the Falls of the Clyde. He says:—"Cranstoun and I walked before dinner. I never saw the Great Fall of Corra Linn from this side before, and I think it the best point perhaps; at all events, it is not that from which it is usually seen; so Lord Corehouse has the sight, and escapes the locusts. This is a superb place. Cranstoun has as much feeling about improvement as other things. Like all new improvers, he is at more expense than is necessary, plants too thick, and trenches where trenching is superfluous. But this is the eagerness of a young artist. Besides the grand lion the Fall of Clyde, he has more than one lion's whelp—a fall of a brook in a cleugh called Mill's Gill must be superb in rainy whether. The old Castle of Corehouse, too, is much more castle-like on this than from the other side. My old friend was very happy when I told him the favourable prospect of my affairs. To be sure, if I come through, it will be wonder to all, and most to myself."

On returning from this trip, Scott found an invitation from Lord and Lady Ravensworth to meet the Duke of Wellington at their castle near Durham. The Duke was then making a progress in the North of England, to which additional importance was given by the uncertain state of political arrangements;—the chance of Lord Goderich's being able to maintain himself as Canning's successor seeming very precarious—and the opinion that his grace must soon be called to a higher station than that of Commander of the Forces, which he had accepted under the new Premier, gaining ground every day. Sir Walter, who felt for the Great Captain the pure and exalted devotion that might have been expected from some honoured soldier of his banners, accepted this invitation, and witnessed a scene of enthusiasm with which its principal object could hardly have been more gratified than he was.

DIARY.—"*October* 1.—I set about work for two hours, and finished three pages; then walked for two hours; then home, adjusted sheriff processes, and cleared the table. I am to set off to-morrow for Ravensworth Castle, to meet the Duke of Wellington; a great let-off, I suppose. Yet I would almost rather stay, and see two days more of Lockhart and my daughter, who will be off before my return. Perhaps—— But there is no end to *perhaps*. We must cut the rope, and let the vessel drive down the tide of destiny.

"*October* 2.—Set out in the morning at seven, and reached Kelso by a little past ten with my own horses. Then took the Wellington coach to carry me to Wellington—Smart that. Nobody inside but an old lady, who proved a toy-woman in Edinburgh; her head furnished with as substantial ware as her shop, but a good soul, I'se warrant her. Heard all her debates with her landlord about a new door to the cellar—and the propriety of paying rent on the 15th or 25th of May. Landlords and tenants will have different opinions on *that* subject. We dined at Wooler, where an obstreperous horse retarded us for an hour at least, to the great alarm of my friend the toy-woman.—N. B. She would have made a good feather-bed if the carriage had happened to fall, and her undermost. The heavy roads had retarded us near an hour more, so that I hesitated to go to

Ravensworth so late; but my goodwoman's tales of dirty sheets, and certain recollections of a Newcastle inn, induced me to go on. When I arrived, the family had just retired. Lord Ravensworth and Mr. Liddell came down, however, and both received me as kindly as possible.

"*October* 3.—Rose about eight or later. My morals begin to be corrupted by travel and fine company. Went to Durham with Lord Ravensworth betwixt one and two. Found the gentlemen of Durham county and town assembled to receive the Duke of Wellington. I saw several old friends, and with difficulty suited names to faces, and faces to names. There were Dr. Philpotts, Dr. Gilly, and his wife, and a world of acquaintance,—among others, Sir Thomas Lawrence; whom I asked to come on to Abbotsford, but he could not. He is, from habit of coaxing his subjects I suppose, a little too fair-spoken, otherwise very pleasant. The Duke arrived very late. There were bells, and cannon, and drums, trumpets, and banners, besides a fine troop of yeomanry. The address was well expressed, and as well answered by the Duke. The enthusiasm of the ladies and the gentry was great—the common people more lukewarm. The Duke has lost popularity in accepting political power. He will be more useful to his country, it may be, than ever, but will scarce be so gracious in the people's eyes—and he will not care a curse for what outward show he has lost. But I must not talk of curses, for we are going to take dinner with the Bishop of Durham.—We dined about one hundred and forty or fifty men, a distinguished company for rank and property. Marshal Beresford, and Sir John,* amongst others—Marquis of Lothian, Lord Feversham, Marquis Londonderry—and I know not who besides—

'Lords and Dukes, and noble Princes,
All the pride and flower of Spain,'

We dined in the old baronial hall, impressive from its rude antiquity, and fortunately free from the plaster of former improvement, as I trust it will long be from the gingerbread taste of modern Gothicizers. The bright moon streaming in through the old Gothic windows contrasted strangely with the artificial lights within; spears, banners, and armour were intermixed with the pictures of old bishops, and the whole had a singular mixture of baronial pomp with the grave and more chastened dignity of prelacy. The conduct of our reverend entertainer suited the character remarkably well. Amid the welcome of a count Palatine he did not for an instant forget the gravity of the Church dignitary. All his toasts were gracefully given, and his little speeches well made, and the more affecting that the failing voice sometimes reminded us that our host laboured under the infirmities of advanced life. To me personally the Bishop was very civil."

In writing to me next day, Sir Walter says, "The dinner was one of the finest things I ever saw; it was in the old Castle Hall, untouched, for aught I know, since Anthony Beck feasted Edward Longshanks on his way to invade Scotland.† The moon streamed through the high latticed windows as if she had been curious to see what was going on." I was also favoured with a letter on the subject from Dr. Philpotts, (now Bishop of Exeter,) who said, "I wish you had witnessed this very striking scene. I never saw curiosity and enthusiasm so highly excited, and I may add, as to a great part of the company, so nearly balanced. Sometimes I doubted whether the hero or the poet was fixing most attention—the latter I need hardly tell you, appeared unconscious that he was regarded differently from the others about him, until the good Bishop rose and proposed his health." Another friend, the Honourable Henry Liddell, enables me to give the words ("*ipsissima verba*") of Sir Walter in acknowledging this toast. He says:—"The manner in which Bishop Van Mildert proceeded on this occasion will never be forgotten by those who know how to appreciate scholarship without pedantry, and dignity without ostentation. Sir Walter had been observed throughout the day with extraordinary interest—I should rather say enthusiasm.—The Bishop gave his health with peculiar felicity, remarking that he could reflect upon the labours of a long literary life, with the consciousness that every thing he had written tended to the practice of virtue, and to the improvement of the human race. Sir Walter replied 'that upon no occasion of his life had he ever returned thanks for the honour done him in drinking his health, with a stronger sense of obligation to the proposer of it than on the present—that hereafter he should always reflect with great pride upon that moment of his existence, when his health had been given *in such terms*, by the Bishop of Durham *in his own baronial hall*, surrounded and supported by the assembled aristocracy of the two northern counties, and *in the presence of the Duke of Wellington*.'"

The Diary continues—

"Mrs. Van Mildert held a sort of drawing-room after we rose from table, at which a great many ladies attended. After this we went to the Assembly rooms, which were crowded with company. Here I saw some very pretty girls dancing merrily that old fashioned thing called a country-dance, which old England has now thrown aside, as she would do her creed, if there were some foreign frippery offered instead. We got away after midnight, a large party, and reached Ravensworth Castle—Duke of Wellington, Lord Londonderry, and about twenty besides—about half-past one. Soda water, and to bed by two.

"*October* 4.—Slept till nigh ten—fatigued by our toils, of yesterday, and the unwonted late hours. Still too early for this Castle of Indolence, for I found few of last night's party yet appearing. I had an opportunity of some talk with the Duke. He does not consider Foy's book as written by himself, but as a thing *got up* perhaps from notes. Mentioned that Foy, when in Spain, was like other French officers, very desirous of seeing the English papers, through which alone they could collect any idea of what was going on without their own cantonments, for Napoleon permitted no communication of that kind with France. The Duke growing tired of this, at length told Baron Tripp, whose services he chiefly used in communications with the outposts, that he was not to give them the newspapers. 'What reason shall I allege for withholding them?' said Tripp. 'None,' replied the Duke—'Let *them* allege some reason why they want them.' Foy was not at a loss to assign a reason. He said he had considerable sums of money in the English funds, and wanted to see how stocks fell and rose. The excuse however did not go down.—I remember Baron Tripp, a Dutch nobleman, and a dandy of the first water, and yet with an energy in his dandyism which made it respectable. He drove a gig as far as Dunrobin Castle, and back again, *without a whip*. He looked after his own horse, for he had no servant, and after all his little establishment of clothes and necessaries, with all the accuracy of a *petit maître*. He was one of the best-dressed men possible, and his horse was in equally fine condition as if he had had a dozen of grooms. I met him at Lord Somerville's, and liked him much. But there was something exaggerated, as appeared from the conclusion of his life. Baron Tripp shot himself in Italy for no assignable cause.

"What is called great society, of which I have seen a good deal in my day, is now amusing to me, because from age and indifference I have lost the habit of considering myself as a part of it, and have only the feelings of looking on as a spectator of the scene, who can neither play his part well nor ill, instead of being one of the *dramatis personæ*; so, careless what is thought of myself I have full time to attend to the motions of others.

* Admiral Sir John Beresford had some few years before this commanded on the Leith station—when Sir Walter and he saw a great deal of each other—"and merry men were they."

† The warlike Bishop Beck accompanied Edward I. in his Scotch expedition, and if we may believe Blind Harry, very narrowly missed having the honour to die by the hand of Wallace in a skirmish on the street of Glasgow.

"Our party went to-day to Sunderland, when the Duke was brilliantly received by an immense population, chiefly of seamen. The difficulty of getting into the rooms was dreadful—an ebbing and flowing of the crowd, which nearly took me off my legs. The entertainment was handsome; about two hundred dined, and appeared most hearty in the cause which had convened them—some indeed so much so, that, finding themselves so far on the way to perfect happiness, they e'en would go on. After the dinner-party broke up, there was a ball, numerously attended, where there was a prodigious anxiety discovered for shaking of hands. The Duke had enough of it, and I came in for my share; for, though as jackall to the lion, I got some part in whatever was going. We got home about half-past two in the morning, sufficiently tired."

Some months afterwards, Sir Cuthbert Sharp, who had been particularly kind and attentive to Scott when at Sunderland, happened, in writing to him on some matter of business, to say he hoped he had not forgotten his friends in that quarter. Sir Walter's answer to Sir Cuthbert (who had been introduced to him by his old and dear friend Mr. Surtees of Mainsforth) begins thus,—

"Forget thee? No! my worthy fere!
Forget blithe mirth and gallant cheer!
Death sooner stretch me on my bier!
Forget thee? No.

"Forget the universal shout
When 'canny Sunderland' spoke out—
A truth which knaves affect to doubt—
Forget thee? No.

"Forget you? No—though now-a-day
I've heard your knowing people say,
Disown the debt you cannot pay,
You'll find it far the thriftiest way—
But I?—O no.

"Forget your kindness found for all room,
In what, though large, seem'd still a small room,
Forget my *Surtees* in a ball room—
Forget you? No.

"Forget your sprightly dumpty-diddles,
And beauty tripping to the fiddles,
Forget my lovely friends the *Liddells*—
Forget you? No.

"So much for oblivion, my dear Sir C., and now, having dismounted from my Pegasus, who is rather spavined, I charge a-foot, like an old dragoon as I am," &c. &c.

"DIARY.—*October* 5.—A quiet day at Ravensworth Castle, giggling and making giggle among the kind and frankhearted young people. The Castle is modern, excepting always two towers of great antiquity. Lord R. manages his woods admirably well. In the evening plenty of fine music, with heart as well as voice and instrument. Much of this was the spontaneous effusions of Mrs. Arkwright, (a daughter of Stephen Kemble,) who has set Hohenlinden, and other pieces of poetry to music of a highly-gifted character. The Miss Liddells and Mrs. Barrington sang 'The Campbells are coming,' in a tone that might have waked the dead.

"*October* 6.—Left Ravensworth this morning, and travelled as far as Whittingham with Marquis of Lothian. Arrived at Alnwick to dinner, where I was very kindly received. The Duke of Northumberland is a handsome man, who will be corpulent if he does not continue to take hard exercise. The Duchess very pretty and lively, but her liveliness is of that kind which shows at once it is connected with thorough principle, and is not liable to be influenced by fashionable caprice. The habits of the family are early and regular; I conceive they may be termed formal and old fashioned by such visiters as claim to be the pink of the mode. The Castle is a fine old pile, with various courts and towers, and the entrance is magnificent. It wants, however, the splendid feature of a keep. The inside fitting up is an attempt at Gothic, but the taste is meagre and poor, and done over with too much gilding. It was done half a century ago, when this kind of taste was ill understood. I found here the Bishop of Worcester,* &c. &c.

"*October* 7.—This morning went to church, and heard an excellent sermon from the Bishop of Worcester; he has great dignity of manner, and his accent and delivery are forcible. Drove out with the Duke in a phaeton, and saw part of the park, which is a fine one lying along the Alne. But it has been ill planted. It was laid out by the celebrated Brown, who substituted clumps of Birch and Scottish firs for the beautiful oaks and copse which grow no where so freely as in Northumberland. To complete this the late Duke did not thin, so the wood is in a poor state. All that the Duke cuts down is so much waste, for the people will not buy it where coals are so cheap. Had they been oak-coppice, the bark would have fetched its value; had they been grown oaks, the sea ports would have found a market. Had they been larch, the country demands for ruder purposes would have been unanswerable. The Duke does the best he can to retrieve his woods, but seems to despond more than a young man ought to do. It is refreshing to see such a man in his situation give so much of his time and thoughts to the improvement of his estates, and the welfare of the people. He tells me his people in Keeldar were all quite wild the first time his father went up to shoot there. The women had no other dress than a bed gown and petticoat. The men were savage, and could hardly be brought to rise from the heath, either from sullenness or fear. They sung a wild tune, the burden of which was *orsina, orsina, orsina*. The females sang, the men danced round, and at a certain point of the tune they drew their dirks, which they always wore.

"We came by the remains of an old Carmelite Monastery, which form a very fine object in the park. It was finished by De Vesci. The gateway of Alnwick Abbey, also a fine specimen, is standing about a mile distant. The trees are much finer on the left side of the Alne, where they have been let alone by the capability villain. Visited the *enceinte* of the Castle, and passed into the dungeon. There is also an armoury, but damp, and the arms in indifferent order. One odd petard-looking thing struck me.—Mem. to consult Grose. I had the honour to sit in Hotspur's seat, and to see the Bloody Gap, a place where the external wall must have been breached. The Duchess gave me a book of etchings of the antiquities of Alnwick and Warkworth from her own drawings. I had half a mind to stay to see Warkworth, but Anne is alone. We had prayers in the evening read by the Archdeacon."†

On the 8th Sir Walter reached Abbotsford, and forthwith resumed his Grandfather's Tales, which he composed throughout with the ease and heartiness reflected in this entry:—"This morning was damp, dripping, and unpleasant; so I even made a work of necessity, and set to the Tales like a dragon. I murdered Maclellan of Bomby at the Thrieve Castle; stabbed the Black Douglas in the town of Stirling; astonished King James before Roxburgh; and stifled the Earl of Mar in his bath, in the Canongate. A wild world, my masters, this Scotland of ours must have been. No fear of want of interest; no lassitude in those days for want of work—

'For treason, d'ye see,
Was to them a dish of tea,
And murder bread and butter.'"

Such was his life in autumn 1827. Before I leave the period, I must note how greatly I admired the manner in which all his dependents appeared to have met the reverse of his fortunes—a reverse which inferred very considerable alteration in the circumstances of every one of them. The butler, instead of being the easy chief of a large establishment, was now doing half the work of the house, at probably half his former wages. Old Peter, who had been for five-and-twenty years a dignified

* Dr. Cornwall.
† Probably Mr. Archdeacon Singleton.

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coachman, was now ploughman in ordinary, only putting his horses to the carriage upon high and rare occasions; and so on with all the rest that remained of the ancient train. And all, to my view, seemed happier than they had ever done before. Their good conduct had given every one of them a new elevation in his own mind—and yet their demeanour had gained, in place of losing, in simple humility of observance. The great loss was that of William Laidlaw, for whom (the estate being all but a fragment in the hands of the trustees and their agent) there was now no occupation here. The cottage, which his taste had converted into a loveable retreat, had found a rent-paying tenant; and he was living a dozen miles off on the farm of a relation in the Vale of Yarrow. Every week, however, he came down to have a ramble with Sir Walter over their old haunts—to hear how the pecuniary atmosphere was darkening or brightening; and to read in every face at Abbotsford, that it could never be itself again until circumstances should permit his re-establishment at Kaeside.

All this warm and respectful solicitude must have had a preciously soothing influence on the mind of Scott, who may be said to have lived upon love. No man cared less about popular admiration and applause; but for the least chill on the affection of any near and dear to him he had the sensitiveness of a maiden. I cannot forget, in particular, how his eyes sparkled when he first pointed out to me Peter Mathieson guiding the plough on the haugh: "Egad," said he, "auld *Pepe* (this was the children's name for their good friend)—auld *Pepe's* whistling at his darg. The honest fellow said, a yoking in a deep field would do baith him and the blackies good. If things get round with me, easy shall be Pepe's cushion." In general, during that autumn, I thought Sir Walter enjoyed much his usual spirits; and often, no doubt, he did so. His Diary shows (what perhaps many of his intimates doubted during his lifetime) that, in spite of the dignified equanimity which characterised all his conversation with mankind, he had his full share of the delicate sensibilities, the mysterious ups and downs, the wayward melancholy, and fantastic sunbeams of the poetical temperament. It is only with imaginative minds, in truth, that sorrows of the spirit are enduring. Those he had encountered were veiled from the eye of the world, but they lasted with his life. What a picture have we in his entry about the Runic letters he had carved in the day of young passion on the turf among the grave-stones of St. Andrews! And again, he wrote neither sonnets, nor elegies, nor monodies, nor even an epitaph on his wife—but what an epitaph is his Diary throughout the year 1826—ay, and down to the close!

There is one entry of that Diary for the period we are leaving, which paints the man in his tenderness, his fortitude, and his happy wisdom:—"*September* 24.—Worked in the morning as usual, and sent off the proofs and copy. Something of the black dog still hanging about me; but I will shake him off. I generally affect good spirits in company of my family, whether I am enjoying them or not. It is too severe to sadden the harmless mirth of others by suffering your own causeless melancholy to be seen; and this species of exertion is, like virtue, its own reward; for the good spirits, which are at first simulated, become at length real."

The first series of Chronicles of the Canongate—(which title supplanted that of "*The Canongate Miscellany, or Traditions of the Sanctuary*")—was published early in the winter. The contents were, the Highland Widow, the Two Drovers, and the Surgeon's Daughter—all in their styles excellent, except that the Indian part of the last does not well harmonize with the rest; and certain preliminary chapters which were generally considered as still better than the stories they introduce. The portraiture of Mrs. Murray Keith, under the name of Mrs. Bethune Baliol, and that of Chrystal Croftangry throughout, appear to me unsurpassed in Scott's writings. In the former, I am assured he has mixed up various features of his own beloved mother; and in the latter, there can be no doubt that a good deal was taken from nobody but himself. In fact, the choice of the hero's residence, the original title of the book, and a world of minor circumstances, were suggested by the actual condition and prospects of the author's affairs; for it appears from his Diary, though I have not thought it necessary to quote those entries, that from time to time, between December 1826 and November 1827, he had renewed threatenings of severe treatment from the Jewish brokers, Messrs. Abud and Co.; and, on at least one occasion, he made every preparation for taking shelter in the Sanctuary of Holyroodhouse. Although these people were well aware that at Christmas 1827 a very large dividend would be paid on the Ballantyne estate, they would not understand that their interest, and that of all the creditors, lay in allowing Scott the free use of his time; that by thwarting and harassing him personally, nothing was likely to be achieved but the throwing up of the trust, and the settlement of the insolvent house's affairs on the usual terms of a sequestration; in which case there could be no doubt that he would, on resigning all his assets, be discharged absolutely, with liberty to devote his future exertions to his own sole benefit. The Jews would understand nothing, but that the very unanimity of the other creditors as to the propriety of being gentle with him, rendered it extremely probable that their harshness might be rewarded by immediate payment of their whole demand. They fancied that the trustees would clear off any one debt, rather than disturb the arrangements generally adopted; they fancied that, in case they laid Sir Walter Scott in prison, there would be some extraordinary burst of feeling in Edinburgh—that private friends would interfere—in short, that in one way or another, they should get hold, without farther delay, of their "pound of flesh."—Two or three paragraphs from the Diary will be enough as to this unpleasant subject.

"*October* 31.—Just as I was merrily cutting away among my trees, arrives Mr. Gibson with a very melancholy look, and indeed the news he brought was shocking enough. It seems Mr. Abud, the same who formerly was disposed to disturb me in London, has given positive orders to take out diligence against me for his debt. This breaks all the measures we had resolved on, and prevents the dividend from taking place, by which many poor persons will be great sufferers. For me the alternative will be more painful to my feelings than prejudicial to my interests. To submit to a sequestration, and allow the creditors to take what they can get, will be the inevitable consequence. This will cut short my labour by several years, which I might spend, and spend in vain, in endeavouring to meet their demands. We shall know more on Saturday, and not sooner.—I went to Bowhill with Sir Adam Ferguson to dinner, and maintained as good a countenance in the midst of my perplexities as a man need desire. It is not bravado; I feel firm and resolute.

"*November* 1.—I waked in the night and lay two hours in feverish meditation. This is a tribute to natural feeling. But the air of a fine frosty morning gave me some elasticity of spirit. It is strange that about a week ago I was more dispirited for nothing at all, than I am now for perplexities which set at defiance my conjectures concerning their issue. I suppose that I, the Chronicler of the Canongate, will have to take up my residence in the Sanctuary, unless I prefer the more airy residence of the Calton Jail, or a trip to the Isle of Man. It is to no purpose being angry with Abud or Ahab, or whatever name he delights in. He is seeking his own, and thinks by these harsh measures to render his road to it more speedy.—Sir Adam Ferguson left Bowhill this morning for Dumfries-shire. I returned to Abbotsford to Anne, and told her this unpleasant news. She stood it remarkably well, poor body.

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"*November* 2.—I was a little bilious this night—no wonder. Had sundry letters without any power of giving my mind to answer them—one about Gourgaud with his nonsense. I shall not trouble my head more on that score. Well, it is a hard knock on the elbow; I knew I had a life of labour before me, but I was resolved to work steadily; now they have treated me like a recusant turnspit, and put in a red-hot cinder into the wheel alongst with me. But of what use is philosophy—and I have always pretended to a little of a practical character—if it cannot teach us to do or suffer? The day is glorious, yet I have little will to enjoy it; yet, were a twelvemonth over, I should perhaps smile at what makes me now very serious. Smile!—No—that can never be. My present feelings cannot be recollected with cheerfulness; but I may drop a tear of gratitude.

"*November* 3.—Slept ill, and lay one hour longer than usual in the morning. I gained an hour's quiet by it, that is much. I feel a little shaken at the result of to-day's post. I am not able to go out. My poor workers wonder that I pass them without a word. I can imagine no alternative but the Sanctuary or the Isle of Man. Both shocking enough. But in Edinburgh I am always on the scene of action, free from uncertainty, and near my poor daughter; so I think I shall prefer it, and thus I rest in unrest. But I will not let this unman me. Our hope, heavenly and earthly, is poorly anchored, if the cable parts upon the stream. I believe in God, who can change evil into good; and I am confident that what befalls us is always ultimately for the best.

"*November* 4.—Put my papers in some order, and prepared for the journey. It is in the style of the Emperors of Abyssinia, who proclaim—Cut down the Kantuffa in the four quarters of the world, for I know not where I am going. Yet, were it not for poor Anne's doleful looks, I would feel firm as a piece of granite. Even the poor dogs seem to fawn on me with anxious meaning, as if there were something going on they could not comprehend. They probably notice the packing of the clothes, and other symptoms of a journey.

"Set off at twelve, firmly resolved in body and mind. Dined at Fushie Bridge. An! good Mrs. Wilson, you know not you are like to lose an old customer!*

"But when I arrived in Edinburgh at my faithful friend, Mr. Gibson's— lo! the scene had again changed, and a new hare is started," &c. &c.

The "new hare" was this. It transpired in the very nick of time that a suspicion of usury attached to these Israelites without guile, in a transaction with Hurst and Robinson, as to one or more of the bills for which the house of Ballantyne had become responsible. This suspicion, upon investigation, assumed a shape sufficiently tangible to justify Ballantyne's trustees in carrying the point before the Court of Session; but they failed to establish their allegation. The amount was then settled—but how and in what manner was long unknown to Scott. Sir William Forbes, whose banking-house was one of Messrs. Ballantyne's chief creditors, crowned his generous efforts for Scott's relief by privately paying the whole of Abud's demand (nearly L.2000) out of his own pocket—ranking as an ordinary creditor for the amount; and taking care at the same time that his old friend should be allowed to believe that the affair had merged quietly in the general measures of the trustees. In fact it was not until some time after Sir William's death, that Sir Walter learned what he had done on this occasion; and I may as well add here, that he himself died in utter ignorance of some services of a like sort, which he owed to the secret liberality of three of his brethren at the Clerks' table—Hector Macdonald Buchanan, Colin Mackenzie, and Sir Robert Dundas.

I ought not to omit that as soon as Sir Walter's eldest son heard of the Abud business, he left Ireland for Edinburgh; but before he reached his father the alarm had blown over.

This vision of the real Canongate has drawn me away from the Chronicles of Mr. Croftangry. The scenery of his patrimonial inheritance was sketched from that of Carmichael, the ancient and now deserted mansion of the noble family of Hyndford; but for his strongly Scottish feelings about parting with his *land*, and stern efforts to suppress them, the author had not to go so far a-field. Christie Steele's brief character of Croftangry's ancestry, too, appears to suit well all that we have on record concerning his own more immediate progenitors of the stubborn race of Raeburn:—"They werena ill to the poor folk, sir, and that is aye something; they were just decent bien bodies. Ony poor creature that had face to beg got an awmous, and welcome; they that were shamefaced gaed by, and twice as welcome. But they keepit an honest walk before God and man, the Croftangrys, and as I said before, if they did little good, they did as little ill. They lifted their rents and spent them, called in their kain and eat them; gaed to the kirk of a Sunday; bowed civilly if folk took aff their bannets as they gaed by, and lookit as black as sin at them that keepit them on." I hope I shall give no offence by adding, that many things in the character and manners of Mr Gideon Gray of Middlemas in the Tale of the Surgeon's Daughter, were considered at the time by Sir Walter's neighbours on Tweedside as copied from Dr. Ebenezer Clarkson of Selkirk. "He was," says the Chronicler, "of such reputation in the medical world, that he had been often advised to exchange the village and its meagre circle of practice for Edinburgh. There is no creature in Scotland that works harder, and is more poorly requited than the country doctor, unless perhaps it may be his horse. Yet the horse is, and indeed must be, hardy, active, and indefatigable, in spite of a rough coat and indifferent condition; and so you will often find in his master, under a blunt exterior, professional skill and enthusiasm, intelligence, humanity, courage, and science." A true picture—a portrait from the life of Scott's hard-riding, benevolent, and sagacious old friend, "tc all the country dear."

These Chronicles were not received with exceeding favour at this time; and Sir Walter was a good deal discouraged. Indeed he seems to have been with some difficulty persuaded by Cadell and Ballantyne, that it would not do for him to "lie fallow" as a novelist; and then when he in compliance with their entreaties began a Second Canongate Series, they were both disappointed with his MS., and told him their opinions so plainly, that his good-nature was sharply tried. The Tales which they disapproved of, were those of "My Aunt Margaret's Mirror," and "The Laird's Jock;" he consented to lay them aside, and began St. Valentine's Eve, or the Fair Maid of Perth, which from the first pleased his critics. It was in the brief interval occasioned by these misgivings and debates, that his ever elastic mind threw off another charming paper for the Quarterly Review—that on Ornamental Gardening, by way of sequel to the Essay on Planting Waste Lands. Another fruit of his leisure was a sketch of the life of George Bannatyne, the collector of ancient Scottish poetry, for the Club which bears his name.

DIARY—"*Edinburgh*, *November* 6.—Wrought upon an introduction to the notices which have been recovered of George Bannatyne, author or rather transcriber of the famous Repository of Scottish Poetry, generally known by the name of the Bannatyne MS. They are very jejune these notices—a mere record of matters of business, putting forth and calling in sums of money, and such like. Yet it is a satisfaction to know that this great benefactor to the literature of Scotland had a prosperous life, and enjoyed the pleasures of domestic

* Mrs. Wilson, landlady of the inn at Fushie, one stage from Edinburgh,—an old dame of some humour, with whom Sir Walter always had a friendly colloquy in passing. I believe the charm was, that she had passed her childhood among the Gipsies of the Border. But her fiery Radicalism latterly was another source of high merriment.

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society, and, in a time peculiarly perilous, lived unmolested and died in quiet."

He had taken, for that winter, the house No. 6, Shandwick Place, which he occupied by the month, during the remainder of his servitude as a Clerk of Session. Very near this house, he was told a few days after he took possession, dwelt the aged mother of his first love—the lady of the *Runic characters*—and he expressed to his friend Mrs. Skene a wish that she should carry him to renew an acquaintance which seems to have been interrupted from the period of his youthful romance. Mrs. Skene complied with his desire, and she tells me that a very painful scene ensued, adding, "I think it highly probable that it was on returning from this call that he committed to writing the verses, *To Time*, by his early favourite, which you have printed at p. 244 of your first volume." I believe Mrs. Skene will have no doubt on that matter when the following entries from his Diary meet her eye:—

"*November* 7.—Began to settle myself this morning, after the hurry of mind and even of body which I have lately undergone.—I went to make a visit, and fairly softened myself, like an old fool, with recalling old stories, till I was fit for nothing but shedding tears and repeating verses for the whole night. This is sad work. The very grave gives up its dead, and time rolls back thirty years to add to my perplexities. I don't care. I begin to grow case-hardened, and, like a stag turning at bay, my naturally good temper grows fierce and dangerous. Yet what a romance to tell,—and told, I fear, it will one day be. And then my three years of dreaming, and my two years of wakening, will be chronicled, doubtless. But the dead will feel no pain.

"*November* 10.—Wrote out my task and little more. At twelve o'clock I went again to poor Lady —— —— to talk over old stories. I am not clear that it is a right or healthful indulgence to be ripping up old sores, but it seems to give her deep-rooted sorrow words, and that is a mental bloodletting. To me these things are now matter of calm and solemn recollection, never to be forgotten, yet scarce to be remembered with pain.—We go out to Saint Catherine's to-day. I am glad of it, for I would not have these recollections haunt me, and society will put them out of my head."

Sir Walter has this entry on reading the *Gazette* of the battle of Navarino:—"*November* 14.—We have thumped the Turks very well. But as to the justice of our interference, I will only suppose some Turkish plenipotentiary, with an immense turban and long loose trousers, comes to dictate to us the mode in which we should deal with our refractory liegemen, the Catholics of Ireland. We hesitate to admit his interference, on which the Moslem runs into Cork Bay, or Bantry Bay, alongside of a British squadron, and sends a boat to tow on a fire-ship. A vessel fires on the boat and sinks it. Is there an aggression on the part of those who fired first, or of those whose manœuvres occasioned the firing?"

A few days afterwards he received a very agreeable piece of intelligence. The King had not forgotten his promise with respect to the poet's second son; and Lord Dudley, then Secretary of State for the Foreign Department, was a much attached friend from early days—(he had been partly educated at Edinburgh under the roof of Dugald Stewart)—his lordship had therefore been very well disposed to comply with the royal recommendation. "*November* 30.—The great pleasure of a letter from Lord Dudley, informing me that he has received his Majesty's commands to put down the name of my son Charles for the first vacancy that shall occur in the Foreign Office, and at the same time to acquaint me with his gracious intentions, which were signified in language the most gratifying to me. This makes me really feel light and happy, and most grateful to the kind and gracious sovereign who has always shown, I may say, so much friendship towards me. Would to God *the King's errand might lie in the cadger's gait*, that I might have some better way of showing my feelings than merely by a letter of thanks, or this private memorandum of my gratitude. Public affairs look awkward. The present Ministry are neither Whig nor Tory, and divested of the support of either of the great parties of the state, stand supported by the will of the sovereign alone. This is not constitutional, and though it may be a temporary augmentation of the prince's personal influence, yet it cannot but prove hurtful to the Crown upon the whole, by tending to throw that responsibility on him of which the law has deprived him. I pray to God I may be wrong, but, I think, an attempt to govern *par bascule*, by trimming betwixt the opposite parties, is equally unsafe for the Crown and detrimental to the country, and cannot do for a long time. That with a neutral Administration this country, hard ruled at any time, can be long governed, I for one do not believe. God send the good King, to whom I owe so much, as safe and honorable extrication as the circumstances render possible." The dissolution of the Goderich Cabinet confirmed very soon these shrewd guesses; and Sir Walter anticipated nothing but good from the Premiership of the Duke of Wellington.

The settlement of Charles Scott was rapidly followed by more than one fortunate incident in Sir Walter's literary and pecuniary history. The first Tales of a Grandfather appeared early in December, and their reception was more rapturous than that of any one of his works since Ivanhoe. He had solved for the first time the problem of narrating history, so as at once to excite and gratify the curiosity of youth, and please and instruct the wisest of mature minds. The popularity of the book has grown with every year that has since elapsed; it is equally prized in the library, the boudoir, the schoolroom, and the nursery; it is adopted as the happiest of manuals, not only in Scotland, but wherever the English tongue is spoken; nay, it is to be seen in the hands of old and young all over the civilized world, and has, I have little doubt, extended the knowledge of Scottish history in quarters where little or no interest had ever before been awakened as to any other parts of that subject, except those immediately connected with Mary Stuart and the Chevalier. This success effectually rebuked the trepidation of the author's bookseller and printer, and inspired the former with new courage as to a step which he had for some time been meditating, and which had given rise to many a long and anxious discussion between him and Sir Walter.

The question as to the property of the Life of Napoleon and Woodstock having now been settled by the arbiter (Lord Newton) in favour of the author, the relative affairs of Sir Walter and the creditors of Constable were so simplified, that the trustee on that sequestrated estate resolved to bring into the market, with the concurrence of Ballantyne's trustees, and without further delay, a variety of very valuable copyrights. This important sale comprised Scott's novels from Waverley to Quentin Durward inclusive, besides a majority of the shares of the Poetical Works.

Mr. Cadell's family and private friends were extremely desirous that he should purchase part at least of these copyrights; and Sir Walter's were not less so that he should seize this last opportunity of recovering a share in the prime fruits of his genius. The relations by this time established between him and Cadell were those of strict confidence and kindness; and both saw well that the property would be comparatively lost, were it not secured, that thenceforth the whole should be managed as one unbroken concern. It was in the success of an uniform edition of the Waverley novels, with prefaces and notes by the author, that both anticipated the means of finally extinguishing the debt of Ballantyne and Co.; and, after some demur, the trustees of that house's creditors were wise enough to adopt their views. The result was, that the copyrights exposed to sale for behoof of Constable's creditors were purchased, one-half for Sir Walter, the other half for Cadell, at the price of £8,500—a sum which was considered large at the moment, but which the London competitors soon

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afterwards convinced themselves they ought to have outbid.

The Diary says:—"*December* 17.—Sent off the new beginning of the Chronicles to Ballantyne. I hate cancels, they are a double labour. Mr. Cowan, trustee for Constable's creditors, called in the morning by appointment, and we talked about the the sale of the copyrights of Waverley, &c. It is to be hoped the high upset price fixed (£5,000) will

'Fright the fuds
Of the pock-puds.'

This speculation may be for good or for evil, but it tends incalculably to increase the value of such copyrights as remain in my own person; and if a handsome and cheap edition of the whole, with notes, can be instituted in conformity with Cadell's plan, it must prove a mine of wealth for my creditors. It is possible, no doubt, that the works may lose their effect on the public mind; but this must be risked, and I think the chances are greatly in our favour. Death (my own, I mean) would improve the property, since an edition with a Life would sell like wildfire. Perhaps those who read this prophecy may shake their heads and say, 'Poor fellow, he little thought how he should see the public interest in him and his extinguished even during his natural existence. It may be so, but I will hope better. This I know, that no literary speculation ever succeeded with me but where my own works were concerned; and that, on the other hand, these have rarely failed.

"*December* 20.—Anent the copyrights—the pockpuds were not frightened by our high price. They came on briskly, four or five bidders abreast, and went on till the lot was knocked down to Cadell at £8,500; a very large sum certainly, yet he has been offered profit on it already. The activity of the contest serves to show the value of the property. On the whole I am greatly pleased with the acquisition."

Well might the "pockpuddings"—the English booksellers—rue their timidity on this day; but it was the most lucky one that ever came for Sir Walter Scott's creditors. A dividend of six shillings in the pound was paid at this Christmas on their whole claims. The result of their high-hearted debtor's exertions, between January 1826 and January 1828, was in all very nearly £40,000. No literary biographer, in all likelihood, will ever have such another fact to record. The creditors unanimously passed a vote of thanks for the indefatigable industry which had achieved so much for their behoof.

On returning to Abbotsford at Christmas, after completing these transactions, he says in his Diary:—"My reflections in entering my own gate today were of a very different and more pleasing cast, than those with which I left this place about six weeks ago. I was then in doubt whether I should fly my country, or become avowedly bankrupt, and surrender up my library and household furniture, with the liferent of my estate, to sale. A man of the world will say I had better done so. No doubt, had I taken this course at once, I might have employed the money I have made since the insolvency of Constable and Robinson's houses in compounding my debts. But I could not have slept sound as I now can, under the comfortable impression of receiving the thanks of my creditors, and the conscious feeling of discharging my duty as a man of honour and honesty. I see before me a long, tedious, and dark path, but it leads to stainless reputation. If I die in the harrows, as is very likely, I shall die with honour; if I achieve my task, I shall have the thanks of all concerned, and the approbation of my own conscience. And so I think, I can fairly trace the return of Christmas-day."

And again, on the 31st December, he says:—

"Looking back to the conclusion of 1826, I observe that the last year ended in trouble and sickness, with pressures for the present and gloomy prospects for the future. The sense of a great privation so lately sustained, together with the very doubtful and clouded nature of my private affairs, pressed hard upon my mind. I am now restored in constitution; and though I am still on troubled waters, yet I am rowing with the tide, and less than the continuation of my exertions of 1827 may, with God's blessing, carry me successfully through 1828, when we may gain a more open sea, if not exactly a safe port. Above all, my children are well. Sophia's situation excites some natural anxiety; but it is only the accomplishment of the burden imposed on her sex. Walter is happy in the view of his majority, on which matter we have favourable hopes from the Horse-Guards. Anne is well and happy. Charles's entry on life under the highest patronage, and in a line for which, I hope, he is qualified, is about to take place presently.

"For all these great blessings it becomes me well to be thankful to God, who, in his good time and good pleasure, sends us good as well as evil."

CHAPTER LXXV.

THE "OPUS MAGNUM"—"RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES, BY A LAYMAN"—LETTERS TO GEORGE HUNTLY GORDON—CADELL—AND BALLANTYNE—HEATH'S KEEPSAKE, &c.—ARNISTON—DALHOUSIE—PRISONS—DISSOLUTION OF YEOMANRY CAVALRY—THE FAIR MAID OF PERTH PUBLISHED—JANUARY—APRIL, 1828.

With the exception of a few weeks occupied by an excursion to London, which business of various sorts had rendered necessary, the year 1828 was spent in the same assiduous labour as 1827. The commercial transaction completed at Christmas cleared the way for two undertakings, which would of themselves have been enough to supply deskwork in abundance; and Sir Walter appears to have scarcely passed a day on which something was not done for them. I allude to Cadell's plan of a new edition of the Poetry, with biographical prefaces; and the still more extensive one of an uniform reprint of the Novels, each to be introduced by an account of the hints on which it had been founded, and illustrated throughout by historical and antiquarian annotations. On this last, commonly mentioned in the Diary as the *Opus Magnum*, Sir Walter bestowed pains commensurate with its importance;—and in the execution of the very delicate task which either scheme imposed, he has certainly displayed such a combination of frankness and modesty as entitles him to a high place in the short list of graceful autobiographers. True dignity is always simple; and perhaps true genius, of the highest class at least, is always humble. These operations took up much time;—yet he laboured hard this year both as a novelist and a historian. He contributed, moreover, several articles to the Quarterly Review and the Bannatyne Club library; and to the Journal conducted by Mr. Gillies, an excellent Essay on Moliere; this last being again a free gift to the Editor.

But the first advertisement of 1828 was of a new order; and the announcement that the Author of Waverley had *Sermons* in the press, was received perhaps with as much incredulity in the clerical world, as could have been excited among them by that of a romance from the Archbishop of Canterbury. A thin octavo volume, entitled "Religious Discourses by a Layman," and having "W. S." at the foot of a short preface, did, however, issue in the course of the spring, and from the shop, that all might be in perfect keeping, of Mr. Colburn, a bookseller then known almost exclusively as the standing purveyor of what is called "light reading"—novels of "fashionable life," and the like pretty ephemera. I am afraid that the "Religious Discourses," too, would, but for the author's name, have had a brief existence; but the history of their composition, besides sufficiently explaining the humility of these tracts in a literary as well as a theological point of view, will, I hope, gratify most of my readers.

It may perhaps be remembered, that Sir Walter's Cicerone over Waterloo, in August, 1815, was a certain Major Pryse Gordon, then on half-pay and

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resident at Brussels. The acquaintance, until they met at Sir Frederick Adam's table, had been very slight—nor was it ever carried farther; but the Major was exceedingly attentive during Scott's stay, and afterwards took some pains about collecting little reliques of the battle for Abbotsford. One evening the poet supped at his house, and there happened to sit next him the host's eldest son, then a lad of nineteen, whose appearance and situation much interested him. He had been destined for the Church of Scotland, but as he grew up a deafness, which had come on him in boyhood, became worse and worse, and at length his friends feared that it must incapacitate him for the clerical function. He had gone to spend the vacation with his father, and Sir Frederick Adam, understanding how he was situated, offered him a temporary appointment as a clerk in the Commissariat, which he hoped to convert into a permanent one, in case the war continued. At the time of Scott's arrival that prospect was wellnigh gone, and the young man's infirmity, his embarrassement, and other things, which his own memorandum makes no allusion, excited the visiter's sympathy. Though there were lion-hunters of no small consequence in the party, he directed most of his talk into the poor clerk's ear-trumpet; and at parting, begged him not to forget that he had a friend on Tweedside.

A couple of years elapsed before he heard any thing more of Mr. Gordon, who then sent him his father's little *spolia* of Waterloo, and accompanied them by a letter explaining his situation, and asking advice, in a style which renewed and increased Scott's favourable impression. He had been dismissed from the Commissariat at the general reduction of our establishments, and was now hesitating whether he had better take up again his views as to the Kirk, or turn his eyes towards English orders; and in the mean-time he was anxious to find some way of lightening to his parents, by his own industry, the completion of his professional education. There ensued a copious correspondence between him and Scott, who gave him on all points of his case most paternal advice, and accompanied his counsels with offers of pecuniary assistance, of which the young man rarely availed himself. At length he resolved on re-entering the Divinity Class at Aberdeen, and in due time was licensed by the Presbytery there as a Preacher of the Gospel; but though with good connexions, for he was "sprung of Scotia's gentler blood," his deafness operated as a serious bar to his obtaining the incumbency of a parish. After several years had elapsed, he received a presentation; but the Provincial Synod pronounced his deafness an insuperable objection, and the case was referred to the General Assembly. That tribunal heard Mr. Gordon's cause maintained by all the skill and eloquence of Mr. Jeffrey, whose good offices had been secured by Scott's intervention, and they overruled the decision of the Presbytery. But Gordon, in the course of the discussion, gathered the conviction, that a man almost literally stone-deaf could *not* discharge some of the highest duties of a parish-priest in a satisfactory manner, and he with honourable firmness declined to take advantage of the judgment of the Supreme Court. Mean time he had been employed, from the failure of John Ballantyne's health downwards, as the transcriber of the Waverly MSS. for the press, in which capacity he displayed every quality that could endear an amanuensis to an author; and when the disasters of 1826 rendered it unnecessary for Scott to have his MS. copied, he exerted himself to procure employment for Gordon in one of the Government offices in London. Being backed by the kindness of the late Duke of Gordon, his story found favour with the then Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Lushington—and Gordon was named assistant private secretary to that gentleman. The appointment was temporary, but he so pleased his chief that there was hope of better things by and by.—Such was his situation at Christmas 1827; but that being his first Christmas in London, it was no wonder that he then discovered himself to have somewhat miscalculated about money matters. In a word, he knew not whither to look at the moment for extrication, until he bethought him of the following little incident of his life at Abbotsford.

He was spending the autumn of 1824 there, daily copying the MS. of Redgauntlet, and working at leisure hours on the Catalogue of the Library, when the family observed him to be labouring under some extraordinary depression of mind. It was just then that he had at length obtained the prospect of a Living, and Sir Walter was surprised that this should not have exhilarated him. Gently sounding the trumpet, however, he discovered that the agitation of the question about the deafness had shaken his nerves—his scruples had been roused—his conscience was sensitive,—and he avowed that, though he thought, on the whole, he ought to go through with the business, he could not command his mind so as to prepare a couple of sermons which, unless he summarily abandoned his object, must be produced on a certain day—then near at hand—before his Presbytery. Sir Walter reminded him, that his exercises when on trials for the Probationership had given satisfaction; but nothing he could say was sufficient to re-brace Mr. Gordon's spirits, and he at length exclaimed, with tears, that his pen was powerless,—that he had made fifty attempts, and saw nothing but failure and disgrace before him. Scott answered, "My good young friend, leave this matter to me—do you work away at the Catalogue, and I'll write for you a couple of sermons that shall pass muster well enough at Aberdeen." Gordon assented with a sigh; and next morning Sir Walter gave him the MS. of the "Religious Discourses." On reflection, Mr. Gordon considered it quite impossible to produce them as his own, and a letter to be quoted immediately will show, that he by and by had written others for himself in a style creditable to his talents, though, from circumstances above explained he never delivered them at Aberdeen. But the "Two discourses" of 1824 had remained in his hands; and it now occurred to him that, if Sir Walter would allow him to dispose of these to some bookseller, they might possibly bring a price that would float him over his little difficulties of Christmas.

Scott consented; and Gordon got more than he had ventured to expect for his MS. But since this matter has been introduced, I must indulge myself with a little retrospect, and give a few specimens of the great author's correspondence with this amiable dependent. The series now before me consist of more than forty letters to Mr. Gordon.

"Edinburgh, 5th January, 1817.

"* * * I am very sorry your malady continues to distress you; yet while one's eyes are spared to look on the wisdom of former times, we are the less entitled to regret that we hear less of the folly of the present. The Church always presents a safe and respectable asylum, and has many mansions. But in fact, the great art of life, so far as I have been able to observe, consists in fortitude and perseverance. I have rarely seen, that a man who conscientiously devoted himself to the studies and duties of *any* profession, and did not omit to take fair and honourable opportunities of offering himself to notice when such presented themselves, has not at length got forward. The mischance of those who fall behind, though flung upon fortune, more frequently arises from want of skill and perseverance. Life, my young friend, is like a game at cards—our hands are alternately good or bad, and the whole seems at first glance to depend on mere chance. But it is not so, for in the long run the skill of the player predominates over the casualities of the game. Therefore, do not be discouraged with the prospect before you, but ply your studies hard, and qualify yourself to receive fortune when she comes your way. I shall have pleasure at any time in hearing from you, and more especially in seeing you."

"24th July, 1818.

"* * * I send you *the Travels of Thiodolf*.* Perhaps you might do well to give a glance over Tytler's Principles of Translation, ere you gird up your loins to the undertaking. If the gods have made you poetical, you should imitate, rather than attempt a literal translation of the verses interspersed; and, in general, I think both the prose and verse might be improved by compression.

* A novel by the Baron de la Motte Fouqué.

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If you find the versification a difficult or unpleasant task, I must translate for you such parts of the poetry as may be absolutely necessary for carrying on the story, which will cost an old hack like me very little trouble. I would have you, however, by all means try yourself." * * *

"14th October, 1818.

"* * * I am greatly at a loss what could possibly make you think you had given me the slightest offence. If that very erroneous idea arose from my silence and short letters, I must plead both business and laziness, which makes me an indifferent correspondent; but I thought I had explained in my last that which it was needful that you should know. * * *

"I have said nothing on the delicate confidence you have reposed in me. I have not forgotten that I have been young, and must therefore be sincerely interested in those feelings which the best men entertain with most warmth. At the same time, my experience makes me alike an enemy to premature marriage and to distant engagements. The first add to our individual cares the responsibility for the beloved and helpless pledges of our affection, and the last are liable to the most cruel disappointments. But, my good young friend, if you have settled your affections upon a worthy object, I can only hope that your progress in life will be such as to make you look forward with prudence to a speedy union." * * *

"12th June, 1820.

"* * * I am very sorry for your illness, and your unpleasant and uncertain situation, for which, unfortunately, I can give no better consolation than in the worn-out and wearying-out word, patience. What you mention of your private feelings on an interesting subject, is indeed distressing; but assure yourself that scarce one person out of twenty marries his first love, and scarce one out of twenty of the remainder has cause to rejoice at having done so. What we love in those early days is generally rather a fanciful creation of our own than a reality. We build statues of snow, and weep when they melt." * * *

"12th April, 1825.

"My dear Mr. Gordon,

"I would have made some additions to your sermon with great pleasure, but it is with even more than great pleasure that I assure you it needs none. It is a most respectable discourse, with good divinity in it, which is always the marrow and bones of a *Concio ad clerum*, and you may pronounce it, *meo periculo*, without the least danger of failure or of unpleasant comparisons. I am not fond of Mr. Irving's species of eloquence, consisting of *outré* flourishes and extravagant metaphors. The eloquence of the pulpit should be of a chaste and dignified character; earnest, but not high-flown and ecstatic, and consisting as much in close reasoning as in elegant expression. It occurs to me as a good topic for more than one discourse,—the manner in which the heresies of the earlier Christian church are treated in the Acts and the Epistles. It is remarkable, that while the arguments by which they are combated are distinct, clear, and powerful, the inspired writers have not judged improper to go beyond general expressions, respecting the particular heresies which they combated. If you look closely, there is much reason in this. * * *

In general, I would say, that on entering on the clerical profession, were it my case, I should be anxious to take much pains with my sermons, and the studies on which they must be founded. Nothing rewards itself so completely as exercise, whether of the body or mind. We sleep sound, and our waking hours are happy, because they are employed; and a little sense of toil is necessary to the enjoyment of leisure, even when earned by study and sanctioned by the discharge of duty. I think most clergymen diminish their own respectability by falling into indolent habits, and what players call *walking through their part*. You, who have to beat up against an infirmity, and it may be against some unreasonable prejudices, arising from that infirmity, should determine to do the thing not only well, but better than others." * * *

To G. Huntly Gordon, Esq. Treasury, London.

"28th December, 1827.

"Dear Gordon,

"As I have no money to spare at present, I find it necessary to make a sacrifice of my own scruples, to relieve you from serious difficulties. The enclosed will entitle you to deal with any respectable bookseller. You must tell the history in your own way as shortly as possible. All that is necessary to say is, that the discourses were written to oblige a young friend. It is understood my name is not to be put on the title-page, or blazed at full length in the preface. You may trust that to the newspapers.

"Pray, do not think of returning any thanks about this; it is enough that I know it is likely to serve your purpose. But use the funds arising from this unexpected source with prudence, for such fountains do not spring up at every place of the desert.—I am, in haste, ever yours most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

The reader will, I believe, forgive this retrospect; and be pleased to know that the publication of the sermons answered the purpose intended. Mr. Gordon now occupies a permanent and respectable situation in her Majesty's Stationary Office; and he concludes his communication to me with expressing his feeling that his prosperity "is all clearly traceable to the kindness of Sir Walter Scott."

In a letter to me about this affair of the Discourses, Sir Walter says, "Poor Gordon has got my leave to make a *kirk and a mill* of my *Sermons*—heaven save the mark! Help him, if you can, to the water of Pactolus and a swapping thirlage." The only entries in the Diary, which relate to the business, are the following:—"*Dec.* 28.—Huntly Gordon writes me in despair about £180 of debt which he has incurred. He wishes to publish two sermons which I wrote for him when he was taking orders; and he would get little money for them without my name. People may exclaim against the undesired and unwelcome zeal of him who stretched his hands to help the ark over, with the best intentions, and cry sacrilege. And yet they will do me gross injustice, for I would, if called upon, die a martyr for the Christian religion, so completely is (in my poor opinion) its divine origin proved by its beneficial effects on the state of society. Were we but to name the abolition of slavery and polygamy, how much has, in these two words, been granted to mankind in the lessons of our Saviour. *January* 10, 1828.—Huntly Gordon has disposed of the two sermons to the bookseller, Colburn, for £250; well sold I think, and to go forth immediately. The man is a puffing quack; but though I would rather the thing had not gone there, and far rather that it had gone nowhere, yet hang it, if it makes the poor lad easy, what needs I fret about it. After all, there would be little grace in doing a kind thing, if you did not suffer pain or inconvenience upon the score."

The next literary entry is this:—"Mr. Charles Heath, the engraver, invites me to take charge of a yearly publication called the Keepsake, of which the plates are beyond comparison beautiful, but the letter-press indifferent enough. He proposes £800 a-year if I would become editor, and £400 if I would contribute from seventy to one hundred pages. I declined both, but told him I might give him some trifling thing or other. To become the stipendiary editor of a New-Year's-Gift Book is not to be thought of, nor could I agree to work regularly, for any quantity of supply, at such a publication. Even the pecuniary view is not flattering, though Mr. Heath meant it should be so. One hundred of his close printed pages, for which he offers £400, are nearly equal to one volume of a novel. Each novel of three volumes brings £4000, and I remain proprietor of the mine after the first ore is scooped out." The result of this negotiation with Mr. Heath was, that he received, for £500, the liberty of printing in his Keepsake the long forgotten juvenile drama of the House of Aspen, with My Aunt Margaret's Mirror, and two other little tales, which had been omitted, at Ballantyne's entreaty, from the second Chronicles of Croftangry. But Sir Walter regretted having meddled in any way with the toy-shop of literature, and would never do so again, though repeatedly offered very large sums—nor even when the motive of private regard was added, upon Mr. Allen Cunningham's lending his name to one of these painted bladders.

In the same week that Mr. Heath made his proposition, Sir Walter received another which he thus disposes of in his Diary:—"I have an invitation from Messrs. Saunders and Ottley, booksellers, offering me from £1500 to £2000 annually to conduct a journal; but I am their humble servant. I am too indolent to stand to that sort of work, and I

must preserve the undisturbed use of my leisure, and possess my soul in quiet. A large income is not my object; I must clear my debts; and that is to be done by writing things of which I can retain the property. Made my excuses accordingly."

In January, 1828, reprints both of the Grandfather's Tales and of the Life of Napoleon were called for; and both so suddenly, that the booksellers would fain have distributed the volumes among various printers in order to catch the demand. Ballantyne heard of this with natural alarm; and Scott, in the case of the Napoleon, conceived that his own literary character was trifled with, as well as his old ally's interests. On receiving James's first appeal—that as to the Grandfather's Stories, he wrote thus:—I need scarcely add, with the desired effect.

To Robert Cadell, Esq., Edinburgh.

"Abbotsford, 3d January, 1828.

"My dear Sir,

"I find our friend James Ballantyne is very anxious about printing the new edition of the Tales, which I hope you will allow him to do, unless extreme haste be an extreme object. I need not remind you that we three are like the shipwrecked crew of a vessel, cast upon a desolate island, and fitting up out of the remains of a gallant bark such a cock-boat as may transport us to some more hospitable shore. Therefore, we are bound by the strong tie of common misfortune to help each other, in so far as the claim of self-preservation will permit, and I am happy to think the plank is large enough to float us all.

"Besides my feelings for my own old friend and schoolfellow, with whom I have shared good and bad weather for so many years, I must also remember that, as in your own case, his friends have made great exertions to support him in the printing-office, under an implied hope and trust that these publications would take *in ordinary cases* their usual direction. It is true no engagement was or could be proposed to this effect, but it was a reasonable expectation which influenced kind and generous men, and I incline to pay every respect to it in my power.

"Messrs. Longman really keep matters a little too quiet for my convenience. The next thing they may tell me is, that Napoleon must go to press instantly to a dozen of printers. I must boot and saddle, off and away at a fortnight's warning. Now this I neither can nor will do. My character as a man of letters is deeply interested in giving a complete revisal of that work, and I wish to have time to do so without being hurried. Yours very truly,

W. S."

The following specimens of his "skirmishes," as he used to call them, with Ballantyne, while the Fair Maid of Perth was in hand, are in keeping with this amiable picture:—

"My dear James—I return the proofs of Tales, and send some leaves, copy of St. Valentine's. Pray get on with *this* in case we should fall through again. When the press does not follow me, I get on slowly and ill, and put myself in mind of Jamie Balfour, who could run when he could not stand still. We *must* go on or stop altogether. Yours," &c. &c.

"I think you are hypercritical in your commentary. I counted the hours with accuracy. In the morning the citizens went to Kinfauns and returned. This puts over the hour of noon, then the dinner hour. Afterwards, and when the king has had his devotions in private, comes all the scene in the court-yard. The sun sets at half-past five on the 14th February; and if we suppose it to be within an hour of evening, it was surely time for a woman who had a night to put over, to ask where she should sleep. This is the explanation,—apply it as you please to the text; for you who see the doubt can best clear it. Yours truly," &c.

"I cannot afford to be merciful to Master Oliver Proudfoot, although I am heartily glad there is any one of the personages sufficiently interesting to make you care whether he lives or dies. But it would cost my cancelling half a volume, and rather than do so, I would, like the valiant Baron of Clackmannan, kill the whole characters, the author, and the printer. Besides, *entre nous*, the resurrection of Athelstane was a botch. It struck me when I was reading Ivanhoe over the other day.

"I value your criticism as much as ever, but the worst is, my faults are better known to myself than to you. Tell a young beauty that she wears an unbecoming dress, or an ill-fashioned ornament, or speaks too loud, or commits any other mistake which she can correct, and she will do so, if she has sense and a good opinion of your taste. But tell a fading beauty, that her hair is getting grey, her wrinkles apparent, her gait heavy, and that she has no business in a ball-room but to be ranged against the wall as an ever-green, and you will afflict the poor old lady, without rendering her any service. She knows all that better than you. I am sure the old lady in question takes pain enough at her toilette, and gives you, her trusty *suivante*, enough of trouble. Yours truly,

W. S."

These notes to the printer appear to have been written at Abbotsford during the holidays. On his way back to Edinburgh, Sir Walter halts for a Saturday and Sunday at Arniston, and the Diary on the second day says:—"Went to Borthwick church with the family, and heard a well-composed, well-delivered, sensible discourse, from Mr. Wright.* After sermon we looked at the old castle, which made me an old man. The castle was not a bit older for the twenty-five years which had passed away, but the ruins of the visiter are very apparent. To climb up ruinous staircases, to creep through vaults and into dungeons, were not the easy labours but the positive sports of my younger years; but I thought it convenient to attempt no more than the access to the large and beautiful hall, in which, as it is somewhere described, an armed horseman might brandish his lance.† This feeling of growing inability is painful to one who boasted, in spite of infirmity, great boldness and dexterity in such feats; the boldness remains, but hand and foot, grip and accuracy of step have altogether failed me—the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, and so I must retreat into the invalided corps, and tell them of my former exploits, which may very likely pass for lies. We then drove to Dalhousie, where the gallant Earl, who has done so much to distinguish the British name in every quarter of the globe, is repairing the castle of his ancestors, which of yore stood a siege against John of Gaunt. I was his companion at school, where he was as much beloved by his playmates, as he has been ever respected by his companions in arms and the people over whom he has been deputed to exercise the authority of his sovereign. He was always steady, wise, and generous. The old Castle of Dalhousie—*seu potius* Dalwolsey—was mangled by a fellow called, I believe, Douglas, who destroyed, as far as in him lay, its military and baronial character, and roofed it after the fashion of a poor's-house. Burnt‡ is now restoring and repairing in the old taste, and, I think, creditably to his own feeling. God bless the roof-tree!

"We returned home by the side of the South Esk, where I had the pleasure to see that Robert Dundas is laying out his woods with taste, and managing them with care. His father and uncle took notice of me when I was a 'fellow of no mark nor likelihood,'§ and I am always happy in finding myself in the old oak room at Arniston, where I have drunk many a merry bottle, and in the fields where I have seen many a hare killed."

At the opening of the Session next day, he misses one of his dear old colleagues of the table, Mr. Mackenzie, who had long been the official press in ordinary of the Writers to the Signet. The Diary has a pithy entry here:—"My good friend Colin Mackenzie proposes to retire from indifferent health. A better man never lived—eager to serve every one—a safeguard over all public business which came through his hands. As Deputy-keeper of the Signet he will be much missed. He had a patience in listening to every one, which is of infinite importance in the management of a public body; for many men care less to gain their point, than they do to play the orator, and be listened to for a certain time. This done, and due quantity of personal consideration being gained, the individual orator is usually satisfied with the reasons of the civil listener, who has suffered him to enjoy his hour of consequence."

The following passages appear (in various ways)

* The Rev. T. Wright, of Borthwick, is the author of various popular works,—"The Morning and Evening Sacrifice," &c. &c.

† See Scott's account of this Castle in his Prose Miscellanies, Vol. VII.

‡ William Burn, Esq., architect, Edinburgh.

§ *King Henry IV., Act III. Sc. 2.*

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too curious and characteristic to be omitted. He is working hard, alas! too hard—at the Fair Maid of Perth.

"*Feburary* 17.—A hard day of work, being, I think eight pages* before dinner. I cannot, I am sure, tell if it is worth marking down, that yesterday, at dinner-time, I was strangely haunted by what I would call the sense of pre-existence—viz. a confused idea, that nothing that passed was said for the first time, that the same topics had been discussed, and the same persons had stated the same opinions on them. It is true there might have been some ground for recollections, considering that three at least of the company were old friends, and had kept much company together; that is, Justice-Clerk, [Lord] Abercromby, and I. But the sensation was so strong as to resemble what is called a *mirage* in the desert, or a calenture on board of ship, when lakes are seen in the desert, and sylvan landscapes in the sea. It was very distressing yesterday, and brought to my mind the fancies of Bishop Berkely about an ideal world. There was a vile sense of want of reality in all I did and said. It made me gloomy and out of spirits, though I flatter myself this was not observed. The bodily feeling which most resembles this unpleasing hallucination is the giddy state which follows profuse bleeding, when one feels as if he were walking on feather-beds and could not find a secure footing. I think the stomach has something to do with it. I drank several glasses of wine, but these only augmented the disorder. I did not find the '*in vino veritas* of the philosophers. Something of this insane feeling remains to-day, but a trifle only.

"*February* 20.—Another day of labour, but not so hard. I worked from eight till three with little intermission, but only accomplished four pages.

"A certain Mr. Mackay from Ireland called on me, an active agent, it would seem, about the reform of prisons. He exclaims, justly I doubt not, about the state of our Lock-up House. For myself I have some distrust of the fanaticism even of philanthropy. A good part of it arises in general from mere vanity and love of distinction, gilded over to others and to themselves with some show of benevolent sentiment. The philanthropy of Howard, mingled with his ill-usage of his son, seems to have risen to a pitch of insanity. Yet without such extraordinary men, who call attention to the subject by their own peculiarities, prisons would have remained the same dungeons which they were forty or fifty years ago. I do not, however, see the propriety of making them dandy places of detention. They should be places of punishment, and that can hardly be if men are lodged better, and fed better, than when they are at large. I have never seen a plan for keeping in order these resorts of guilt and misery, without presupposing a superintendence of a kind which might perhaps be exercised, could we turn out upon the watch a guard of angels. But, alas! jailers and turnkeys are rather like angels of a different livery, nor do I see how it is possible to render them otherwise. *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* As to reformation, I have no great belief in it, when the ordinary classes of culprits, who are vicious from ignorance or habit, are the subjects of the experiment. 'A shave from a broken loaf' is thought as little of by the male set of delinquents as by the fair frail. The state of society now leads to such accumulations of humanity, that we cannot wonder if it ferment and reek like a compost dunghill. Nature intended that population should be diffused over the soil in proportion to its extent. We have accumulated in huge cities and smothering manufactories the numbers which should be spread over the face of a country; and what wonder that they should be corrupted? We have turned healthful and pleasant brooks into morasses and pestiferous lakes,—what wonder the soil should be unhealthy? A great deal, I think, might be done by executing the punishment of *death*, without a chance of escape, in all cases to which it should be found properly applicable; of course these occasions being diminished to one out of twenty to which capital punishment is now assigned. Our ancestors brought the country to order by *killing* thieves and banditti with strings. So did the French when at Naples, and bandits became for the time unheard of. When once men are taught that a crime of a certain character is connected inseparably with death, the moral habits of a population become altered, and you may in the next age remit the punishment which in this it has been necessary to inflict with stern severity.

"*February* 21.—Last night after dinner I rested from my work, and read the third series of *Sayings and Doings*, which shows great knowledge of life in a certain sphere, and very considerable powers of wit, which somewhat damages the effect of the tragic parts. But Theodore Hook is an able writer, and so much of his work is well said, that it will carry through what is indifferent. I hope the same good fortune for other folks.

"I am watching and waiting till I hit on some quaint and clever mode of extricating, but do not see a glimpse of any one. James B., too, discourages me a good deal by his silence, waiting, I suppose, to be invited to disgorge a full allowance of his critical bile. But he will wait long enough, for I am discouraged enough. Now here is the advantage of Edinburgh. In the country, if a sense of inability once seizes me, it haunts me from morning to night; but in town the time is so occupied and frittered away by official duties and chance occupations, that you have not leisure to play Master Stephen, and be melancholy and gentlemanlike.* On the other hand, you never feel in town those spirit-stirring influences—those glances of sunshine that make amends for clouds and mist. The country is said to be the quieter life; not to me, I am sure. In town the business I have to do hardly costs me more thought than just occupies my mind, and I have as much of gossip and lady-like chat as consumes odd hours pleasantly enough. In the country I am thrown entirely on my own resources, and there is no medium betwixt happiness and the reverse.

"*March* 9.—I set about arranging my papers, a task which I always take up with the greatest possible ill-will, and which makes me cruelly nervous. I don't know why it should be so, for I have nothing particularly disagreeable to look at; far from it, I am better than I was at this time last year, my hopes firmer, my health stronger, my affairs bettered and bettering. Yet I feel an inexpressible nervousness in consequence of this employment. The memory, though it retains all that has passed, has closed sternly over it; and this rummaging, like a bucket dropped suddenly into a well, deranges and confuses the ideas which slumbered on the mind. I am nervous, and I am bilious, and, in a word, I am unhappy. This is wrong, very wrong; and it is reasonably to be apprehended that something of serious misfortune may be the deserved punishment of this pusillanimous lowness of spirits. Strange, that one who, in most things, may be said to have enough of the 'care na by,' should be subject to such vile weakness!—Drummond Hay, the antiquary and Lyon-herald,† came in. I do not know any thing which relieves the mind so much from the sullens as trifling discussions about antiquarian *old womanries*. It is like knitting a stocking, diverting the mind without occupying it; or it is like, by Our Lady, a mill-dam, which leads one's thoughts gently and imperceptibly out of the channel, in which they are chafing and boiling. To be sure, it is only conducting them to turn a child's mill: what signifies that?—the diversion is a relief, though the object is of little importance. I cannot tell what we talked of.

"*March* 12.—I was sadly worried by the black dog this morning, that vile palpitation of the heart—

* i. e. Forty pages of print, or very nearly.

* See Ben Johnson's '*Every Man in his Humour*.' Act i, Scene 3.

† W. A. Drummond Hay, Esq., (now consul at Tangier,) was at this time the deputy of his cousin the Earl of Kinnoull, hereditary Lord Lyon King at Arms.

that *tremor cordis*—that hysterical passion which forces unbidden sighs and tears, and falls upon a contented life like a drop of ink on white paper, which is not the less a stain because it carries no meaning. I wrote three leaves, however, and the story goes on.

"The dissolution of the Yeomanry was the act of the last ministry. The present did not alter the measure, on account of the expense saved. I am, if not the very oldest Yeoman in Scotland, one of the oldest, and have seen the rise, progress, and now the fall of this very constitutional part of the national force. Its efficacy, on occasions of insurrection, was sufficiently proved in the Radical time. But besides, it kept up a spirit of harmony between the proprietors of land and the occupiers, and made them known to and beloved by each other; and it gave to the young men a sort of military and high-spirited character, which always does honour to a country. The manufacturers are in great glee on this occasion. I wish Parliament, as they have turned the Yeomen adrift somewhat scornfully, may not have occasion to roar them in again.

'The eldrich knight gave up his arms
With many a sorrowful sigh.'"

Sir Walter finished his novel by the end of March, and immediately set out for London, where the last budget of proof-sheets reached him. The Fair Maid was, and continues to be highly popular, and though never classed with his performances of the first file, it has undoubtedly several scenes equal to what the best of them can show, and is on the whole a work of brilliant variety and most lively interest. Though the Introduction of 1830 says a good deal on the most original character, that of Connochar, the reader may not be sorry to have one paragraph on that subject from the Diary:—"*December* 5, 1827.—The fellow that swam the Tay, and escaped, would be a good ludicrous character. But I have a mind to try him in the serious line of tragedy. Miss Baillie has made her Ethling a coward by temperament, and a hero when touched by filial affection. Suppose a man's nerves, supported by feelings of honour, or say, by the spur of jealousy, sustaining him against constitutional timidity to a certain point, then suddenly giving way, I think something tragic might be produced. James Ballantyne's criticism is too much moulded upon the general taste of novels to admit (I fear) this species of reasoning. But what can one do? I am hard up as far as imagination is concerned, yet the world calls for novelty. Well, I'll try my brave coward or cowardly brave man. *Valeat quantum.*"

The most careful critic that has handled this Tale, while he picks many holes in the plot, estimates the characters very highly. Of the glee-maiden, he well says; "Louise is a delightful sketch.—Nothing can be more exquisite than the manner in which her story is partly told, and partly hinted, or than the contrast between her natural and her professional character;" and after discussing at some length Rothsay, Henbane, Ramorney, &c. &c. he comes to Connochar.

"This character" (says Mr. Senior) "is perfectly tragic, neither too bad for sympathy, nor so good as to render his calamity revolting; but its great merit is the boldness with which we are called upon to sympathize with a deficiency which is generally the subject of unmitigated scorn. It is impossible not to feel the deepest commiseration for a youth cursed by nature with extreme sensibility both to shame and to fear, suddenly raised from a life of obscurity and peace, to head a confederacy of warlike savages, and forced immediately afterwards to elect, before the eyes of thousands, between a frightful death and an ignominious escape. The philosophy of courage and cowardice is one of the obscurest parts of human nature: partly because the susceptibility of fear is much affected by physical causes, by habit, and by example; and partly because it is a subject as to which men do not readily state the result of their own experience, and when they do state it, are not always implicitly believed. The subject has been further perplexed, in modern times, by the Scandinavian invention of the point of honour;—a doctrine which represents the manifestation, in most cases, of even well-founded apprehension as fatal to all nobility of character;—an opinion so little admitted by the classical world, that Homer has attributed to Hector, and Virgil to Turnus, certainly without supposing them dishonoured, precisely the same conduct of which Sir Walter makes suicide a consequence, without being an expiation. The result of all this has been that scarcely any modern writers have made the various degrees of courage a source of much variety and discrimination of character. They have given us indeed plenty of fire-eaters and plenty of poltroons; and Shakspeare has painted in Falstaff constitutional intrepidity unsupported by honour; but by far the most usual modification of character among persons of vivid imagination, that in which a quick feeling of honour combats a quick apprehension of danger, a character which is the precise converse of Falstaff's, has been left almost untouched for Scott."

I alluded, in an early part of these Memoirs (p. 144,) to a circumstance in Sir Walter's conduct, which it was painful to mention, and added, that in advanced life he himself spoke of it with a deep feeling of contrition. Talking over this character of Connochar, just before the book appeared, he told me the unhappy fate of his brother Daniel, and how he had declined to be present at his funeral, or wear mourning for him. He added, "My secret motive in this attempt, was to perform a sort of expiation to my poor brother's manes. I have now learned to have more tolerance and compassion than I had in those days." I said he put me in mind of Samuel Johnson's standing bareheaded, in the last year of his life, on the market-place of Uttoxeter, by way of penance for a piece of juvenile irreverence towards his father. "Well, no matter," (said he,) "perhaps that's not the worst thing in the Doctor's story."*

CHAPTER LXXVI.

JOURNEY TO LONDON—CHARLECOTE-HALL—HOLLAND-HOUSE—CHISWICK—KENSINGTON PALACE—RICHMOND PARK—GILL'S-HILL—BOYD—SOTHEBY—COLERIDGE—SIR T. ACKLAND—BISHOP COPPLESTONE—MRS. ARKWRIGHT—LORD SIDMOUTH—LORD ALVANLEY—NORTHCOTE—HAYDON—CHANTREY AND CUNNINGHAM—ANECDOTES—LETTERS TO MR. TERRY—MRS. LOCKHART—AND SIR ALEXANDER WOOD—DEATH OF SIR WILLIAM FORBES—REVIEWS OF HAJJI BABA IN ENGLAND, AND DAVY'S SALMONIA—ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN BEGUN—SECOND SERIES OF THE GRANDFATHER'S TALES PUBLISHED—APRIL—DECEMBER, 1828.

Sir Walter remained at this time six weeks in London. His eldest son's regiment was stationed at Hampton Court; the second had recently taken his desk at the Foreign Office, and was living at his sister's in the Regent's Park; he had thus looked forward to a happy meeting with all his family—but he encountered scenes of sickness and distress, in consequence of which I saw but little of him in general society. I shall cull a few notices from his private volume, which, however, he now opened much less regularly than formerly, and which offers a total blank for the latter half of the year 1828. In coming up to town he diverged a little for the sake of seeing the interesting subject of the first of these extracts.

"*April* 8.—Learning from Washington Irving's description of Stratford, that the hall of Sir Thomas Lucy, the justice who rendered Warwickshire too hot for Shakspeare, was still extant, we went in quest of it.

"Charlecote is in high preservation, and inhabited by Mr. Lucy, descendant of the worshipful Sir Thomas. The Hall is about three hundred years old, a brick mansion with a gate-house in advance. It is surrounded by venerable oaks, realizing the imagery which Shakspeare loved to dwell upon; rich verdant pastures extend on every side, and numerous herds of deer were reposing in the shade. All showed that the Lucy family had retained their 'land and beeves.' While we were surveying the antlered old hall, with its painted glass and family pictures, Mr. Lucy came to welcome us in person,

* See Croker's *Boswell*, octavo edition, vol. v. p. 228.]

and to show the house, with the collection of paintings, which seems valuable.

"He told me the park from which Shakspeare stole the buck was not that which surrounds Charlecote, but belonged to a mansion at some distance, where Sir Thomas Lucy resided at the time of the trespass. The tradition went that they hid the buck in a barn, part of which was standing a few years ago, but now totally decayed. This park no longer belongs to the Lucys. The house bears no marks of decay, but seems the abode of ease and opulence. There were some fine old books, and I was told of many more which were not in order. How odd if a folio Shakspeare should be found amongst them. Our early breakfast did not permit taking advantage of an excellent repast offered by the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Lucy, the last a lively Welsh woman. This visit gave me great pleasure; it really brought Justice Shallow freshly before my eyes;—the *luces* which do become an old coat well,'* were not more plainly portrayed in his own armorials in the hall window, than was his person in my mind's eye. There is a picture shown as that of the old Sir Thomas, but Mr. Lucy conjectures it represents his son. There were three descents of the same name of Thomas. The portrait hath 'the eye severe, and beard of formal cut,' which fill up with judicial austerity the otherwise social physiognomy of the worshipful presence, with his 'fair round belly with good capon lined.'†

"*Regent's Park, April* 17.—Made up my journal, which had fallen something behind. In this phantasmagorial place the objects of the day come and depart like shadows. Went to Murray's, where I met Mr. Jacob, the great economist. He is proposing a mode of supporting the poor, by compelling them to labour under a species of military discipline. I see no objection to it, only it will make a rebellion to a certainty; and the tribes of Jacob will cut Jacob's throat.‡

"Canning's conversion from popular opinions was strangely brought round. While he was studying in the Temple, and rather entertaining revolutionary opinions, Godwin sent to say that he was coming to breakfast with him, to speak on a subject of the highest importance. Canning knew little of him, but received his visit, and learned to his astonishment, that in expectation of a new order of things, the English Jacobins designed to place him, Canning, at the head of their revolution. He was much struck, and asked time to think what course he should take—and having thought the matter over, he went to Mr. Pitt, and made the Anti-Jacobin confession of faith, in which he persevered until ——. Canning himself mentioned this to Sir W. Knighton upon occasion of giving a place in the Charter-house of some ten pounds a-year to Godwin's brother. He could scarce do less for one who had offered him the dictator's curule chair.

"Dined with Rogers with all my own family, and met Sharp, Lord John Russell, Jekyll, and others. The conversation flagged as usual, and jokes were fired like minute guns, producing an effect not much less melancholy. A wit should always have an atmosphere congenial to him, otherwise he will not shine.

"*April* 18.—Breakfasted at Hampstead with Joanna Baillie, and found that gifted person extremely well, and in the display of all her native knowledge of character, and benevolence. I would give as much to have a capital picture of her as for any portrait in the world. Dined with the Dean of Chester, Dr. Philpotts—

> 'Where all above us was a solemn row
> Of priests and deacons—so were all below.'§

There were the amiable Bishop of London (Howley,) Coppleatone, whom I remember the first man at Oxford, now Bishop of Llandaff, and Dean of St. Paul's (strongly intelligent,) and other dignitaries, of whom I knew less. It was a very pleasant day—the wigs against the wits for a guinea, in point of conversation. Anne looked queer, and much disposed to laugh, at finding herself placed betwixt two prelates in black petticoats.

"*April* 19.—Breakfasted with Sir George Phillips. Had his receipt against the blossoms being injured by frost. It consists in watering them plentifully before sunrise. This is like the mode of thawing beef. We had a pleasant morning, much the better that Morritt was with us. Dined with Sir Robert Inglis, and met Sir Thomas Acland, my old and kind friend. I was happy to see him. He may be considered now as the head of the religious party in the House of Commons, a powerful body which Wilberforce long commanded. It is a difficult situation; for the adaptation of religious motives to earthly policy is apt—among the infinite delusions of the human heart—to be a snare. But I could confide much in Sir T. Acland's honour and integrity. Bishop Bloomfield of Chester, one of the most learned prelates of the church, also dined.

"*April* 22.—Sophia left this to take down poor Johnnie to Brighton. I fear—I fear—but we must hope the best. Anne went with her sister.

"Lockhart and I dined with Sotheby, where we met a large party, the orator of which was that extraordinary man Coleridge. After eating a hearty dinner, during which he spoke not a word, he began a most learned harangue on the Samothracian Mysteries, which he regards as affording the germ of all tales about fairies past, present, and to come. He then diverged to Homer, whose Iliad he considered as a collection of poems by different authors, at different times, during a century. Morritt, a zealous worshipper of the old bard, was incensed at a system which would turn him into a polytheist, gave battle with keenness, and was joined by Sotheby. Mr. Coleridge behaved with the utmost complaisance and temper, but relaxed not from his exertions. 'Zounds, I was never so bethumped with words.' Morritt's impatience must have cost him an extra sixpence worth of snuff.

"*April* 23.—Dined at Lady Davy's with Lord and Lady Lansdowne and several other fine folks—my keys were sent to Bramah's with my desk, so I have not had the means of putting down matters regularly for several days. But who cares for the whipp'd cream of London society?

"*April* 24.—Spent the day in rectifying a road bill which drew a turnpike road through all the Darnickers' cottages, and a good field of my own. I got it put to rights. I was in some apprehension of being obliged to address the Committee. I did not fear them, for I suppose they are no wiser or better in their capacity of legislators than I find them every day at dinner. But I feared for my reputation. They would have expected something better than the occasion demanded, or the individual could produce, and there would have been a failure. We had one or two persons at home in great wretchedness to dinner. I was not able to make any fight, and the evening went off as heavily as any I ever spent in the course of my life.

"*April* 26.—We dined at Richardson's with the two Chief Barons of England* and Scotland,† odd enough, the one being a Scotsman and the other an Englishman—far the pleasantest day we have had. I suppose I am partial, but I think the lawyers beat the bishops, and the bishops beat the wits.

"*April* 27.—This morning I went to meet a remarkable man, Mr. Boyd of the house of Boyd, Benfield, & Co., which broke for a very large sum at the beginning of the war. Benfield went to the devil, I believe. Boyd, a man of very different stamp, went over to Paris to look after some large claims which his house had on the French Government. They were such as, it seems, they could not disavow, however they might be disposed to do so.

* *Henry IV.*, Act III., Scene 2.
† *As You Like It*, Act I., Scene 7.
‡ I believe Mr. Jacob published at this time some tracts concerning the Poor Colonies instituted by the King of the Netherlands.
§ Crabbe's Tale of 'the Dumb Orators.'

* Sir William Alexander. † Sir Samuel Shepherd.

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But they used every effort, by foul means and fair, to induce Mr. Boyd to depart. He was reduced to poverty; he was thrown into prison; and the most flattering prospects were, on the other hand, held out to him if he would compromise his claims. His answer was uniform. It was the property, he said, of his creditors, and he would die ere he resigned it. His distresses were so great, that a subscription was made amongst his Scottish friends, to which I was a contributor, through the request of poor Will Erskine. After the peace of Paris the money was restored, and, faithful to the last, Boyd laid the whole at his creditors' disposal; stating, at the same time, that he was penniless unless they consented to allow him a moderate sum in name of per centage, in consideration of twenty years of exile, poverty, and danger, all of which evils he might have escaped by surrendering their rights. Will it be believed, that a muck-worm was base enough to refuse his consent to this deduction, alleging he had promised to his father, on his death-bed, never to compromise this debt? The wretch, however, was overpowered by the execrations of all around him, and concurred, with others, in setting apart for Mr. Boyd a sum of £40,000 or £50,000 out of half a million. This is a man to whom statues should be erected, and pilgrims should go to see him. He is good looking, but old and infirm. Bright dark eyes and eyebrows contrast with his snowy hair, and all his features mark vigour of principle and resolution.

"*April* 30.—We have Mr. Adolphus, and his father, the celebrated lawyer, to breakfast, and I was greatly delighted with the information of the latter. A barrister of extended practice, if he has any talents at all, is the best companion in the world. Dined with Lord Alvanley and met Lord Fitzroy Somerset, Marquis and Marchioness of Worcester, &c. Lord Alvanley's wit made this party very pleasant, as well as the kind reception of my friends the Misses Arden.

"*May* 1.—Breakfasted with Lord and Lady Francis Gower, and enjoyed the splendid treat of hearing Mrs. Arkwright sing her own music, which is of the highest order—no forced vagaries of the voice, no caprices of tone, but all telling upon and increasing the feeling the words require. This is 'marrying music to immortal verse.' Most people place them on separate maintenance.*

"*May* 2.—I breakfasted with a Mr. ——, and narrowly escaped Mr. Irving the celebrated preacher. The two ladies of his house seemed devoted to his opinions, and quoted him at every word. Mr. —— himself made some apologies for the Millenium. He is a neat antiquary, who thinks he ought to have been a man of letters, and that his genius has been misdirected in turning towards the law. I endeavoured to combat this idea, which his handsome house and fine family should have checked. Compare his dwelling, his comforts, with poor Tom Campbell's.

"*May* 5.—Breakfasted with Haydon, and sat for my head. I hope this artist is on his legs again. The King has given him a lift, by buying his clever picture of the Mock Election in the King's Bench prison, to which he is adding a second part, representing the chairing of the member at the moment it was interrupted by the entry of the guards. Haydon was once a great admirer and companion of the champions of the Cockney school, and is now disposed to renounce them and their opinions. To this kind of conversation I did not give much way. A painter should have nothing to do with politics. He is certainly a clever fellow, but too enthusiastic, which, however, distress seems to have cured in some degree. His wife, a pretty woman, looked happy to see me, and that is something. Yet it was very little I could do to help them.*

"*May* 8.—Dined with Mrs. Alexander of Ballochmyle:—Lord and Lady Meath, who were kind to us in Ireland, and a Scottish party, pleasant from having the broad accents and honest thoughts of my native land. A large circle in the evening. A gentleman came up to me and asked 'If I had seen the Casket, a curious work, the most beautiful, the most highly ornamented,—and then the editor or editress—a female so interesting,—might he ask a very great favour?' and out he pulled a piece of this pic-nic. I was really angry, and said for a subscription he might command me—for a contributor—No. This may be misrepresented, but I care not. Suppose this patron of the Muses gives five guineas to his distressed lady, he will think he does a great deal, yet he takes fifty from me with the calmest air in the world; for the communication is worth that if it be worth any thing. There is no equalizing in the proposal.

"*May* 9.—Grounds of Foote's farce of the Cozeners. Lady —— ——. A certain Mrs. Phipps audaciously set up in a fashionable quarter of the town as a person through whose influence, properly propitiated, favours and situations of importance might certainly be obtained—always for a consideration. She cheated many people, and maintained the trick for months. One trick was to get the equipages of Lord North, and other persons of importance, to halt before her door, as if their owners were within. With respect to most of them, this was effected by bribing the drivers. But a gentleman who watched her closely, observed that Charles J. Fox actually left his carriage and went into the house, and this more than once. He was then, it must be noticed, in the Ministry. When Mrs. Phipps was blown up, this circumstance was recollected as deserving explanation, which Fox readily gave at Brookes' and elsewhere. It seems Mrs. Phipps had the art to persuade him that she had the disposal of what was then called a *hyæna*, that is, an heiress—an immense Jamaica heiress, in whom she was willing to give or sell her interest to Charles Fox. Without having perfect confidence in the obliging proposal, the great statesman thought the thing worth looking after, and became so earnest in it, that Mrs. Phipps was desirous to back out for fear of discovery. With this view she made confession one fine morning, with many professions of the deepest feelings, that the hyæna had proved a frail monster, and given birth to a girl or boy—no matter which. Even this did not make Charles quit chase of the hyæna. He intimated that if the cash was plenty and certain, the circumstance might be overlooked. Mrs. Phipps had nothing for it but to double the disgusting dose. 'The poor child,' she said, 'was unfortunately of a mixed colour, somewhat tinged with the blood of Africa; no doubt Mr. Fox was himself very dark, and the circumstance might not draw attention,' &c. &c. This singular anecdote was touched upon by Foote, and is the cause of introducing the negress into the Cozeners, though no express allusion to Charles Fox was admitted. Lady —— tells me that in her youth, the laugh was universal so soon as the black woman appeared. It is one of the numerous hits that will be lost to posterity.

"This day, at the request of Sir William Knighton, I sat to Northcote, who is to introduce himself in the same piece in the act of painting me, like some pictures of the Venetian school. The artist is an old man, low in stature, and bent with years—fourscore at least. But the eye is quick and the countenance noble. A pleasant companion, fa-

* Among other songs Mrs. Arkwright (see *ante*, p. 512,) delighted Sir Walter with her own set of—

"Farewell! Farewell!—the voice you hear
Has left its last soft tone with you,
Its last must join the seaward cheer,
And shout among the shouting crew," &c.

He was sitting by me, at some distance from the lady, and whispered as she closed, "capital words—whose are they?—Byron's I suppose, but I don't remember them." He was astonished when I told him that they were his own in the Pirate—he seemed pleased at the moment—but said next minute—"You have distressed me—if memory goes, all is up with me, for that was always my strong point."

* Sir Walter had shortly before been one of the contributors to a subscription for Mr. Haydon. The imprisonment from which this subscription relieved the artist produced, I need scarcely say, the picture mentioned in the Diary.

miliar with recollections of Sir Joshua, Samuel Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith, &c. His account of the last confirms all that we have heard of his oddities.

"*May* 11.—Another long sitting to the old Wizard Northcote. He really resembles an animated mummy. Dined with his Majesty in a very private party, five or six only being present. I was received most kindly, as usual. It is impossible to conceive a more friendly manner than that his Majesty used towards me. I spoke to Sir William Knighton about the dedication of the collected novels, and he says it will be highly well taken.*

"*May* 17.—A day of busy idleness. Richardson came and breakfasted with me, like a good fellow. Then I went to Mr. Chantrey. Thereafter, about 12 o'clock, I went to breakfast the second at Lady Shelley's, where there was a great morning party. A young lady begged a lock of my hair, which was not worth refusing. I stipulated for a kiss, which I was permitted to take. From this I went to the Duke of Wellington, who gave me some hints or rather details. Afterwards I drove out to Chiswick, where I had never been before. A numerous and gay party were assembled to walk and enjoy the beauties of that Palladian dome. The place and highly ornamented gardens belonging to it resemble a picture of Watteau. There is some affectation in the picture, but in the ensemble the original looked very well. The Duke of Devonshire received every one with the best possible manners. The scene was dignified by the presence of an immense elephant, who, under charge of a groom, wandered up and down, giving an air of Asiatic pageantry to the entertainment. I was never before sensible of the dignity which largeness of size and freedom of movement give to this otherwise very ugly animal. As I was to dine at Holland House, I did not partake in the magnificent repast which was offered to us, and took myself off about five o'clock. I contrived to make a demi-toilette at Holland House, rather than drive all the way to London. Rogers came to the dinner, which was very entertaining. Lady Holland pressed us to stay all night, which we did accordingly.

"*May* 18.—The freshness of the air, the singing of the birds, the beautiful aspect of nature, the size of the venerable trees, gave me altogether a delightful feeling this morning. It seemed there was pleasure even in living and breathing without any thing else. We (*i. e.* Rogers and I) wandered into a green lane, bordered with fine trees, which might have been twenty miles from a town. It will be a great pity when this ancient house must come down and give way to rows and crescents. It is not that Holland House is fine as a building,—on the contrary it has a tumble-down look; and although decorated with the bastard Gothic of James I.'s time, the front is heavy. But it resembles many respectable matrons, who having been absolutely ugly during youth, acquire by age an air of dignity. But one is chiefly affected by the air of deep seclusion which is spread around the domain.

"*May* 19.—Dined by command with the Duchess of Kent. I was very kindly recognised by Prince Leopold—and presented to the little Princess Victoria—I hope they will change her name—the heir-apparent to the crown as things now stand. How strange that so large and fine a family as that of his late Majesty should have died off, or decayed into old age, with so few descendants. Prince George of Cumberland is, they say, a fine boy about nine years old—a bit of a Pickle. This little lady is educating with much care, and watched so closely that no busy maid has a moment to whisper, 'You are heir of England.' I suspect if we could dissect the little heart, we should find that some pigeon or other bird of the air had carried the matter. She is fair, like the Royal family—the Duchess herself very pleasing and affable in her manners. I sat by Mr. Spring Rice, a very agreeable man. There were also Charles Wynn and his lady—and the evening, for a court evening, went agreeably off. I am commanded for two days by Prince Leopold, but will send excuses.

"*May* 24.—This day dined at Richmond Park with Lord Sidmouth. Before dinner his Lordship showed me letters which passed between his father, Dr. Addington, and the great Lord Chatham. There was much of that familiar friendship which arises, and must arise, between an invalid, the head of an invalid family, and their medical adviser, supposing the last to be a wise and well-bred man. The character of Lord Chatham's handwriting is strong and bold, and his expressions short and manly. There are intimations of his partiality for William, whose health seems to have been precarious during boyhood. He talks of William imitating him in all he did, and calling for ale because his father was recommended to drink it. 'If I should smoke,' he said, 'William would instantly call for a pipe;' and, he wisely infers, 'I must take care what I do.' The letters of the late William Pitt are of great curiosity; but as, like all real letters of business, they only *allude* to matters with which his correspondent is well acquainted, and do not enter into details, they would require an ample commentary. I hope Lord Sidmouth will supply this, and have urged it as much as I can. I think, though I hate letters, and abominate interference, I will write to him on this subject. Here I met my old and much esteemed friend, Lord Stowell, looking very frail and even comatose. *Quantum mutatus.* He was one of the pleasantest men I ever knew.

"Respecting the letters, I picked up from those of Pitt that he was always extremely desirous of peace with France, and even reckoned upon it at a moment when he ought to have despaired. I suspect this false view of the state of France (for such it was) which induced the British Minister to look for peace when there was no chance of it, damped his ardour in maintaining the war. He wanted the lofty ideas of his father—you read it in his handwriting, great statesman as he was. I saw a letter or two of Burke's, in which there is an *epanchement de cœur* not visible in those of Pitt, who writes like a Premier to his colleague. Burke was under the strange hallucination that his son, who predeceased him, was a man of greater talents than himself. On the contrary, he had little talent, and no nerve. On moving some resolutions in favour of the Catholics, which were ill-received by the House of Commons, young Burke actually ran away, which an Orangeman compared to a cross-reading in the newspapers. 'Yesterday the Catholic resolutions were moved, &c.—but the pistol missing fire, the villains ran off!!'"

"*May* 25.—After a morning of letter writing, leave-taking, papers destroying, and God knows what trumpery, Sophia and I set out for Hampton Court, carrying with us the following lions and lionesses—Samuel Rogers, Tom Moore, Wordsworth, with wife and daughter. We were very kindly and properly received by Walter and his wife, and had a very pleasant day. At parting Rogers gave me a gold-mounted pair of glasses, which I will not part with in a hurry. I really like S. R., and have always found him most friendly."

This is the last London entry; but I must mention two circumstances that occurred during that visit. Breakfasting one morning with Allan Cunningham, and commending one of his publications, he looked round the table and said, "what are you going to make of all these boys, Allan?" "I ask that question often at my own heart," said Allan, "and I cannot answer it." "What does the eldest point to?" "The callant would fain be a soldier, Sir Walter—and I have a half promise of a commission in the king's army for him; but I wish rather he could go to India, for there the pay is a maintenance, and one does not need interest at every step to get on." Scott dropped the subject, but went an hour afterwards to Lord Melville, (who was now President of the Board of Control,) and begged a

* The *Magnum Opus* was dedicated to King George IV.

cadetship for young Cunningham. Lord Melville promised to enquire if he had one at his disposal, in which case he would gladly serve the son of honest Allan; but the point being thus left doubtful, Scott, meeting Mr. John Loch, one of the East India Directors, at dinner the same evening, at Lord Stafford's, applied to him, and received an immediate assent. On reaching home at night he found a note from Lord Melville, intimating that he had enquired, and was happy in complying with his request. Next morning Sir Walter appeared at Sir F. Chantrey's breakfast table, and greeted the sculptor (who is a brother of the angle) with—"I suppose it has sometimes happened to you to catch one trout (which was all you thought of) with the fly, and another with the bobber. I have done so, and I think I shall land them both. Don't you think Cunningham would like very well to have cadetships for two of those fine lads?" "To be sure he would," said Chantrey, "and if you'll secure the commissions, I'll make the outfit easy." Great was the joy in Allan's household on this double good news; but I should add, that before the thing was done he had to thank another benefactor. Lord Melville, after all, went out of the Board of Control before he had been able to fulfil his promise; but his successor, Lord Ellenborough, on hearing the circumstances of the case, desired Cunningham to set his mind at rest, and both his young men are now prospering in the India service.

Another friend's private affairs occupied more unpleasantly much of Scott's attention during this residence in London. He learned, shortly after his arrival, that misfortunes (as foreseen by himself in May, 1825) had gathered over the management of the Adelphi Theatre.* The following letter has been selected from among several on the same painful subject.

To Daniel Terry, Esq. Boulogne-sur-Mer.

"London, Lockhart's, April 15, 1828.

"My dear Terry,

"I received with sincere distress your most melancholy letter. Certainly want of candour with one's friends is blameable, and procrastination in circumstances of embarrassment is highly unwise. But they bring such a fearful chastisement on the party who commits them that he may justly expect, not the reproaches, but the sympathy and compassion of his friends; at least of all such whose conscience charges them with errors of their own. For my part I feel as little title, as God knows I have wish, to make any reflections on the matter, more than are connected with the most sincere regret on your own account. The sum at which I stand noted in the schedule is of no consequence in the now more favourable condition of my affairs, and the loss to me personally is the less, that I always considered £200 of the same as belonging to my godson; but he is young, and may not miss the loss when he comes to be fitted out for the voyage of life; we must hope the best. I told your solicitor that I desired he would consider me as a friend of yours, desirous to take as a creditor the measures which seemed best to forward your interest. It might be inconvenient to me were I called upon to make up such instalments of the price of the theatre as are unpaid, but of this, I suppose, there can be no great danger. Pray let me know, as soon as you can, how this stands. I think you are quite right to stand to the worst, and that your retiring with an injudicious measure which cannot be too soon retracted, *coute qui coute*. I am at present in London with Lockhart, who, as well as my daughter, are in deep sorrow for what has happened, as they, as well as I on their account, consider themselves as deeply obliged to Mrs. Terry's kindness, as well as from regard to you. These hard times must seem still harder while you are in a foreign country. I am not, you know, so wealthy as I have been, but £20 or £30 are heartily at your service if you will let me know how the remittance can reach you. It does not seem to me that an arrangement with your creditors will be difficult; but for God's sake do not temporize and undertake burdens which you cannot discharge, and which will only lead to new difficulties.

"As to your views about an engagement at Edinburgh I doubt much, though an occasional visit would probably succeed. My countrymen, taken in their general capacity, are not people to have recourse to in adverse circumstances. John Bull is a better beast in misfortune. Your objections to an American trip are quite satisfactory, unless the success of your Solicitor's measures should in part remove them, when it may be considered as a *pis-aller*. As to Walter there can be no difficulty in procuring his admission to the Edinburgh Academy, and if he could be settled with his grandfather, or under his eye, as to domestic accommodation, I would willingly take care of his schooling, and look after him when I am in town. I shall be anxious, indeed, till I hear that you are once more restored to the unrestrained use of your talents; for I am sensible how dreadfully annoying must be your present situation, which leaves so much time for melancholy retrospection without any opportunity of exertion. Yet this state, like others, must be endured with patience; the furiously impatient horse only plunges himself deeper in the slough, as our old hunting excursions may have taught us. In general, the human mind is strong in proportion to the internal energy which it possesses. Evil fortune is as transient as good, and if the endangered ship is still manned by a sturdy and willing crew, why then

'Up and rig a jury foremast,
She rights, she rights, boys, we're off shore.'

This was the system I argued upon in my late distresses, and, therefore, I strongly recommend it to you; I beg my kindest compliments to Mrs. Terry, and I hope better days may come. I shall be here till the beginning of May; therefore we may meet; believe me, very truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

On the afternoon of the 28th of May, Sir Walter started for the north, but could not resist going out of his way to see the spot where "Mr. William Weare, who dwelt in Lyon's Inn," was murdered. His Diary says:—

"Our elegant researches carried us out of the high-road and through a labyrinth of intricate lanes, which seem made on purpose to afford strangers the full benefit of a dark night and a drunk driver, in order to visit Gill's Hill, in Hertfordshire, famous for the murder of Mr. Weare. The place has the strongest title to the description of Wordsworth,

'A merry spot 'tis said in days of yore,
But something ails it now—the place is curst.'

The principal part of the house has been destroyed, and only the kitchen remains standing. The garden has been dismantled, though a few laurels and flowering-shrubs, run wild, continue to mark the spot. The fatal pond is now only a green swamp, but so near the house that one cannot conceive how it was ever chosen as a place of temporary concealment for the murdered body. Indeed the whole history of the murder, and the scenes which ensued, are strange pictures of desperate and short-sighted wickedness. The feasting—the singing—the murderer, with his hands still bloody, hanging round the neck of one of the females the watch-chain of the murdered man—argue the utmost apathy. Even Probart, the most frightened of the party, fled no farther for relief than to the brandy bottle, and is found in the very lane, nay, at the very spot of the murder, seeking for the weapon, and exposing himself to the view of the passengers. Another singular mark of stupid audacity was their venturing to wear the clothes of their victim. There was a want of foresight in the whole arrangements of the deed, and the attempts to conceal it, which a professed robber would not have exhibited. There was just one shade of redeeming character about a business so brutal, perpetrated by men above the very lowest rank of life—it was the mixture of revenge, which afforded some relief to the circumstances of treachery and premeditation. But Weare was a cheat,* and had no doubt pillaged Thurtell, who therefore deemed he might take greater liberties with him than with others. The dirt of the present habitation equalled its wretched desolation, and a truculent-looking hag, who showed us the place, and received half-a-crown, looked not unlike the natural inmate of such a mansion. She hinted as much herself, saying the landlord had dismantled the place, because no respectable person would live there. She seems to live entirely alone, and fears

* See *ante*, p. 123.

* Weare, Thurtell, and all the rest were professed gamblers. See *ante*, p. 199.

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no ghosts, she says. One thing about this tragedy was never explained. It is said that Weare, as is the habit of such men, always carried about his person, and between his flannel waistcoat and shirt, a sum of ready money, equal to £1500 or £2000. No such money was ever recovered, and as the sum divided by Thurtell among his accomplices was only about £20, he must, in slang phrase, have *bucketed his palls*.

"*May* 29.—We travelled from Alconbury Hill to Ferry Bridge, upwards of a hundred miles, amid all the beauties of flourish and verdure which spring awakens at her first approach in the midland counties of England, but without any variety, save those of the season's making. I do believe this great north road is the dullest in the world, as well as the most convenient for the travellers. The skeleton at Barnby Moor has deserted his gibbet, and that is the only change I recollect.

"*Rokeby, May* 30.—We left Ferry Bridge at seven, and reached this place at past three. A mile from the house we met Morritt, looking for us. I had great pleasure in finding myself at Rokeby, and recollecting a hundred passages of past time. Morritt looks well and easy in his mind, which I am delighted to see. He is now one of my oldest, and, I believe, one of my most sincere friends;—a man unequalled in the mixture of sound good sense, high literary cultivation, and the kindest and sweetest temper that ever graced a human bosom. His nieces are much attached to him, and are deserving and elegant, as well as beautiful young women. What there is in our partiality to female beauty that commands a species of temperate homage from the aged, as well as ecstatic admiration from the young, I cannot conceive; but it is certain that a very large portion of some other amiable quality is too little to counterbalance the absolute want of this advantage. I, to whom beauty is, and shall henceforward be a picture, still look upon it with the quiet devotion of an old worshipper, who no longer offers incense on the shrine, but peaceably presents his inch of taper, taking special care in doing so not to burn his own fingers. Nothing in life can be more ludicrous or contemptible than an old man aping the passions of his youth.

"Talking of youth, there was a certain professor at Cambridge who used to keep sketches of all the lads who, from their conduct at college, seemed to bid fair for distinction in life. He showed them one day to an old shrewd sarcastic master of arts, who looked over the collection, and then observed, 'A promising nest of eggs; what a pity the great part will turn out addle!' And so they do:—looking round amongst the young men one sees to all appearances fine flourish—but it ripens not.

"*May* 31.—I have finished Napier's War in the Peninsula.* It is written in the spirit of a Liberal, but the narrative is distinct and clear. He has, however, given a bad sample of accuracy in the case of Lord Strangford, where his pointed affirmation has been as pointedly repelled. It is evident he would require probing. His defence of Moore is spirited and well argued, though it is evident he defends the statesman as much as the general. As a *Liberal* and a military man, Napier finds it difficult to steer his course. The former character calls on him to plead for the insurgent Spaniards; the latter induces him to palliate the cruelties of the French. Good-even to him until next volume, which I shall long to see. This was a day of pleasure, and nothing else."

Next night Sir Walter rested at Carlisle. "A sad place," says the Diary, "in my domestic remembrances, since here I married my poor Charlotte. She is gone, and I am following—faster, perhaps, than I wot off. It is something to have lived and loved; and our poor children are so hopeful and affectionate, that it chastens the sadness attending the thoughts of our separation. . . . My books being finished, I lighted on an odd volume of the Gentleman's Magazine, a work in which, as in a pawnbroker's shop, much of real curiosity and value are stowed away amid the frippery and trumpery of those reverend old gentlewomen who were the regular correspondents of Mr. Urban."

His companion wrote thus a day or two afterwards to her sister*—

"Early in the morning before we started, papa took me with him to the Cathedral. This he had often done before; but he said he must stand once more on the spot where he married poor mamma. After that we went to the Castle, where a new showman went through the old trick of pointing out Fergus MacIvor's *very* dungeon. Peveril said 'Indeed? Are you quite sure, sir?' And on being told there could be no doubt, was troubled with a fit of coughing, which ended in a laugh. The man seemed exceedingly indignant: so when papa moved on, I whispered who it was. I wish you had seen the man's start, and how he stared and bowed as he parted from us; and then rammed his keys into his pocket, and went off at a hand-gallop to warn the rest of the garrison. But the carriage was ready, and we escaped a row."

They reached Abbotsford that night, and a day or two afterwards Edinburgh; where Sir Walter was greeted with the satisfactory intelligence, that his plans as to the "*opus magnum*" had been considered at a meeting of his trustees, and finally approved *in toto*. As the scheme inferred a large outlay on drawings and engravings, and otherwise, this decision had been looked for with much anxiety by him and Mr. Cadell. He says, "I trust it will answer; yet who can warrant the continuance of popularity? Old Nattali Corri, who entered into many projects, and could never set the sails of a windmill to catch the *aura popularis*, used to say he believed that, were he to turn baker, it would put bread out of fashion. I have had the better luck to dress my sails to every wind; and so blow on, good wind, and spin round, whirligig." The *Corri* here alluded to was an unfortunate adventurer, who, among many other wild schemes, tried to set up an Italian Opera at Edinburgh.

The Diary for the next month records the usual meeting at Blair-Adam—but nothing worth quoting, that was done or said, except, perhaps, these two scraps—

"*Salutation of two old Scottish Lairds*—'Ye'er maist obedient hummil servant, Tannachy-Tulloch,' 'Your nain man, Kilspindie.'

"*Hereditary descent in the Highlands.* A clergyman showed John Thomson the island of Inchmachome, on the Port of Monteith, and pointed out the boatman as a remarkable person, the representative of the hereditary gardeners of the Earls of Monteith, while these Earls existed. His son, a puggish boy, follows up the theme.—'Fayther, when Donald MacCorkindale dees will not the family be extinct?' *Father*—'No; I believe there is a man in Balquhidder who takes up the *succession*.'"

During the remainder of this year, as I already mentioned, Sir Walter never opened his "locked book." Whether in Edinburgh or the country, his life was such, that he describes himself, in several letters, as having become "a writing automaton." He had completed, by Christmas, the Second Series of Tales on Scottish History, and made considerable progress in another novel—Anne of Geierstein; he had also drawn up for the Quarterly Review his article on Mr. Morier's Hajji Baba in England; and that delightful one on Sir Humphry Davy's *Salmonia*—which, like those on Planting and Gardening, abounds in sweet episodes of personal reminiscence: And, whenever he had not proof-sheets to press him, his hours were bestowed on the *opus magnum*.

A few extracts from his correspondence may supply in part this blank in the Diary. Several of them touch on the affairs of Mr. Terry, whose *stamina*

* The first volume of Colonel Napier's work had recently been published.

* I copy from a letter which has no date, so that I cannot be quite sure of this being the halt at Carlisle it refers to. I once witnessed a scene almost exactly the same at Stirling Castle, where an old soldier called Sir Walter's attention to the "very dungeon" of Rhoderick Dhu.

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were not sufficient to resist the stroke of misfortune. He had a paralytic seizure, very shortly after the ruin of his theatre was made public. One, addressed to a dear and early friend, Sir Alexander Wood, was written on the death of his brother-in-law, Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo—the same modest, gentle, and high-spirited man with whose history Sir Walter's had (as the Diary of 1826 tells) been very remarkably intertwined.

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq. Regent's Park.

"Abbotsford, July 14, 1828.

"My dear L.,

"I wrote myself blind and sick last week about * * * † God forgive me for having thought it possible that a schoolmaster should be out and out a rational being. I have a letter from Terry—but written by his poor wife—his former one was sadly scrawled. I hope he may yet get better—but I suspect the shot has gone near the heart.

'O what a world of worlds were it,
Would sorrow, pain, and sickness spare it,
And aye a rowth roast-beef and claret;
Syne wha would starve?'

"If it be true that Longman and Co. have offered £1000 for a history of Ireland, Scotland must stand at fifty per cent discount, for they lately offered me £500 for one of the latter country, which of course I declined. I have also had Murray's request to do some biography for his new undertaking.‡ But I really can't think of any Life I could easily do, excepting Queen Mary's, and that I decidedly would not do, because my opinion, in point of fact, is contrary both to the popular feeling and to my own. I see, by the by, that your Life of Burns is going to press again, and therefore send you a few letters which may be of use to you. In one of them (to that singular old curmudgeon, Lady Winifred Constable) you will see he plays high Jacobite, and, on that account, it is curious; though I imagine his Jacobitism, like my own, belonged to the fancy rather than the reason. He was, however, a great Pittite down to a certain period. There were some passing stupid verses in the papers, attacking and defending his satire on a certain preacher, whom he termed 'an unco calf.' In one of them occurred these lines in vituperation of the adversary—

'A Whig, I guess. But Rab's a Tory,
An gies us mony a funny story.'

'This was in 1787.—Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Robert Cadell, Esq., Edinburgh.

"Abbotsford, 4th October, 1828.

"My dear Sir,

"We were equally gratified and surprised by the arrival of the superb time-piece, with which you have ornamented our halls. There are grand discussions where it is to be put, and we are only agreed upon one point, that it is one of the handsomest things of the kind we ever saw, and that we are under great obligations to the kind donor. On my part, I shall never look on it without recollecting that the employment of my time is a matter of consequence to you, as well as myself.§

"I send you two letters, of which copies will be requisite for the *magnum opus*. They must be copied separately. I wish you would learn from Mr. Walter Dickson, with my best respects, the maiden name of Mrs. Goldie, and the proper way in which she ought to be designated. Another point of information I wish to have is, concerning the establishment of the King's beadsmen or blue-gowns. Such should occur in any account of the Chapel-Royal, to which they were an appendage, but I have looked into Arnott and Maitland, without being able to find any thing. My friend, Dr. Lee, will know at once where this is to be sought for.

"Here is a question. Burns in his poetry repeatedly states the idea of his becoming a beggar—these passages I have. But there is a remarkable one in some of his *prose*, stating with much spirit the qualifications he possessed for the character. I have looked till I am sick, through all the letters of his which I have seen, and cannot find this. Do you know any amateur of the Ayrshire Bard who can point it out? It will save time, which is precious with me.'

"J. B. has given me such a dash of criticism, that I have laid by the Maid of the Mist for a few days, but I am working hard, meanwhile, at the illustrations, so no time is lost.—Yours very truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Mrs. Lockhart, Brighton.

"Abbotsford, 24th October, 1828.

"My dear Sophia,

"I write to you rather than to the poor Terrys, on the subject of their plans, which appear to me to require reconsideration, as I have not leisure so to modify my expressions as to avoid grating upon feelings which may be sore enough already. But if I advise I must be plain. The plan of a cottage in this neighbourhood is quite visionary. London or its vicinity is the best place for a limited income, because you can get every thing you want without taking a pennyweight more of it than you have occasion for. In the country (with us at least) if you want a basin of milk every day, you must keep a cow—if you want a bunch of straw, you must have a farm. But what is still worse, it seems to me that such a plan would remove Terry out of his natural sphere of action. It is no easy matter, at any rate, to retreat from the practice of an art to the investigation of its theory; but common sense says, that if there is one branch of literature which has a chance of success for our friend, it must be that relating to the drama. Dramatic works, whether designed for the stage or the closet,—dramatic biography (an article in which the public is always interested)—dramatic criticism—these can all be conducted with best advantage in London, or, rather, they can be conducted nowhere else. In coming down to Scotland, therefore, Terry would be leaving a position in which, should he prove able to exert himself and find the public favourable, he might possibly do as much for his family as he could by his profession. But then he will require to be in book-shops and publishing-houses, and living among those up to the current of public opinion. And although poor Terry's spirits might not at first be up to this exertion, he should remember that the power of doing things easily is only to be acquired by resolution and habit, and if he really could give heart and mind to literature in any considerable degree, I can't see how, amidst so many Bijoux, and Albums, and Souvenirs—not to mention daily papers, critics, censors, and so forth—I cannot see how he could fail to make £200 or £300 a year. In Edinburgh there is nothing of this kind going forwards, positively nothing. Since Constable's fall, all exertion is ended in the Gude Town in the publishing business, excepting what I may not long be able to carry on.

"We have had little Walter Terry with us. He is a nice boy. I have got him sent to the New Academy in Edinburgh, and hope he will do well. Indeed, I have good hopes as to them all, but the prospect of success must remain, first, with the restoration of Terry to the power of thought and labour, a matter which is in God's hand; and, secondly, on the choice he shall make of a new sphere of occupation. On these events no mortal can have influence, unless so far as Mrs. Terry may be able to exert over him that degree of power which mind certainly possesses over body.

"Our worthy old aunt, Lady Raeburn, is gone, and I am now the eldest living person of my father's family. My old friend, Sir William Forbes, is extremely ill, dying I fear, and the winter seems to approach with more than usual gloom. We are well here, however, and send love to Lockhart and the babies. I want to see L. much, and hope he may make a run down at Christmas.

"You will take notice, that all the advice I venture to offer to the Terrys is according as matters now stand.† Indeed, I think he is better now, than when struggling against a losing concern, turning worse every day. With health, I have little doubt he may do well yet, and without it what can any one do? Poor Rose, he too seems to be very badly, and so end, if I lose him, wit, talent, frolic beyond the bounds of sobriety, all united with an admirable heart and feelings.

"Besides all other objections to Terry's plan, the poor invalid would be most uncomfortable here. As my guest, it was another thing; but without power to entertain the better sort of folk, and liable from his profession to the prejudices of our middling people, without means too of moving about, he must, while we are not at Abbotsford, be an absolute hermit. Besides, health may be restored so as to let him act again—regimen and quiet

† These letters, chiefly addressed to Sir Walter's excellent friend, James Haywood Markland, Esq., (Editor of the Chester Mysteries,) were on a delicate subject connected with the incipient arrangements of King's College, London.

‡ Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street was at this time projecting his *Family Library*, one of the many imitations of Constable's last scheme.

§ The allusion is to a clock in the style of Louis Quatorze, now in the drawing-room at Abbotsford.

*, These queries all point to the annotation of *The Antiquary*.

† Mr. Terry died in London on the 22d June, 1829. His widow, to whom these memoirs have owed many of their materials, is now (1837,) married to Mr. Charles Richardson of Tulse Hill, the author of the well-known dictionary of the English Language, &c.

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living do much in such cases—and he should not rashly throw up professional connexions. If they be bent on settling in Scotland, a small house in Edinburgh would be much better than the idea of residing here.

"I have been delighted with your views of coming back to Chiefswood next summer—but had you not better defer that for another year? Here is plenty of room for you all—plenty of beef and mutton—plenty of books for L., and he should have the little parlour (the monkey-room, as Morritt has christened it) inviolate—and he and I move on easily without interrupting each other. Pray think of all this, and believe that, separated as I am so much from you both and the grandchildren, the more I can see of you all while I have eyes left to see you with, the greater will be my pleasure. I am turning a terrible fixture with rheumatism, and go about little but in the carriage, and round the doors. A change of market-days, but seams will slit, and elbows will out. My general health is excellent.—I am always, dearest Sophia, your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Sir Alexander Wood, &c. &c. &c., Colinton House, Edinburgh.

"Abbotsford, Oct. 28, 1828.

"My dear Sir Alexander,

"Your letter brought me the afflicting intelligence of the death of our early and beloved friend Sir William. I had little else to expect, from the state of health in which he was when I last saw him, but that circumstance does not diminish the pain with which I now reflect that I shall never see him more. He was a man who, from his habits, could not be intimately known to many, although every thing which he did partook of that high feeling and generosity which belongs perhaps to a better age than that we live in. In him I feel I have sustained a loss which no after years of my life can fill up to me. Our early friendship none knew better than you; and you also well know that if I look back to the gay and happy hours of youth, they must be filled with recollections of our departed friend. In the whole course of life our friendship has been uninterrupted as his kindness has been unwearied. Even the last time I saw him (so changed from what I knew him) he came to town when he was fitter to have kept his room, merely because he could be of service to some affairs of mine. It is most melancholy to reflect that the life of a man whose principles were so excellent, and his heart so affectionate, should have, in the midst of external prosperity, been darkened, and I fear, I may say, shortened, by domestic affliction. But 'those whom He loveth, he chasteneth;' and the over-seeing Providence, whose ways are as just and kind as they are inscrutable, has given us, in the fate of our dear friend, an example that we must look to a better world for the reward of sound religion, active patriotism, and extended benevolence. I need not write more to you on this subject; you must feel the loss more keenly than any one. But there is 'another and a better world,' in which, I trust in God, those who have loved each other in this transitory scene, may meet and recognise the friends of youth, and companions of more advanced years.

"I beg my kindest compliments and sincere expression of sympathy to Lady Wood, and to any of the sorrowing family who may be gratified by the interest of one of their father's oldest friends and most afflicted survivors.

"God bless you, my dear Wood! and I am sure you will believe me

Yours in sorrow as in gladness,

WALTER SCOTT."

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq. Brighton.

"October 30, 1828.

'Dear John,

"I have a sad affliction in the death of poor Sir William Forbes. You loved him well, I know, but it is impossible that you should enter into all my feelings on this occasion. My heart bleeds for his children. God help all!

"Your scruples about doing an epitome of the Life of Bony, for the Family Library that is to be, are a great deal over delicate. My book in nine thick volumes can never fill the place which our friend Murray wants you to fill, and which, if you don't, some one else will right soon. Moreover, you took much pains in helping me when I was beginning my task, which I afterwards greatly regretted that Constable had no means of remunerating, as no doubt he intended, when you were giving him so much good advice in laying down his grand plans about the Miscellany. By all means do what the Emperor asks. He is what Emperor Nap. was not, much a gentleman, and, knowing our footing in all things, would not have proposed any thing that ought to have excited scruples on your side. Alas, poor Crafty! Do you remember his exultation when my Bony affair was first proposed? Good God, I see him as he then was at this moment—how he swelled and rolled and reddened, and outblarneyed all blarney! Well, so be it. I hope

'After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.'*

But he has cost me many a toilsome dreary day, and drearier night, and will cost me more yet.

"I am getting very unlocomotive—something like an old cabinet that looks well enough in its own corner, but will scarce bear wheeling about even to be dusted. But my work has been advancing gaily, or at least rapidly nevertheless, all this harvest. Master Litlejohn will soon have three more tomes in his hand, and the Swiss story too will be ready early in the year. I shall send you Vol. I. with wee Johnnie's affair. Fat James, as usual, has bored and bothered me with his criticisms, many of which, however, may have turned to good. At first my not having been in Switzerland was a devil of a poser for him—but had I not the honour of an intimate personal acquaintance with every pass in the Highlands; and if that were not enough, had I not seen pictures and prints *galore*? I told him I supposed he was becoming a geologist, and afraid of my misrepresenting the *strata* of some rock on which I had to perch my Maid of the Mist, but that he should be too good a Christian to join those humbugging sages, confound them, who are all tarred with the same stick as Mr. Whiston—

'Who proved as sure as God's in Gloster,
That Moses was a grand impostor;'†

and that at any rate I had no mind to rival the accuracy of the traveller, I forget who, that begins his chapter on Athens with a disquisition on the *formation* of the Acropolis Rock. Mademoiselle de Geierstein, is now, however, in a fair way—I mean of being married and a' the lave o't, and I of having her ladyship off my hands. I have also twined off a world of not bad balsam in the way of notes, &c., for my Magnum, which if we could but manage the artists decently, might soon be afloat, and will, I do think, do wonders for my extrication. I have no other news to trouble you with. It is possible the Quarterly may be quite right to take the Anti-Catholic line so strongly; but I greatly doubt the prudence of the thing, for I am convinced the question must and will be carried very soon, whoever may or may not be Minister; and as to the Duke of Wellington, my faith is constant, that there is no other man living who can work out the salvation of this country. I take some credit to myself for having foreseen his greatness, before many would believe him to be any thing out of the ordinary line of clever officers. He is such a man as Europe has not seen since Julius Cæsar; and if Spain had had the brains to make him king, that country might have been one of the first in the world before his death. Ever affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

Of the same date was the following letter, addressed to the Editor of a work, entitled, "The Courser's Manual." He had asked Sir Walter for a contribution; and received therewith the ancient Scottish ditty of "*Auld Heck:*"—

"Dear Sir,

"I have loved the sport of coursing so well, and pursued it so keenly for several years, that I would with pleasure have done any thing in my power to add to your collection on the subject; but I have long laid aside the amusement, and still longer renounced the poetical pen, which ought to have celebrated it; and I could only send you the laments of an old man, and the enumeration of the number of horses and dogs which have been long laid under the sod. I cannot, indeed, complain with the old huntsman, that—

'——No one now,
Dwells in the hall of Ivor,
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead,
And I the sole survivor;'‡

but I have exchanged my whip for a walking-stick, my smart hack has dwindled into a Zetland shelty, and my two brace of greyhounds into a pair of terriers. Instead of entering on such melancholy topics, I judge it better to send you an Elegy on 'Bonny Heck,' an old Scottish poem, of very considerable merit in the eyes of those who understand the dialect.

"The Elegy itself turns upon a circumstance which, when I kept greyhounds, I felt a considerable alloy to the sport; I mean, the necessity of despatching the instruments and partakers of our amusement, when they begin to make up, by cunning, for the deficiency of youthful vigour. A greyhound is often termed an inferior

* Macbeth. † Swift. ‡ Wordsworth.

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species of the canine race, in point of sagacity, and in the eyes of an accomplished sportsman it is desirable they should be so, since they are valued for their spirit, not their address. Accordingly, they are seldom admitted to the rank of personal favourites. I have had such greyhounds, however, and they possessed as large a share of intelligence, attachment, and sagacity, as any other species of dog that I ever saw. In such cases, it becomes difficult or impossible to execute the doom upon the antiquated greyhound, so coolly recommended by Dame Juliana Berners:—

> 'And when he comes to that yere,
> Have him to the tannere,
> For the best whelp ever bitch had
> At nine years is full bad.'

Modern sportsmen anticipate the doom by three years at least.

"I cannot help adding to the 'Last Words of Bonny Heck,' a sporting anecdote, said to have happened in Fife, and not far from the residence of that famous greyhound, which may serve to show, in what regard the rules of fair play between hound and hare are held by Scottish sportsmen. There was a coursing club, once upon a time, which met at Balchristy, in the Province, or as it is popularly called, the Kingdom of Fife. The members were elderly social men, whom a very moderate allowance of sport served as an introduction to a hearty dinner and jolly evening. Now, there had her seat on the ground where they usually met, a certain large stout hare, who seemed made on purpose to entertain these moderate sportsmen. She usually gave the amusement of three or four turns, as soon as she was put up,—a sure sign of a strong hare, when practised by any beyond the age of a leveret,—then stretched out in great style, and after affording the gentlemen an easy canter of a mile or two, threw out the dogs, by passing through a particular gap in an enclosure. This sport the same hare gave to the same party for one or two seasons, and it was just enough to afford the worthy members of the club a sufficient reason to be alleged to their wives, or others whom it may concern, for passing the day in the public house. At length, a fellow who attended the hunt nefariously thrust his plaid or great coat, into the gap I mentioned, and poor puss, her retreat being thus cut off, was, in the language of the dying Desdemona, 'basely—basely murdered.' The sport of the Balchristy club seemed to end with this famous hare. They either found no hares, or such as afforded only a halloo and a squeak, or such, finally, as gave them farther runs than they had pleasure of following. The spirit of the meeting died away, and at length it was altogether given up.

"The publican was, of course, the party most especially affected by the discontinuance of the club, and regarded, it may be supposed, with no complacency, the person who had prevented the hare from escaping, and even his memory. One day a gentleman asked him what was become of such a one, naming the obnoxious individual. 'He is dead, sir,' answered mine host, with an angry scowl, 'and his soul kens this day whether the hare of Balchristy got fair play or not.'

WALTER SCOTT."

Resuming his journal at the close of the year, he says, "Having omitted to carry on my Diary for two or three days, I lost heart to make it up, and left it unfilled for many a month and day. During this period nothing has happened worth particular notice:—the same occupations,—the same amusements,—the same occasional alternations of spirits, gay or depressed,—the same absence, for the most part, of all sensible or rational cause for the one or the other. I half grieve to take up my pen, and doubt if it is worth my while to record such an infinite quantity of nothing.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

VISIT TO CLYDESDALE—JOHN GREENSHIELDS, SCULPTOR—LETTER TO LORD ELGIN—THE WESTPORT MURDERS—EXECUTION OF BURKE—LETTER TO MISS EDGEWORTH—BALLANTYNE'S HYPOCHONDRIA—ROMAN CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION CARRIED—EDINBURGH PETITION, &c.—DEATHS OF LORD BUCHAN, MR. TERRY, AND MR. SHORTREED—REV. EDWARD IRVING—ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN PUBLISHED—ISSUE OF THE "OPUS MAGNUM" BEGUN—ITS SUCCESS—NERVOUS ATTACK—HÆMORRHAGES—REVIEWALS ON ANCIENT SCOTTISH HISTORY, AND PITCAIRN'S TRIALS—THIRD SERIES OF TALES OF A GRANDFATHER, AND FIRST VOLUME OF THE SCOTTISH HISTORY IN LARDNER'S CYCLOPÆDIA PUBLISHED—DEATH AND EPITAPH OF THOMAS PURDIE.—1829.

SIR WALTER having expressed a wish to consult me about some of his affairs, I went down to Abbotsford at Christmas, and found him apparently well in health (except that he suffered from rheumatism,) and enjoying the society as usual of the Fergusons, with the welcome addition of Mr. Morritt, and Sir James Stuart of Allanbank—a gentleman whose masterly pencil had often been employed on subjects from his poetry and novels, and whose conversation on art (like that of Sir George Beaumont and Mr. Scrope,) being devoid of professional pedantries and jealousies, was always particularly delightful to him. One snowy morning, he gave us sheets of Anne of Geierstein, extending to, I think, about a volume and a half; and we read them together in the library, while he worked in the adjoining room, and occasionally dropped in upon us to hear how we were pleased. All were highly gratified with those vivid and picturesque pages, and both Morritt and Stuart, being familiar with the scenery of Switzerland, could not sufficiently express their astonishment at the felicity with which he had divined its peculiar character, and outdone, by the force of imagination, all the efforts of a thousand actual tourists. Such approbation was of course very acceptable. I had seldom seen him more gently and tranquilly happy.

Among other topics connected with his favourite studies, Sir James Stuart had much to say on the merits and prospects of a remarkable man (well known to myself,) who had recently occupied general attention in the North. I allude to the late John Greenshields, a stonemason, who at the age of twenty-eight began to attempt the art of sculpture, and after a few years of solitary devotion to this new pursuit, had produced a statue of the Duke of York, which formed at this time a popular exhibition in Edinburgh. Greenshields was the son of a small farmer, who managed also a ferry-boat, on my elder brother's estate in Lanarkshire; and I could increase the interest with which both Sir James and Sir Walter had examined the statue, by bearing testimony to the purity and modesty of his character and manners. Another eminent lover of art, who had been especially gratified by Greenshields' work, was the Earl of Elgin. Just at this time, as it happened, the sculptor had been invited to spend a day or two at his Lordship's seat in Fife; but learning, through a letter of Sir James Stuart's, that Sir Walter was about to visit Clydesdale, Greenshields would not lose the chance of being presented to him on his native spot, and left Broomhall without having finished the inspection of Lord Elgin's marbles. His Lordship addressed a long and interesting letter to Sir Walter, in which he mentioned this circumstance, and besought him, after having talked with the aspirant, and ascertained his own private views and feelings, to communicate his opinion as to the course which might most advantageously be pursued for the encouragement and developement of his abilities.

Sir Walter went, in the middle of January, to Milton-Lockhart; there saw the sculptor in the paternal cottage, and was delighted with him and some of the works he had on hand—particularly a statue of George IV. Greenshields then walked with us for several hours by the river side, and among the woods. His conversation was easy and manly, and many sagacious remarks on life, as well as art, lost nothing to the poet's ear by being delivered in an accent almost as broad and unsophisticated as Tom Purdie's. John had a keen sense of humour, and his enjoyment of Sir Walter's lectures on planting, and jokes on every thing, was rich. He had exactly that way of drawing his lips into a grim involuntary whistle, when a sly thing occurred, which the author of Rob Roy assigns to Andrew Fairservice. After he left us, Scott said, "There is

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much about that man that reminds me of Burns." On reaching Edinburgh he wrote as follows:—

To the Right Honourable the Earl of Elgin, &c. &c., Broomhall, Fyfe.

"Edinburgh, 20th January, 1829.

"My dear Lord,

"I wish I were able to pay in better value the debt which I have contracted with your Lordship, by being the unconscious means of depriving you of Mr. Greenshields sooner than had been meant. It is a complicated obligation, since I owe a much greater debt to Greenshields for depriving him of an invaluable opportunity of receiving the advice, and profiting by the opinions of one whose taste for the arts is strong by nature, and has been so highly cultivated. If it were not that he may again have an opportunity to make up for that which he has lost, I would call the loss irreparable.

"My own acquaintance with art is so very small, that I almost hesitate to obey your Lordship in giving an opinion. But I think I never saw a more successful exertion of a young artist than the King's statue, which, though the sculptor had only an indifferent print to work by, seems to me a very happy likeness. The position (as if in act of receiving some person whom his majesty delighted to honour) has equal ease and felicity, and conveys an idea of grace and courtesy, and even kindness, mixed with dignity, which, as he never saw the original, I was surprised to find mingled in such judicious proportions. The difficulties of a modern military or court dress are manfully combated; and I think the whole thing purely conceived. In a word, it is a work of great promise.

"I may speak with more confidence of the artist than of the figure. Mr. Greenshields seems to me to be one of those remarkable men who must be distinguished in one way or other. He showed, during my conversation with him, sound sense on all subjects, and considerable information on such as occupied his mind. His habits, I understand, are perfectly steady and regular. His manners are modest and plain, without being clownish or rude, and he has all the good-breeding which nature can teach. Above all, I had occasion to remark that he had a generous and manly disposition—above feeling little slights, or acts of illiberality. Having to mention some very reasonable request of his which had been refused by an individual, he immediately, as if to obliterate the unfavourable impression, hastened to mention several previous instances of kindness which the same individual had shown to him. His mind seems to be too much bent upon fame to have room for love of money, and his passion for the arts seems to be unfeignedly sincere.

"The important question of how he is to direct his efforts, must depend on the advice of his friends, and I know no one so capable of directing him as your Lordship. At the same time, I obey your commands, by throwing together in haste the observations which follow.

"Like all heaven-born geniuses, he is ignorant of the rules which have been adopted by artists before him, and has never seen the *chefs-d'œuvre* of classical time. Such men, having done so much without education, are sometimes apt either to despise it, or to feel so much mortification at seeing how far short their efforts fall of excellence, that they resign their art in despair. I do think and hope, however, that the sanguine and the modest are so well mixed in this man's temper, that he will study the best models with the hope of improvement, and will be bold, as Spencer says, without being too bold. But opportunity of such study is wanting, and that can only be had in London. To London, therefore, he should be sent, if possible. In addition to the above, I must remark, that Mr. G. is not master of the art of tempering his clay, and other mechanical matters relating to his profession. These he should apply to without delay, and it would probably be best, having little time to lose, that he should for a while lay the chisel aside, and employ himself in making models almost exclusively. The transference of the figure from the clay to the marble is, I am informed by Chantrey, a mere mechanical art, excepting that some finishing touches are required. Now it follows that Greenshields may model, I dare say, six figures while he could only cut one in stone, and in the former practice must make a proportional progress in the principles of his art. The knowledge of his art is only to be gained in the studio of some sculptor of eminence. The task which Mr. G. is full of at present seems to be chosen on a false principle, chiefly adopted from a want of acquaintance with the genuine and proper object of art. The public of Edinburgh have been deservedly amused and delighted with two figures in the character of Tam O'Shanter and his drunken companion Souter Johnny. The figures were much and justly applauded, and the exhibition being of a kind adapted to every taste, is daily filled. I rather think it is the success of this piece by a man much in his own circumstances, which has inclined Mr. Greenshields to propose cutting a groupe of grotesque figures from the Beggars' Cantata of the same poet. Now, in the first place, I suspect six figures will form too many for a sculptor to group to advantage. But besides, I deprecate the attempt at such a subject. I do not consider caricature as a proper style for sculpture at all. We have Pan and his Satyrs in ancient sculpture, but the place of these characters in the classic mythology gives them a certain degree of dignity. Besides this, "the gambol has been shown." Mr. Thom has produced a group of this particular kind, and instead of comparing what Greenshields might do in this way with higher models, the public would certainly regard him as the rival of Mr. Thom, and give Mr. Thom the preference, on the same principle that the Spaniard says when one man walks first, all the rest must be his followers. At the same time I highly approved of one figure in the group, I mean that of Burns himself. Burns (taking his more contemplative moments) would indeed be a noble study, and I am convinced Mr. G. would do it nobly—as, for example, when Coila describes him as gazing on a snow-storm,—

> 'I saw grim Nature's visage hoar,
> Strike thy young eye.'

I suppose it possible to represent rocks with icicles in sculpture.

"Upon the moment I did not like to mention to Mr. G. my objections against a scheme which was obviously a favourite one, but I felt as I did when my poor friend John Kemble threatened to play Falstaff. In short, the perdurable character of sculpture, the grimly and stern severity of its productions, their size too, and their consequence, confine the art to what is either dignified and noble, or beautiful and graceful: it is, I think, inapplicable to situations of broad humour. A painting of Teniers is very well—it is of a moderate size, and only looked at when we choose; but a group of his drunken boors dancing in stone, as large as life, to a grinning fiddler at the bottom of a drawing-room would, I think, be soon found intolerable bad company.

"I think, therefore, since Mr. Greenshields has a decided call to the higher and nobler department of his art, he should not be desirous of procuring immediate attention by attempting a less legitimate object. I desired Mr. Lockhart of Milton to state to Mr. G. what I felt on the above subject, and I repeat it to you, that, if I am so fortunate as to agree in opinion with your Lordship, you may exert your powerful influence on the occasion.

"I have only to add that I am quite willing to contribute my mite to put Mr. Greenshields in the way of the best instruction, which seems to me the best thing which can be done for him. I think your Lordship will hardly claim another epistolary debt from me, since I have given it like a tether, which, Heaven knows, is no usual error of mine. I am always, with respect, my dear Lord, your Lordship's most faithful and obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—I ought to mention, that I saw a good deal of Mr. Greenshields, for he walked with us, while we went over the grounds at Milton to look out a situation for a new house."

Mr. Greenshields saw Sir Walter again in Clydesdale in 1831, and profited so well by these scanty opportunities, as to produce a statute of the poet, in a sitting posture, which, all the circumstances considered, must be allowed to be a very wonderful performance.* He subsequently executed various other works, each surpassing the promise of the other; but I fear his enthusiastic zeal had led him to unwise exertions. His health gave way, and he died in April 1835, at the early age of forty, in the humble cottage where he was born. Celebrity had in no degree changed his manners or his virtues. The most flattering compliment he ever received was a message from Sir Francis Chantrey, inviting him to come to London, and offering to take him into his house, and give him all the benefits of his advice, instruction, and example. This kindness filled his eyes with tears—but the hand of fate was already upon him.

Scott's Diary for the day on which he wrote to Lord Elgin says:—"We strolled about Milton on as fine a day as could consist with snow on the ground, in company with John Greenshields, the new sculptor, a sensible strong-minded man. The

* This statue is now in the possession of Sir Walter's publisher, Mr. Cadell, 31, St. Andrew's Square, Edinburgh.

situation is eminently beautiful; a fine promontory round which the Clyde makes a magnificent bend. We fixed on a situation for William's new house where the sitting rooms will command the upper valley; and, with an ornamental garden, I think it may be made the prettiest place in Scotland. Next day, on our way to Edinburgh, we stopped at Allanton to see a tree transplanted, which was performed with great ease. Sir Henry Stewart is lifted beyond the solid earth by the effect of his book's success;—but the book well deserves it.* He is in practice particularly anxious to keep the roots of trees near the surface, and only covers them with about a foot of earth: *Nota.*—Lime rubbish dug in among the roots of ivy encourages it much.—The operation delayed us three hours, so it was seven before we reached our dinner and a good fire in Shandwick Place, and we were well-nigh frozen to death. During the excursion I walked very ill—with more pain in fact than I ever remember to have felt—and, even leaning on John Lockhart, could hardly get on.—Well, the day of return to Edinburgh is come. I don't know why, but I am more happy at the change than usual. I am not working hard, and it is what I ought to do and must do. Every hour of laziness cries fie upon me. But there is a perplexing sinking of the heart which one cannot always overcome. At such times I have wished myself a clerk, quill-driving for two-pence per page. You have at least application, and that is all that is necessary, whereas, unless your lively faculties are awake and propitious, your application will do you as little good as if you strained your sinews to lift Arthur's Seat."

On the 23d he says:—"The Solicitor† came to dine with me—we drank a bottle of Champagne, and two bottles of claret, which, in former days, I should have thought a very sober allowance, since Lockhart included, there were three persons to drink it. But I felt I had drunk too much, and was uncomfortable. The young men stood it like young men. Skene and his wife and daughter looked in in the evening. I suppose I am turning to my second childhood, for not only am I filled drunk, or made stupid at least, with one bottle of wine, but I am disabled from writing by chilblains on my fingers—a most babyish complaint."

At this time the chief topic of discourse in Edinburgh was the atrocious series of murders perpetrated by a gang of Irish desperadoes, Burke, Hare, &c., in a house or cellar of the West Port, to which they seduced poor old wayfaring people, beggar women, idiots, and so forth, and then filled them drunk, and smothered or strangled them, for the mere purpose of having bodies to sell to the anatomists. Sir Walter writes on the 28th:—"Burke, the murderer, hanged this morning. The mob, which was immense, demanded Knox and Hare, but though greedy for more victims, received with shouts the solitary wretch who found his way to the gallows out of five or six who seem not less guilty than he. But the story begins to be stale, insomuch that I believe a doggrel ballad upon it would be popular, how brutal soever the wit. This is the progress of human passion. We ejaculate, exclaim, hold up to heaven our hand, like the rustic Phœbe—next morning the mood changes, and we dance a jig to the tune which moved us to tears."

A few days later, he discusses the West Port tragedy in this striking letter. It was written in answer to one announcing Miss Fanny Edgeworth's marriage with Mr. Lestock Wilson:—

To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown.

"Edinburgh, Feb. 4, 1829.

"My dear Miss Edgeworth,

"I have had your letter several days, and only answer just now, that, you may believe, from want of interest in the contents, but from the odd circumstance of being so much afflicted with chilblains in the fingers, that my pen scrambles every way but the right one. Assuredly I should receive the character of the most crabbed fellow from those modern sages who judge of a man from his handwriting. But as an old man becomes a child, I must expect, I suppose, measles and small-pox. I only wish I could get a fresh set of teeth. To tell you the truth, I feel the advance of age more than I like, though my general health is excellent; but I am not able to walk as I did, and I fear I could not now visit St. Kevin's Bed. This is a great affliction to one who has been so active as I have been, in spite of all disadvantages. I must now have a friendly arm, instead of relying on my own exertions; and it is sad to think I shall be worse before I am better. However, the mild weather may help me in some degree, and the worst is a quiet pony, (I used to detest a quiet pony,) or perhaps a garden-chair. All this does not prevent my sincere sympathy in the increase of happiness, which I hope Miss Fanny's marriage will afford to herself, and you, and all who love her. I have not had the same opportunity to know her merits as those of my friends Mrs. Butler and Mrs. Fox; but I saw enough of her (being your sister) when at Dublin, to feel most sincerely interested in a young person whose exterior is so amiable. In Mr. Wilson you describe the national character of John Bull, who is not the worst of the three nations, though he has not the quick feeling and rich humour of your countrymen, nor the shrewd sagacity, or the romantic spirit of thinking and adventuring which the Scotch often conceal under their apparent coldness, and which you have so well painted in the M'Leod of your Ennui. Depend upon it, I shall find Russell Square when I go to London, were I to have a voyage of discovery to make it out; and it will be Mr. Wilson's fault if we do not make an intimate acquaintance.

"I had the pleasure of receiving, last autumn, your American friend Miss Douglas, who seems a most ingenious person; and I hope I succeeded in making her happy during her short visit at Abbotsford; for I was compelled to leave her to pay suit and service at the Circuit. The mention of the Circuit brings me to the horrors which you have so well described, and which resemble nothing so much as a wild dream. Certainly I thought, like you, that the public alarm was but an exaggeration of vulgar rumour; but the tragedy is too true, and I look in vain for a remedy of the evils, in which it is easy to see this black and unnatural business has found its origin. The principal source certainly lies in the feelings of attachment, which the Scotch have for their deceased friends. They are curious in the choice of their sepulchre, and a common shepherd is often, at whatever ruinous expense to his family, transported many miles to some favourite place of burial which has been occupied by his fathers. It follows, of course, that any interference with these remains is considered with most utter horror and indignation. To such of their superiors as they love from clanship or habits of dependance, they attach the same feeling. I experienced it when I had a great domestic loss; for I learned afterwards that the cemetery was guarded, out of good will, by the servants and dependants who had been attached to her during life; and were I to be laid beside my lost companion just now, I have no doubt it would be long before my humble friends would discontinue the same watch over my remains, and that it would incur mortal risk to approach them with the purpose of violation. This is a kind and virtuous principle, in which every one so far partakes, that, although an unprejudiced person would have no objection to the idea of his own remains undergoing dissection, if their being exposed to scientific research could be of the least service to humanity, yet we all shudder at the motion of any who had been dear to us, especially a wife or sister, being subjected to a scalpel among a gazing and unfeeling crowd of students. One would fight and die to prevent it. This current of feeling is encouraged by the law which, as distinguishing murderers and other atrocious criminals, orders that their bodies shall be given for public dissection. This makes it almost impossible to consign the bodies of those who die in the public hospitals to the same fate; for it would be inflicting on poverty the penalty which, wisely or unwisely, the law of the country has denounced against guilt of the highest degree; and it would assuredly deprive all who have a remaining spark of feeling or shame, of the benefit of those consolations of charity of which they are the best objects. If the prejudice be not very liberal, it is surely natural, and so deeply seated, that many of the best feelings must be destroyed ere it can be eradicated. What then remains? The only chance I see is to permit importation from other countries. If a subject can be had in Paris for ten or twenty francs, it will surely pay the importer who brings it to Scotland. Something must be done, for there is an end of the *Cantabit vacuus*,* the last preco-

* See Sir Walter's article on Ornamental Gardening.—*Miscellaneous Prose Works.*

† John Hope, Esq., Solicitor-General—now Dean of the Faculty of Advocates.

* Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator.—*Juvenal.*

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gative of beggary, which entitled him to laugh at the risk of robbery. The veriest wretch in the highway may be better booty than a person of consideration, since the last may have but a few shillings in his pocket, and the beggar, being once dead, is worth ten pounds to his murderer.

"The great number of the lower Irish which have come over here since the peace, is, like all important occurrences, attended with its own share of good and evil. It must relieve Ireland in part of the excess of population, which is one of its greatest evils, and it accommodates Scotland with a race of hardy and indefatigable labourers, without which it would be impossible to carry on the very expensive improvements which have been executed. Our canals, our rail-roads, and our various public works are all wrought by Irish. I have often employed them myself, at burning clay, and similar operations, and have found them as labourers quiet and tractable, light-spirited, too, and happy to a degree beyond belief, and in no degree quarrelsome, keep whiskey from them and them from whiskey. But most unhappily for all parties they work at far too low a rate; at a rate, in short, which can but just procure salt and potatoes; they become reckless, of course, of all the comforts and decencies of life, which they have no means of procuring. Extreme poverty brings ignorance and vice, and these are the mothers of crime. If Ireland were to submit to some kind of poor-rate—I do not mean that of England—but something that should secure to the indigent their natural share of the fruits of the earth, and enable them at least to feed while others are feasting—it would, I cannot doubt, raise the character of the lower orders, and deprive them of that recklessness of futurity which leads them to think only of the present. Indeed, where intoxication of the lower ranks is mentioned as a vice, we must allow the temptation is well-nigh inevitable; meat, clothes, fire, all that men can and do want are supplied by a drop of whiskey, and no one should be surprised that the relief (too often the only one within the wretches' power) is eagerly grasped at.

"We pay back, I suspect, the inconveniences we receive from the character of our Irish importation, by sending you a set of half-educated, cold-hearted Scotchmen to be agents and middle-men. Among them, too, there are good and excellent characters, yet I can conceive they often mislead their employers. I am no great believer in the extreme degree of improvement to be derived from the advancement of science; for every study of that nature tends, when pushed to a certain extent, to harden the heart, and render the philosopher reckless of everything, save the object of his own pursuit; all equilibrium in the character is destroyed, and the visual force of the understanding is perverted by being fixed on one object exclusively. Thus we see theological sects (although inculcating the moral doctrines) are eternally placing man's zeal in opposition to them; and even in the practice of the bar, it is astonishing how we become callous to right and wrong, when the question is to gain or lose a cause. I have myself often wondered how I became so indifferent to the horrors of a criminal trial, if it involved a point of law. In like manner, the pursuit of physiology inflicts tortures on the lower animals of creation, and at length comes to rub shoulders against the West Port. The state of high civilization to which we have arrived, is perhaps scarcely a national blessing, since, while the *few* are improved to the highest point, the *many* are in proportion tantalized and degraded, and the same nation displays at the same time the very highest and the very lowest state in which the human race can exist in point of intellect. *Here* is a doctor who is able to take down the whole clock-work of the human frame, and may in time find some way of repairing and putting it together again; and *there* is Burke with the body of his murdered countrywoman on his back, and her blood on his hands, asking his price from the learned carcass-butcher. After all, the golden age was the period for general happiness, when the earth gave its stores without labour, and the people existed only in the numbers which it could easily subsist; but this was too good to last. As our numbers grew our wants multiplied, and here we are contending with increasing difficulties by the force of repeated inventions. Whether we shall at last eat each other, as of yore, or whether the earth will get a flap with a comet's tail first, who but the reverend Mr. Irving will venture to pronounce?

"Now here is a fearful long letter, and the next thing is to send it under Lord Francis Gower's omnipotent frank.* Anne sends best compliments; she says she had the honour to despatch her congratulations to you already. Walter and his little wife are at Nice; he is now major of his regiment, which is rapid advancement, and so has gone abroad to see the world. Lockhart has been here for a week or two, but is now gone for England. I suspect he is at this moment stopped by the snow-storm, and solacing himself with a cigar somewhere in Northumberland; that is all the news that can interest you. Dr. and Mrs. Brewster are rather getting over their heavy loss, but it is still too visible on their brows, and that broad river lying daily before them is a sad remembrancer. I saw a brother of yours on a visit at Allerley;† he dined with us one day, and promised to come and see us next summer, which I hope he will make good. My pen has been declaring itself independent this last half hour, which is the more unnatural, as it is engaged in writing to its former mistress. Ever yours affectionately.

W. Scott."

Sir Walter's operations appear to have been interrupted ever and anon, during January and February, 1829, in consequence of severe distress in the household of his printer: whose warm affections were not, as in his own case, subjected to the authority of a stoical will. On the 14th of February the Diary says: "The letters I received were numerous, and craved answers, yet the third volume is getting on *hooly and fairly*. I am twenty leaves before the printer, but Ballantyne's wife is ill, and it is his nature to indulge apprehensions of the worst, which incapacitates him for labour. I cannot help regarding this amiable weakness of the mind with something too nearly allied to contempt." On the 17th:—"I received the melancholy news that James Ballantyne has lost his wife. With his domestic habits the blow is irretrievable. What can he do, poor fellow, at the head of such a family of children? I should not be surprised if he were to give way to despair." James was not able to appear at his wife's funeral; and this Scott viewed with something more than pity. Next morning, however, says the Diary:—"Ballantyne came in, to my surprise, about twelve o'clock. He was very serious, and spoke as if he had some idea of sudden and speedy death. He mentioned that he had named Cadell, Cowan, young Hughes, and his brother to be his trustees with myself. He has settled to go to the country, poor fellow!"

Ballantyne retired accordingly to some sequestered place near Jedburgh, and there, indulging his grief in solitude, fell into a condition of religious melancholy, from which I think he never wholly recovered. Scott regarded this as weakness, and in part at least as wilful weakness, and addressed to him several letters of strong remonstrance and rebuke. I have read them, but do not possess them; nor perhaps would it have been proper for me to print them. In writing of the case to myself, he says, "I have a sore grievance in poor Ballantyne's increasing lowness of heart, and I fear he is sinking rapidly into the condition of a religious dreamer. His retirement from Edinburgh was the worst advised scheme in the world. I in vain reminded him that when our Saviour himself was to be led into temptation, the first thing the Devil thought of was to get him into the wilderness." Ballantyne, after a few weeks, resumed his place in the printing office; but he addicted himself more and more to what his friend considered as erroneous and extravagant notions of religious doctrine; and I regret to say that in this difference originated a certain alienation, not of affection, but of confidence, which was visible to every near observer of their subsequent intercourse. Towards the last, indeed, they saw but little of each other. I suppose, however, it is needless to add that down to the very last, Scott watched over Ballantyne's interests with undiminished attention.

I must give a few more extracts from the Diary, for the Spring Session, during which Anne of Geierstein was finished, and the Prospectus of the Opus Magnum issued.—Several entries refer to the final carrying of the Roman Catholic Question. When the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel announced their intention of conceding those claims, on which the reader has already seen Scott's opinion, there were meetings and petitions enough in Edinburgh as elsewhere; and though he felt consid-

* Lord F. G. was Secretary for Ireland, under the Duke of Wellington's Ministry.

† Allerley is the seat of Sir David Brewster, opposite Melrose. A fine boy, one of Sir David's sons, had been drowned a year before in the Tweed.

‡ Miss Edgeworth had given Sir Walter a bronze inkstand (said to have belonged to Ariosto), with appurtenances.

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erable repugnance to acting in any such matter with Whigs and Radicals, in opposition to a great section of the Tories, he ultimately resolved not to shrink from doing his part in support of the Duke's government on that critical experiment. He wrote, I believe, several articles in favour of the measure for the Weekly Journal; he spoke, though shortly, at the principal meeting, and proposed one of its resolutions; and when the consequent petition was read in the House of Commons, his name among the subscribers was received with such enthusiasm, that Sir Robert Peel thought fit to address to him a special and very cordial letter of thanks on that occasion.

DIARY, "*Feb.* 23.—Anne and I dined at Skene's, where we met Mr. and Mrs. George Forbes, Colonel and Mrs. Blair, George Bell, &c. The party was a pleasant one. Colonel Blair told us that at the commencement of the battle of Waterloo, there was some trouble to prevent the men from breaking their ranks. He expostulated with one man—'Why, my good fellow, you cannot propose to beat the French alone? You had better keep your ranks.' The man, who was one of the 71st, returned to his place, saying, 'I believe you are right, sir, but I am a man of a very *hot temper*.' There was much *bonhommie* in the reply.

"*February* 24.—Snowy, miserable morning. I corrected my proofs, and then went to breakfast with Mr. Drummond Hay, where we again met Colonel and Mrs. Blair, with Thomas Thompson. We looked over some most beautiful drawings which Mrs. Blair had made in different parts of India, exhibiting a species of architecture so gorgeous, and on a scale so extensive, as to put to shame the magnificence of Europe; and yet, in most cases, as little is known of the people who wrought these wonders as of the kings who built the Pyramids. Fame depends on literature, not on architecture. We are more eager to see a broken column of Cicero's villa, than all these mighty labours of barbaric power. Mrs. Blair is full of enthusiasm. She told me, that when she worked with her pencil she was glad to have some one to read to her as a sort of sedative, otherwise her excitement made her tremble, and burst out a-crying. I can understand this very well. On returning home, I wrought, but not much—rather dawdled and took to reading Chambers's Beauties of Scotland, which would be admirable if they were accurate. He is a clever young fellow, but hurts himself by too much haste. I am not making too much myself I know—and I know, too, it is time I were making it—unhappily there is such a thing as more haste and less speed. I can very seldom think to purpose by lying perfectly idle, but when I take an idle book, or a walk, my mind strays back to its task, out of contradiction as it were; the things I read become mingled with those I have been writing, and something is concocted. I cannot compare this process of the mind to any thing save that of a woman to whom the mechanical operation of spinning serves as a running bass to the songs she sings, or the course of ideas she pursues. The phrase *Hoc age*, so often quoted by my father, does not jump with my humour. I cannot nail my mind to one subject of contemplation, and it is by nourishing two trains of ideas that I can bring one into order.

"*February* 25.—Finished my proofs this morning; and read part of a curious work, called Memoirs of Vidocq; a fellow who was at the head of Buonaparte's police. It is a *picaresque* tale; in other words, a romance of roguery. The whole seems much exaggerated, and got up; but I suppose there is truth *au fond*. I came home about two o'clock, and wrought hard and fast till now—night. I cannot get myself to feel at all anxious about the Catholic question. I cannot see the use of fighting about the platter, when you have let them snatch the meat off it. I hold Popery to be such a mean and depraving superstition, that I am not sure I could have found myself liberal enough for voting the repeal of the penal laws as they existed before 1780. They must, and would, in course of time, have smothered Popery; and, I confess, I should have seen the old lady of Babylon's mouth stopped with pleasure. But now, that you have taken the plaster off her mouth, and given her free respiration, I cannot see the sense of keeping up the irritation about the claim to sit in Parliament. Unopposed, the Catholic superstition may sink into dust, with all its absurd ritual and solemnities. Still it is an awful risk. The world is, in fact, as silly as ever, and a good competence of nonsense will always find believers. Animal magnetism, phrenology, &c. &c., have all had their believers, and why not Popery? Ecod! if they should begin to make Smithfield broils, I do not know where many an honest Protestant could find courage enough to be carbonadoed? I should shrink from the thoughts of tar-barrels and gibbets, I am afraid, and make a very pusillanimous martyr. So I hope the Duke of Wellington will keep the horned beast well in hand, and not let her get her leg over the harrows.

"*March* 4.—At four o'clock arrives Mr. Cadell, with his horn charged with good news. The prospectus of the Magnum, although issued only a week, has produced such a demand among the trade, that he thinks he must add a large number of copies, that the present edition of 7000 may be increased to meet the demand; he talks of raising it to 10,000 or 12,000. If so, I shall have a powerful and constant income to bear on my unfortunate debts for several years to come, and may fairly hope to put every claim in a secure way of payment. Laidlaw dined with me, and, poor fellow, was as much elated with the news as I am, for it is not of a nature to be kept secret. I hope I shall have him once more at Kaeside to debate, as we used to do, on religion and politics.

"*March* 5.—I am admitted a member of the Maitland Club of Glasgow, a Society on the principle of the Roxburgh and Bannatyne. What a tail of the alphabet I should draw after me were I to sign with the indications of the different societies I belong to, beginning with President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and ending with umpire of the Six-feet-high Club.

"*March* 6.—Made some considerable additions to the Appendix to General Preface. I am in the sentiments towards the public that the buffoon player expresses towards his patron—

> "Go tell my good Lord, said this modest young man,
> If he will but invite me to dinner,
> I'll be as diverting as ever I can—
> I will, on the faith of a sinner."

I will multiply the notes, therefore, when there is a chance of giving pleasure and variety. There is a stronger gleam of hope on my affairs than has yet touched on them; it is not steady or certain, but it is bright and conspicuous. Ten years may last with me, though I have but little chance of it.

"*March* 7.—Sent away proofs. This extrication of my affairs, though only a Pisgah prospect, occupies my mind more than is fitting; but without some such hopes I must have felt like one of the victims of the wretch Burke, struggling against a smothering weight on my bosom, till nature could endure it no longer.

"*March* 8.—Ballantyne, by a letter of this morning, totally condemns Anne of Geierstein. Third volume nearly finished—a pretty thing, truly, for I shall be expected to do all over again. Great dishonour in this, as Trinculo says, besides an infinite loss. Sent for Cadell to attend me to-morrow morning, that we may consult about this business. —Peel has made his motion on the Catholic question with a speech of three hours. It is almost a complete surrender to the Catholics, and so it should be, for half measures do but linger out the feud. This will, or rather ought to satisfy all men who sincerely love peace, and, therefore, all men of property. But will this satisfy Pat, who, with all his virtues, is certainly not the most sensible person in the world?

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Perhaps not; and if not, it is but fighting them at last. I smoked away, and thought of ticklish politics and bad novels.

"*March* 9.—Cadell came to breakfast.' We resolved in privy council to refer the question whether Anne of G——n be sea-worthy or not to further consideration, which, as the book cannot be published, at any rate, during the full rage of the Catholic question, may be easily managed. After breakfast I went to Sir William Arbuthnot's,* and met there a select party of Tories, to decide whether we should act with the Whigs, by adopting their petition in favour of the Catholics. I was not free from apprehension that the petition might be put into such language as I, at least, should be unwilling to homologate by my subscription. The Solicitor was voucher that they would keep the terms quite general; whereupon we subscribed the requisition for a meeting, with a slight alteration, affirming that it was our desire not to have intermeddled, had not the anti-Catholics pursued that course; and so the Whigs and we are embarked in the same boat.—*vogue la galère.*

"Went about one o'clock to the Castle, where we saw the auld murderess Mons Meg† brought up in solemn procession to re-occupy her ancient place on the Argyle battery. The day was cold, but serene, and I think the ladies must have been cold enough, not to mention the Celts, who turned out upon the occasion, under the leading of Cluny Macpherson, a fine spirited lad. Mons Meg is a monument of our pride and poverty. The size is enormous, but six smaller guns would have been made at the same expease, and done six times as much execution as she could have done. There was immense interest taken in the show by the people of the town, and the numbers who crowded the Castle-hill had a magnificent appearance. About thirty of our Celts attended in costume: and as there was a Highland regiment for duty, with dragoons and artillerymen, the whole made a splendid show. The style in which the last manned and wrought the windlass which raised Old Meg, weighing seven or eight tons, from her temporary carriage to that which has been her basis for many years, was singularly beautiful as a combined exhibition of skill and strength. My daughter had what might have proved a frightful accident. Some rockets were let off, one of which lighted upon her head, and set her bonnet on fire. She neither screamed nor ran, but quietly permitted Charles Sharpe to extinguish the fire, which he did with great coolness and dexterity. All who saw her, especially the friendly Celts, gave her merit for her steadiness, and said she came of good blood. My own courage was not tried, for being at some distance escorting the beautiful and lively Countess of Hopetoun, I did not hear of the accident till it was over.

"We lunched with the regiment (73d) now in the castle. The little entertainment gave me an opportunity of observing what I have often before remarked—the improvement in the character of the young and subaltern officers in the army, which in the course of a long and bloody war had been, in point of rank and manners, something deteriorated. The number of persons applying for commissions (3,000 being now on the lists) gives an opportunity of selection; and officers should certainly be *gentlemen*, with a complete opening to all who can rise by merit. The style in which duty and the knowledge of their profession are now enforced, prevents *faineants* from remaining long in the profession.

"In the evening I presided at the annual festival of the Celtic Club. I like this Society, and willingly give myself to be excited by the sight of handsome young men with plaids and claymores, and all the alertness and spirit of Highlanders in their native garb. There was the usual degree of excitation—excellent dancing, capital songs, a general inclination to please and to be pleased. A severe cold caught on the battlements of the Castle prevented me from playing first fiddle so well as on former occasions, but what I could do was received with the usual partiality of the Celts. I got home fatigued and *vino gravatus* about eleven o'clock. We had many guests, some of whom, English officers, seemed both amused and surprised at our wild ways, especially at the dancing without ladies, and the mode of drinking favourite toasts, by springing up with one foot on the bench and one on the table, and the peculiar shriek of applause, so unlike English cheering.

"*Abbotsford, March* 18.—I like the hermit life indifferent well, nor would, I sometimes think, break my heart, were I to be in that magic mountain where food was regularly supplied by ministering genii, and plenty of books were accessible without the least interruption of human society. But this is thinking like a fool. Solitude is only agreeable when the power of having society is removed to a short space, and can be commanded at pleasure. 'It is not good for man to be alone.'‡ It blunts our faculties and freezes our active virtues. And now, my watch pointing to noon, I think after four hours' work I may indulge myself with a walk. The dogs see me about to shut my desk, and intimate their happiness by caresses and whining. By your leave, Messrs. Genii of the Mountain, if I come to your retreat I'll bring my dogs with me.

"The day was showery, but not unpleasant—soft dropping rains, attended by a mild atmosphere, that spoke of flowers in their seasons, and a chirping of birds, that had a touch of spring in it. I had the patience to get fully wet, and the grace to be thankful for it.

"Come, a little flourish on the trumpet. Let us rouse the Genius of this same red mountain—so called, because it is all the year covered with roses. There can be no difficulty in finding it, for it lies towards the Caspian, and is quoted in the Persian Tales. Well, I open my ephemerides, form my scheme under the suitable planet, and the Genius obeys the invitation and appears. The Gnome is a misshapen dwarf, with a huge jolter-head like that of Boerhaave on the Bridge,† his limbs and body monstrously shrunk and disproportioned. 'Sir Dwarf,' said I, undauntedly, 'thy head is very large, and thy feet and limbs somewhat small in proportion.' 'I have crammed my head, even to the overflowing, with knowledge; and I have starved my limbs by disuse of exercise and denial of sustenance!' 'Can I acquire wisdom in thy solitary library?' 'Thou mayest!' 'On what condition?' 'Renounce all gross and fleshly pleasures, eat pulse and drink water, converse with none but the wise and learned. alive and dead.' 'Why, this were to die in the cause of wisdom!' 'If you desire to draw from our library only the advantage of seeming wise, you may have it consistent with all your favourite enjoyments.' 'How much sleep?' 'A Lapland night—eight months out of the twelve.' 'Enough for a dormouse, most generous Genius—a bottle of wine?' 'Two, if you please; but you must not seem to care for them—cigars in loads, whiskey in hushings—only they must be taken with an air of contempt, a *flocci-pauci-nihili-pili-fication* of all that can gratify the outward man.' 'I am about to ask you a serious question—when one has stuffed his stomach, drunk his bottle, and smoked his cigar, how is he to keep himself awake?' 'Either by cephalic snuff or castle-building.' 'Do you approve of castle-building as a frequent exercise?' *Genius*—'Life were not life without it—

> 'Give me the joy that sickens not the heart,
> Give me the wealth that has no wings to fly.'

* This gentleman was a favourite with Sir Walter—a special point of communion being the Antiquities of the British Drama. He was Provost of Edinburgh in 1816-17, and again in 1822, and the King gracefully surprised him by proposing his health, at the Banquet in the Parliament House, as "Sir William Arbuthnot, Baronet."

† See *ante*, p. 379.

‡ Genesis, chap. ii. v. 18.

† This head may still be seen over a laboratory at No. 100 of the South Bridge, Edinburgh.—N. B. There is a tradition that the venerable bust in question was once dislodged by "Colonel Grogg" and some of his companions, and waggishly planted in a very inappropriate position.

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Author.—'I reckon myself one of the best aerial architects now living, and *Nil me pœnitet.*' *Genius.*—'*Nec est cur te pœniteat.* Most of your novels had previously been subjects for airy castles.' *Author.*—'You have me—and moreover a man derives experience from such fanciful visions. There are few situations I have not in fancy figured, and there are few, of course, which I am not previously prepared to take some part in.' *Genius.*—'True, but I am afraid your having fancied yourself victorious in many a fight, would be of little use were you suddenly called to the field, and your personal infirmities and nervous agitations both rushing upon you and incapacitating you.' *Author.*—'My nervous agitations! down with them!—

'Down down to Limbo and the burning lake!
False fiend avoid!—
So there ends the tale, with a hoy, with a hoy,
So there ends the tale with a ho.
There's a moral—if you fail
To seize it by the tail,
Its import will exhale, you must know.'

"*March* 19.—The above was written yesterday before dinner, though appearances are to the contrary. I only meant that the studious solitude I have sometimes dreamed of, unless practised with rare stoicism, might perchance degenerate into secret indulgences of coarser appetites, which, when the cares and restraints of social life are removed, are apt to make us think, with Dr. Johnson, our dinner the most important event of the day. So much in the way of explanation, a humour which I love not. Go to. I fagged at my Review on Ancient Scottish History, both before and after breakfast. I walked from one o'clock till near three. I make it out rather better than of late I have been able to do in the streets of Edinburgh, where I am ashamed to walk so slow as would suit me. Indeed nothing but a certain suspicion, that once drawn up on the beach, I would soon break up, prevents my renouncing pedestrian exercises altogether, for it is positive suffering, and of an acute kind too.

"*May* 26.—Sent off ten pages of the Maid of the Mist this morning with a murrain!—But how to get my catastrophe packed into the compass allotted for it?

'It sticks like a pistol half out of its holster,
Or rather indeed like an obstinate bolster,
Which I think I have seen you attempting, my dear,
In vain to cram into a small pillow-beer.'

There is no help for it—I must make a *tour de force*, and annihilate both time and space.

"*March* 28.—In spite of the temptation of a fine morning, I toiled manfully at the Review till two o'clock, commencing at seven. I fear it will be uninteresting, but I like the muddling work of antiquities, and, besides, wish to record my sentiments with regard to the Gothic question. No one that has not laboured as I have done on imaginary topics can judge of the comfort afforded by walking on all fours, and being grave and dull. I dare say, when the clown of the pantomime escapes from his nightly task of vivacity, it is his especially to smoke a pipe and be prosy with some good-natured fellow, the dullest of his acquaintance. I have seen such a tendency in Sir Adam Ferguson, the gayest man I ever knew; and poor Tom Sheridan has complained to me on the fatigue of supporting the character of an agreeable companion.

"*April* 3.—Both Sir James Mackintosh and Lord Haddington have spoken very handsomely in Parliament of my accession to the Catholic petition, and I think it has done some good; yet I am not confident that the measure will disarm the Catholic spleen—nor am I entirely easy at finding myself allied to the Whigs even in the instance where I agree with them. This is witless prejudice, however.

"*April* 8.—We have the news of the Catholic question being carried in the House of Lords, by a majority of 105 upon the second reading. This is decisive, and the balsam of Fierabras must be swallowed.

"*April* 9.—I have bad news of James Ballantyne. Hypochondria, I am afraid, and religiously distressed in mind.

"*April* 18.—Corrected proofs. I find J. B. has not returned to his business, though I wrote to say how necessary it was. My pity begins to give way to anger. Must he sit there and squander his thoughts and senses upon dowdy metaphysics and abstruse theology, till he addles his brains entirely, and ruins his business?—I have written to him again, letter third, and, I am determined, last.

"*April* 20.—Lord Buchan is dead, a person whose immense vanity, bordering upon insanity, obscured, or rather eclipsed, very considerable talents. His imagination was so fertile, that he seemed really to believe the extraordinary fictions which he delighted in telling. His economy, most laudable in the early part of his life, when it enabled him, from a small income, to pay his father's debts, became a miserable habit, and led him to do mean things. He had a desire to be a great man and a Mœcenas—*a bon marché*. The two celebrated lawyers, his brothers, were not more gifted by nature than I think he was, but the restraints of a profession kept the eccentricity of the family in order. Henry Erskine was the best-natured man I ever knew, thoroughly a gentleman, and with but one fault. He could not say *no*, and thus sometimes misled those who trusted him. Tom Erskine was positively mad. I have heard him tell a cock-and-a-bull story of having seen the ghost of his father's servant, John Burnet, with as much gravity as if he believed every word he was saying. Both Henry and Thomas were saving men, yet both died very poor. The latter at one time possessed £200,000; the other had a considerable fortune. The Earl alone has died wealthy. It is saving, and not getting, that is the mother of riches. They all had wit. The Earl's was crack-brained, and sometimes caustic; Henry's was of the very kindest, best-humoured, and gayest sort that ever cheered society; that of Lord Erskine was moody and muddish. But I never saw him in his best days.

"*April* 25.—After writing a heap of letters, it was time to set out for Lord Buchan's funeral at Dryburgh Abbey. The letters were signed by Mr. David Erskine, his Lordship's natural son; and his nephew, the young Earl, was present; but neither of them took the head of the coffin. His Lordship's burial took place in a chapel amongst the ruins. His body was in the grave with its feet pointing westward. My cousin, Maxpopple,* was for taking notice of it, but I assured him that a man who had been wrong in the head all his life would scarce become right-headed after death. I felt something at parting with this old man, though but a trumpery body. He gave me the first approbation I ever obtained from a stranger. His caprice had led him to examine Dr. Adam's class when I, a boy of twelve years old, and then in disgrace for some aggravated case of negligence, was called up from a low bench, and recited my lesson with some spirit and appearance of feeling the poetry—(it was the apparition of Hector's ghost in the Æneid)—which called forth the noble Earl's applause. I was very proud of this, at the time. I was sad from another account—it was the first time I had been among those ruins since I left a very valued pledge there. My next visit may be involuntary. Even God's will be done—at least I have not the mortification of thinking what a deal of patronage and fuss Lord Buchan would bestow on my funeral.† Maxpopple dined and slept here with four of his family, much amused with what they heard and saw. By good fortune, a ventriloquist and parcel juggler came in, and we had him in the library after dinner. He was a half-starved, wretched-looking creature, who seemed to have eat more fire than bread. So I caused him to

* William Scott, Esq.—the present Laird of Raeburn—was commonly thus designated from a minor possession, during his father's life-time. Whatever, in things of this sort, used to be practised among the French noblesse might be traced, till very lately, in the customs of the Scottish provincial gentry.

† *See ante*, p. 314.

be well stuffed, and gave him a guinea—rather to his poverty than to his skill—and now to finish Anne of Geierstein."

Anne of Geierstein was finished before breakfast on the 29th of April; and his Diary mentions that immediately after breakfast he began his Compendium of Scottish History for Dr. Lardner's Cyclopædia. We have seen that when the Proprietors of that work, in July 1828, offered him £500 for an abstract of Scottish History in one volume, he declined the proposal. They subsequently offered £700, and this was accepted; but though he began the task under the impression that he should find it a heavy one, he soon warmed to the subject, and pursued it with cordial zeal and satisfaction. One volume, it by and by appeared, would never do—in his own phrase "he must have elbow room"—and I believe it was finally settled that he should have £1500 for the book in two volumes; of which the first was published before the end of this year.

Anne of Geierstein came out about the middle of May; and this, which may be almost called the last work of his imaginative genius, was received at least as well—(out of Scotland, that is)—as the Fair Maid of Perth had been, or indeed as any novel of his after the Crusaders. I partake very strongly, I am aware, in the feeling which most of my countrymen have little shame in avowing, that no novel of his, where neither scenery nor character is Scottish, belongs to the same pre-eminent class with those in which he paints and peoples his native landscape. I have confessed that I cannot rank even his best English romances with such creations as Waverley and Old Mortality; far less can I believe that posterity will attach similar value to this Maid of the Mist. Its pages, however, display in undiminished perfection all the skill and grace of the mere artist, with occasional outbreaks of the old poetic spirit, more than sufficient to remove the work to an immeasurable distance from any of its order produced in this country in our own age. Indeed, the various play of fancy in the combination of persons and events, and the airy liveliness of both imagery and diction, may well justify us in applying to the author what he beautifully says of his King René—

> "A mirthful man he was; the snows of age
> Fell, but they did not chill him. Gaiety,
> Even in life's closing, touch'd his teeming brain
> With such wild visions as the setting sun
> Raises in front of some hoar glacier,
> Painting the bleak ice with a thousand hues."

It is a common saying, that there is nothing so distinctive of *genius* as the retention, in advanced years, of the capacity to depict the feelings of youth with all their original glow and purity. But I apprehend this blessed distinction belongs to, and is the just reward of, virtuous genius only. In the case of extraordinary force of imagination, combined with the habitual indulgence of a selfish mood;—not combined, that is to say, with the genial temper of mind and thought which God and Nature design to be kept alive in man by those domestic charities, out of which the other social virtues so easily spring, and with which they find such endless links of interdependence;—in this unhappy case, which none who has studied the biography of genius can pronounce to be a rare one, the very power which heaven bestowed seems to become, as old age darkens, the sternest avenger of its own misapplication. The retrospect of life is converted by its energy into one wide blackness of desolate regret; and whether this breaks out in the shape of a rueful contemptuousness, or a sarcastic mockery of tone, the least drop of the poison is enough to paralyze all attempts at awakening sympathy by fanciful delineations of love and friendship. Perhaps Scott has nowhere painted such feelings more deliciously than in those very scenes of Anne of Geierstein, which offer every now and then, in some incidental circumstance or reflection, the best evidence that they are drawn by a gray-headed man. The whole of his own life was too present to his wonderful memory to permit of his brooding with exclusive partiality, whether painfully or pleasurably, on any one portion or phasis of it; and besides, he was always living over again in his children, young at heart whenever he looked on them, and the world that was opening on them and their friends. But above all he had a firm belief in the future re-union of those whom death has parted.

He lost two more of his old intimates about this time;—Mr. Terry in June, and Mr. Shortreed in the beginning of July. The Diary says:—"*July* 9.—Heard of the death of poor Bob Shortreed, the companion of many a long ride among the hills in quest of old ballads. He was a merry companion, a good singer and mimic, and full of Scottish drollery. In his company, and under his guidance, I was able to see much of rural society in the mountains, which I could not otherwise have attained, and which I have made my use of. He was in addition a man of worth and character. I always burdened his hospitality while at Jedburgh on the circuit, and have been useful to some of his family. Poor fellow! So glide our friends from us.* Many recollections die with him and with poor Terry."

His Diary has few more entries for this twelvemonth. Besides the volume of History for Dr. Lardner's collection, he had ready for publication by December the last of the *Scottish* Series of Tales of a Grandfather; and had made great progress in the prefaces and notes for Cadell's *Opus Magnum*. He had also overcome various difficulties which for a time interrupted the twin scheme of an illustrated edition of his Poems: and one of these in a manner so agreeable to him, and honourable to the other party, that I must make room for the two following letters:—

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq. Regent's Park.

"Shandwick Place, 4th June, 1829.

"My dear Lockhart,

"I have a commission for you to execute for me, which I shall deliver in a few words. I am now in possession of my own copyrights of every kind, excepting a few things in Longman's hands, and which I am offered on very fair terms—and a fourth share of Marmion, which is in the possession of our friend Murray. Now, I should consider it a great favour if Mr. Murray would part with it at what he may consider as a fair rate, and would be most happy to show my sense of obligation by assisting his views and speculations as far as lies in my power. I wish you could learn as soon as you can Mr. Murray's sentiments on this subject, as they would weigh with me in what I am about to arrange as to the collected edition. The Waverley Novels are doing very well indeed.

"I put you to a shilling's expense, as I wish a speedy answer to the above query. I am always, with love to Sophia, affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., Edinburgh.

"Albemarle Street, June 8, 1829.

"My dear Sir,

"Mr. Lockhart has this moment communicated your letter respecting my fourth share of the copyright of Marmion. I have already been applied to by Messrs. Constable, and by Messrs. Longman, to know what sum I would sell this share for—but so highly do I estimate the honour of being even in so small a degree the publisher of the author of the poem—that no pecuniary consideration whatever can induce me to part with it.

"But there is a consideration of another kind, which until now I was not aware of, which would make it painful to me if I were to retain it a moment longer. I mean the knowledge of its being required by the author, into whose hands it was spontaneously resigned in the same instant that I read his request.

"This share has been profitable to me fifty-fold beyond what either publisher or author could have anticipated, and, therefore, my returning it on such an occasion you will, I trust, do me the favour to consider in no other light than as a mere act of grateful acknowledgment for

* Some little time before his death, the worthy Sheriff-substitute of Jedburgh received a complete set of his friend's works, with this inscription:—"To Robert Shortreed, Esq., the friend of the author from youth to age, and his guide and companion upon many an expedition among the Border hills, in quest of the materials of legendary lore which have at length filled so many volumes, this collection of the results of their former rambles is presented by his sincere friend, *Walter Scott*."

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benefits already received by, my dear Sir, your obliged and faithful servant,

JOHN MURRAY."

The success of the collective novels was far beyond what either Sir Walter or Mr. Cadell had ventured to anticipate. Before the close of 1829 eight volumes had been issued; and the monthly sale had reached as high as 35,000. Should this go on, there was, indeed, every reason to hope that, coming in aid of undiminished industry in the preparation of new works, it would wipe off all his load of debt in the course of a very few years. And during the autumn (which I spent near him) it was most agreeable to observe the effects of the prosperous intelligence, which every succeeding month brought, upon his spirits.

This was the more needed, that at this time his eldest son, who had gone to the south of France on account of some unpleasant symptoms in his health, did not at first seem to profit rapidly by the change of climate. He feared that the young man was not quite so attentive to the advice of his physicians as he ought to have been; and in one of many letters on this subject, after mentioning some of Cadell's good news as to the great affair, he says —"I have wrought hard, and so far successfully. But I tell you plainly, my dear boy, that if you permit your health to decline from want of attention, I have not strength of mind enough to exert myself in these matters as I have hitherto been doing." Happily Major Scott was, ere long, restored to his usual state of health and activity.

Sir Walter himself, too, besides the usual allowance of rheumatism, and other lesser ailments, had an attack that season of a nature which gave his family great alarm, and which for some days he himself regarded with the darkest prognostications. After some weeks, during which he complained of headache and nervous irritation, certain hæmorrhages indicated the sort of relief required, and he obtained it from copious cupping. He says in his Diary for June 3d:—"The ugly symptom still continues. Dr. Ross does not make much of it; and I think he is apt to look grave. Either way I am firmly resolved. I wrote in the morning. The Court kept me till near two, and then home comes I. Afternoon and evening were spent as usual. In the evening Dr. Ross ordered me to be cupped, an operation which I only knew from its being practised by those eminent medical practitioners the barbers of Bagdad. It is not painful; and, I think, resembles a giant twisting about your flesh between his finger and thumb." After this he felt better, he said, than he had done for years before; but there can be little doubt that the natural evacuation was a very serious symptom. It was, in fact, the precursor of apoplexy. In telling the Major of his recovery, he says—"The sale of the Novels is pro—di—gi—ous. If it last but a few years, it will clear my feet of old incumbrances, nay, perhaps, enable me to talk a word to our friend Nicol Milne.

'But old ships must expect to get out of commission,
Nor again to weigh anchor with *yo heave ho!*'

However that may be, I should be happy to die a free man; and I am sure you will all be kind to poor Anne, who will miss me most. I don't intend to die a minute sooner than I can help, for all this; but when a man takes to making blood instead of water, he is tempted to think on the possibility of his soon making earth."

One of the last entries in this year's Diary gives a sketch of the celebrated Edward Irving, who was about this time deposed from the ministry of the Church of Scotland on account of his wild heresies. Sir Walter, describing a large dinner party, says:—"I met to-day the celebrated divine and *soi-disant* prophet, Irving. He is a fine-looking man (bating a diabolical squint,) with talent on his brow and madness in his eye. His dress, and the arrangement of his hair, indicated that. I could hardly keep my eyes off him while we were at table. He put me in mind of the devil disguised as an angel of light, so ill did that horrible obliquity of vision harmonize with the dark tranquil features of his face, resembling that of our Saviour in Italian pictures, with the hair carefully arranged in the same manner. There was much real or affected simplicity in the manner in which he spoke. He rather *made play*, spoke much, and seemed to be good-humoured. But he spoke with that kind of unction which is nearly allied to *cajolerie*. He boasted much of the tens of thousands that attended his ministry at the town of Annan, his native place, till he well-nigh provoked me to say he was a distinguished exception to the rule that a prophet was not esteemed in his own country. But time and place were not fitting."

Among a few other friends from a distance, Sir Walter received this autumn a short visit from Mr. Hallam, and made in his company several of the little excursions which had in former days been of constant recurrence. Mr. Hallam had with him his son, Arthur, a young gentleman of extraordinary abilities, and as modest as able, who not long afterwards was cut off in the very bloom of opening life and genius. In a little volume of "Remains," which his father has since printed for private friends —with this motto—

"Vattene in pace alma beata e bella,"—

there occurs a memorial of Abbotsford and Melrose, which I have pleasure in being allowed to quote.

"STANZAS—AUGUST, 1829.

"I lived an hour in fair Melrose,
It was not when 'the pale moonlight'
Its magnifying charm bestows;
Yet deem I that I 'viewed it right.'
The wind-swept shadows fast careered,
Like living things that joyed or feared,
Adown the sunny Eildon Hill,
And the sweet winding Tweed the distance crowned well.

"I inly laughed to see that scene
Wear such a countenance of youth,
Though many an age those hills were green,
And yonder river glided smooth,
Ere in these now disjointed walls
The Mother Church held festivals,
And full-voiced anthemings the while
Swelled from the choir, and lingered down the echoing aisle.

"I coveted that Abbey's doom;
For if, I thought, the early flowers
Of our affection may not bloom,
Like those green hills, through countless hours,
Grant me at least a tardy waning,
Some pleasure still in age's paining;
Though lines and forms must fade away,
Still may old Beauty share the empire of Decay!

"But looking toward the grassy mound
Where calm the Douglas chieftains lie,
Who, living, quiet never found,
I straightway learnt a lesson high:
For there an old man sat serene,
And well I knew that thoughtful mien
Of him whose early lyre had thrown
Over these mouldering walls the magic of its tone.

"Then ceased I from my envying state,
And knew that aweless intellect
Hath power upon the ways of fate,
And works through time and space uncheck'd.
That minstrel of old chivalry,
In the cold grave must come to be,
But his transmitted thoughts have part
In the collective mind, and never shall depart.

"It was a comfort too to see
Those dogs that from him ne'er would rove,
And always eyed him reverently,
With glances of depending love.
They know not of that eminence
Which marks him to my reasoning sense;
They know but that he is a man,
And still to them is kind, and glads them all he can.

"And, hence, their quiet looks confiding,
Hence grateful instincts seated deep,
By whose strong bond, were ill betiding,
They risk'd their own his life to keep.

What joy to watch in lower creature
Gambolsmirking of a mental nature,
And how (the rule all things obey)
They look to a higher mind to be their law and stay!"

The close of the autumn was embittered by a sudden and most unexpected deprivation. Apparently in the fullest enjoyment of health and vigour, Thomas Purdie leaned his head one evening on the table, and dropped asleep. This was nothing uncommon in a hard-working man; and his family went and came about him for several hours, without taking any notice. When supper came they tried to awaken him, and found that life had been for some time extinct. Far different from other years, Sir Walter seemed impatient to get away from Abbotsford to Edinburgh. "I have lost," he writes (4th November) to Cadell,—"my old and faithful servant—my factotum—and am so much shocked that I really wish to be quit of the country and safe in town. I have this day laid him in the grave. This has prevented my answering your letters."

The grave, close to the Abbey at Melrose, is surmounted by a modest monument, having on two sides these inscriptions:—

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE
OF
THE FAITHFUL
AND ATTACHED SERVICES
OF
TWENTY-TWO YEARS,
AND IN SORROW
FOR THE LOSS OF A HUMBLE
BUT SINCERE FRIEND;
THIS STONE WAS ERECTED
BY
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.,
OF ABBOTSFORD.

HERE LIES THE BODY
OF
THOMAS PURDIE,
WOOD-FORESTER,
AT ABBOTSFORD,
WHO DIED 29TH OCTOBER,
1829,
AGED SIXTY-TWO YEARS.

"Thou hast been faithful
over a few things,
I will make thee ruler
over many things."
Matthew, chap. xxv. v. 21st.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

AUCHINDRANE, OR THE AYRSHIRE TRAGEDY—SECOND VOLUME OF THE HISTORY OF SCOTLAND—PARALYTIC SEIZURE—LETTERS ON DEMONOLOGY, AND TALES ON THE HISTORY OF FRANCE BEGUN—POETRY, WITH PREFACES, PUBLISHED—REVIEWAL OF SOUTHEY'S LIFE OF BUNYAN—EXCURSIONS TO CULROSS AND PRESTONPANS—RESIGNATION OF THE CLERKSHIP OF SESSION—COMMISSION ON THE STUART PAPERS—OFFERS OF A PENSION AND OF THE RANK OF PRIVY COUNSELLOR—DECLINED—DEATH OF GEORGE IV.—GENERAL ELECTION—SPEECH AT JEDBURGH—SECOND PARALYTIC ATTACK—DEMONOLOGY, AND FRENCH HISTORY PUBLISHED—ARRIVAL OF KING CHARLES X. AT HOLYROOD-HOUSE—LETTER TO LADY LOUISA STUART—1830.

SIR WALTER'S reviewal of the early parts of Mr. Pitcairn's Ancient Criminal Trials had, of course, much gratified the editor, who sent him, on his arrival in Edinburgh, the proof-sheets of the Number then in hand, and directed his attention particularly to its details on the extraordinary case of Mure of Auchindrane, A. D. 1611. Scott was so much interested with these documents, that he resolved to found a dramatic sketch on their terrible story; and the result was a composition far superior to any of his previous attempts of that nature. Indeed there are several passages in his "Ayrshire Tragedy"—especially that where the murdered corpse floats upright in the wake of the assassin's bark,—(an incident suggested by a lamentable chapter in Lord Nelson's history)—which may bear comparison with any thing but Shakspeare. Yet I doubt whether the prose narrative of the preface be not, on the whole, more dramatic than the versified scenes. It contains, by the way, some very striking allusions to the recent atrocities of Gill's Hill and the West Port. This piece was published in a thin octavo early in the year; and the beautiful Essays on Ballad Poetry, composed with a view to a collective edition of all his Poetical Works in small cheap volumes, were about the same time attached to the octavo edition then on sale; the state of stock not as yet permitting the new issue to be begun.

Sir Walter was now to pay the penalty of his unparalleled toils. On the 15th of February, about two o'clock in the afternoon, he returned from the Parliament House, apparently in his usual state, and found an old acquaintance, Miss Young of Hawick, waiting to show him some MS. memoirs of her father, (a dissenting minister of great worth and talents,) which he had undertaken to revise and correct for the press. The old lady sat by him for half an hour while he seemed to be occupied with her papers; at length he rose, as if to dismiss her, but sunk down again—a slight convulsion agitating his features. After a few minutes he got up and staggered to the drawing-room, where Anne Scott and my sister Violet Lockhart were sitting. They rushed to meet him, but he fell at all his length on the floor ere they could reach him. He remained speechless for about ten minutes, by which time a surgeon had arrived and bled him. He was cupped again in the evening, and gradually recovered possession of speech and of all his faculties in so far that, the occurrence being kept quiet, when he appeared abroad again after a short interval, people in general do not seem to have observed any serious change. He submitted to the utmost severity of regimen, tasting nothing but pulse and water for some weeks, and the alarm of his family and intimate friends subsided. By and by he again mingled in society much as usual, and seems to have *almost* persuaded himself that the attack had proceeded merely from the stomach, though his letters continued ever and anon to drop hints that the symptoms resembled apoplexy or paralysis. When we recollect that both his father and his elder brother died of paralysis, and consider the terrible violences of agitation and exertion to which Sir Walter had been subjected during the four preceding years, the only wonder is that this blow (which had, I suspect, several indistinct harbingers) was deferred so long; there can be none that it was soon followed by others of the same description.

He struggled manfully, however, against his malady, and during 1830 covered almost as many sheets with his MS. as in 1829. About March I find, from his correspondence with Ballantyne, that he was working regularly at his letters on Demonology and Witchcraft for Murray's Family Library, and also on a Fourth Series of the Tales of a Grandfather—the subject being French history. Both of these books were published by the end of the year; and the former contains many passages worthy of his best day—little snatches of picturesque narrative and the like—in fact, transcripts of his own familiar fireside stories. The shrewdness with which evidence is sifted on legal cases attests, too, that the main reasoning faculty remained unshaken. But on the whole, these works can hardly be submitted to a strict ordeal of criticism. There is in both a cloudiness both of words and arrangement. Nor can I speak differently of the second volume of his

Scottish History for Lardner's Cyclopædia, which was published in May. His very pretty reviewal of Mr. Southey's Life and Edition of Bunyan was done in August—about which time his recovery seems to have reached its *acmé*.

In the course of the Spring Session, circumstances rendered it highly probable that Sir Walter's resignation of his place as Clerk of Session might be acceptable to the Government—and it is not surprising that he should have, on the whole, been pleased to avail himself of this opportunity.

His Diary was resumed in May, and continued at irregular intervals for the rest of the year; but its contents are commonly too medical for quotation. Now and then, however, occur entries which I cannot think of omitting. For example :—

"*Abbotsford, May* 23, 1830.—About a year ago I took the pet at my Diary, chiefly because I thought it made me abominably selfish; and that by recording my gloomy fits, I encouraged their recurrence, whereas, out of sight, out of mind, is the best way to get rid of them; and now I hardly know why I take it up again, but here goes. I came here to attend Raeburn's funeral. I am near of his kin, my great-grandfather, Walter Scott, being the second son or first cadet of this small family. My late kinsman was also married to my aunt, a most amiable old lady. He was never kind to me, and at last utterly ungracious. Of course I never liked him, and we kept no terms. He had forgot, though, an infantine cause of quarrel, which I always remembered. When I was four or five years old, I was staying at Lessudden Place, an old mansion, the abode of this Raeburn. A large pigeon-house was almost destroyed with starlings, then a common bird, though now seldom seen. They were seized in their nests and put in a bag, and I think drowned, or thrashed to death, or put to some such end. The servants gave one to me, which I in some degree tamed, and the brute of a laird seized and wrung its neck. I flew at his throat like a wild-cat, and was torn from him with no little difficulty. Long afterwards I did him the mortal offence to recall some superiority which my father had lent to the laird to make up a qualification, which he meant to exercise by voting for Lord Minto's interest against the Duke of Buccleuch's. This made a total breach between two relations who had never been friends; and though I was afterwards of considerable service to his family, he kept his ill humor, alleging, justly enough, that I did these kind actions for the sake of his wife and name, not for his benefit. I now saw him at the age of eighty-two or three deposited in the ancestral grave; dined with my cousins, and returned to Abbotsford about eight o'clock.

"*Edinburgh, May* 26.—Wrought with proofs, &c. at the Demonology, which is a cursed business to do neatly. I must finish it though. I went to the Court, from that came home, and scrambled on with half writing, half reading, half idleness till evening. I have laid aside smoking much; and now, unless tempted by company, rarely take a cigar. I was frightened by a species of fit which I had in March, [February,] which took from me my power of speaking. I am told it is from the stomach. It looked woundy like palsy or apoplexy. Well, be what it will, I can stand it.

"*May* 27.—Court as usual. I am agitating a proposed retirement from the Court. As they are only to have four instead of six Clerks of Session in Scotland, it will be their interest to let me retire on a superannuation. Probably I shall make a bad bargain, and get only two-thirds of the salary, instead of three-fourths. This would be hard, but I could save between two or three hundred pounds by giving up town residence. At any rate, *facta est alea*—Sir Robert Peel and the Advocate acquiesce in the arrangement, and Sir Robert Dundas retires alongst with me. I think the difference will be infinite in point of health and happiness. Yet I do not know. It is perhaps a violent change in the end of life to quit the walk one has trod so long, and the cursed splenetic temper which beats all men makes you value opportunities and circumstances when one enjoys them no longer. Well—'Things must be as they may,' as says that great philosopher Corporal Nym.

"*June* 3.—I finished my proofs, and sent them off with copy. I saw Mr. Dickinson* on Tuesday; a right plain sensible man. He is so confident in my matters, that, being a large creditor himself, he offers to come down, with the support of all the London creditors, to carry through any measure that can be devised for my behoof. Mr. Cadell showed him that we were four years forward in matter prepared for the press. Got Heath's Illustrations, which I dare say are finely engraved, but commonplace enough in point of art.

"*June* 17.—Went last night to Theatre, and saw Miss Fanny Kemble's Isabella, which was a most creditable performance. It has much of the genius of Mrs. Siddons, her aunt. She wants her beautiful countenance, her fine form, and her matchless dignity of step and manner. On the other hand, Miss Fanny Kemble has very expressive, though not regular features, and what is worth it all, great energy mingled with and chastised by correct taste. I suffered by the heat, lights, and exertion, and will not go back to-night, for it has purchased me a sore headache this theatrical excursion. Besides, the play is Mrs. Beverley, and I hate to be made miserable about domestic distress, so I keep my gracious presence at home to-night, though I love and respect Miss Kemble for giving her active support to her father in his need, and preventing Covent Garden from coming down about their ears. I corrected proofs before breakfast, attended Court, but was idle in the forenoon, the headache annoying me much.

"*Blair-Adam, June* 18.—Our meeting cordial, but our numbers diminished; the good and very clever Lord Chief Baron [Shepherd] is returned to his own country with more regrets than in Scotland usually attend a stranger. Will Clerk has a bad cold, Tom Thomson is detained, but the Chief Commissioner, Admiral Adam, Sir Adam, John Thomson and I make an excellent concert.

"*June* 19.—Arose and expected to work a little, but a friend's house is not favourable; you are sure to want the book you have not brought, and are, in short, out of sorts, like the minister who could not preach out of his own pulpit. There is something fanciful in this, and something real too. After breakfast to Culross, where the veteran, Sir Robert Preston, showed us his curiosities. Life has done as much for him as most people. In his ninety-second year, he has an ample fortune, a sound understanding, not the least decay of eyes, ears, or taste, is as big as two men, and eats like three. Yet he too experiences the "*singula prædantur*," and has lost something since I last saw him. If his appearance renders old age tolerable, it does not make it desirable. But I fear when death comes we shall be unwilling for all that to part with our bundle of sticks. Sir Robert amuses himself with repairing the old House of Culross, built by the Lord Bruce. What it is destined for is not very evident. It is too near his own mansion of Valleyfield to be useful as a residence, if indeed it could be formed into a comfortable modern house. But it is rather like a banqueting-house. Well, he follows his own fancy. We had a sumptuous cold dinner. Sir Adam grieves it was not hot, so little can war and want break a man to circumstances. The beauty of Culross consists in magnificent terraces rising on the sea beach, and commanding the opposite shore of Lothian: the house is repairing in the style of James VI. There are some fine relics of the Old Monastery, with large Saxon arches. At Anstruther I saw with pleasure the painting, by Raeburn, of my old friend Adam Rolland, Esq., who was in the external circumstances, but not in frolic or fancy, my prototype for Paul Pleydell.

* Mr. John Dickinson of Nash-mill, Herts, the eminent paper-maker.

"*June* 9.—Dined with the Bannatyne, where we had a lively party. Touching the songs, an old *roué* must own an improvement in the times, when all paw-paw words are omitted;—and yet, when the naughty innuendoes are gazers, one is apt to say—

'Swear me, Kate, like a lady as thou art,
A good mouth-filling oath, and leave Forsooth.
And such protests of petty gingerbread.'

I think there is more affectation than improvement in the new mode."

Not knowing how poor Maida had been replaced, Miss Edgeworth at this time offered Sir Walter a fine Irish staghound. He replies thus:—

To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown.

"Edinburgh, 23d June, 1830.

"My Dear Miss Edgeworth,

"Nothing would be so valuable to me as the mark of kindness which you offer, and yet my kennel is so much changed since I had the pleasure of seeing you, that I must not accept of what I wished so sincerely to possess. I am the happy owner of two of the noble breed, each of gigantic size, and the gift of that sort of Highlander whom we call a High Chief, so I would hardly be justified in parting with them even to make room for your kind present, and I should have great doubts whether the mountaineers would receive the Irish stranger with due hospitality. One of them I had from poor Glengarry, who, with all wild and fierce points of his character, had a kind, honest, and warm heart. The other from a young friend, whom Highlanders call MacVourigh, and Lowlanders MacPherson of Cluny. He is a fine spirited boy, fond of his people and kind to them, and the best dancer of a Highland reel now living. I fear I must not add a third to Nimrod and Bran, having little use for them except being pleasant companions. As to labouring in their vocation, we have only one wolf which I know of, kept in a friend's menagerie near me, and no wild deer. Walter has some roebucks indeed, but Lochore is far off, and I begin to feel myself distressed at running down these innocent and beautiful creatures, perhaps because I cannot gallop so fast after them as to drown sense of the pain we are inflicting. And yet I suspect I am like the sick fox; and if my strength and twenty years could come back, I would become again a copy of my namesake, remembered by the sobriquet of Walter *ill to hauld* (to hold, that is.) 'But age has clawed me in its clutch,' and there is no remedy for increasing disability except dying, which is an awkward score.

"There is some chance of my retiring from my official situation upon the changes in the Court of Session. They cannot reduce my office, though they do not wish to fill it up with a new occupant. I shall be therefore *de trop;* and in these days of economy they will be better pleased to let me retire on three parts of my salary than to keep me a Clerk of Session on the whole; and small grief at our parting, as the old horse said to the broken cart. And yet, though I thought such a proposal when first made was like a Pisgah peep of Paradise, I cannot help being a little afraid of changing the habits of a long life all of a sudden and for ever. You ladies have always your work-basket and stocking-knitting to wreak an hour of tediousness upon. The routine of business serves, I suspect, for the same purpose to us male wretches; it is seldom a burden to the mind, but a something which must be done, and is done almost mechanically; and though dull judges and duller clerks, the routine of law proceedings, and law forms, are very unlike the plumed troops and the tug of war, yet the result is the same. The occupation's gone.* The morning, that the day's news must all be gathered from other sources—that the jokes which the principal Clerks of Session have laughed at weekly for a century, and which would not move a muscle of any other person's face, must be laid up to perish like those of Sancho in the Sierra Morena—I don't above half like forgetting all these moderate habits, and yet

'Ah, freedom is a noble thing!'

as says the old Scottish poet.† So I will cease my regrets, or lay them by to be taken up and used as arguments of comfort, in case I do not slip my cable after all, which is highly possible. Lockhart and Sophia have taken up their old residence at Chiefswood. They are very fond of the place; and I am glad also my grandchildren will be bred near the heather, for certain qualities which I think are best taught there.

"Let me inquire about all my friends, Mrs. Fox, Mr. and Mrs. Butler, Mrs. Edgeworth, the hospitable squire, and plan of education, and all and sundry of the household of Edgeworthstown. I shall long remember our delightful days—especially those under the roof of Protestant Frank.*

"Have you forsworn merry England, to say nothing of our northern regions? This meditated retreat will make me more certain of being at Abbotsford the whole year; and I am now watching the ripening of those plans which I schemed five years, ten years, twenty years ago. Anne is still the Beatrix you saw her; Walter, now major, predominating with his hussars at Nottingham and Sheffield; but happily there has been no call to try Sir Toby's experiment of drawing three souls out of the body of one weaver. Ireland seems to be thriving. A friend of mine laid out £40,000 or £50,000 on an estate there, for which he gets 7 per cent.; so you are looking up. Old England is distressed enough—we are well enough here—but we never feel the storm till it has passed over our neighbours. I ought to get a frank for this, but our members are all up mending the stops of the great fiddle. The termination of the King's illness is considered as inevitable, and expected with great apprehension and anxiety. Believe me always with the greatest regard, yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

On the 26th of June Sir Walter heard of the death of King George IV. with the regret of a devoted and obliged subject. He had received almost immediately before two marks of his Majesty's kind attention. Understanding that his retirement from the Court of Session was at hand, Sir William Knighton suggested to the King that Sir Walter might henceforth be more frequently in London, and that he might very fitly be placed at the head of a new commission for examining and editing the MSS. collections of the exiled Princes of the House of Stuart, which had come into the King's hands on the death of the Cardinal of York. This Sir Walter gladly accepted, and contemplated with pleasure spending the ensuing winter in London. But another proposition, that of elevating him to the rank of Privy Counsellor, was unhesitatingly declined. He felt that any increase of rank under the circumstances of diminished fortune and failing health would be idle and unsuitable, and desired his friend, the Lord Chief Commissioner, whom the King had desired to ascertain his feelings on the subject, to convey his grateful thanks, with his humble apology.

He heard of the King's death, on what was otherwise a pleasant day. The Diary says—"*June* 27.—Yesterday morning I worked as usual at proofs and copy of my infernal Demonology, a task to which my poverty and not my will consents. About twelve o'clock I went to the country to take a day's relaxation. We (*i. e.* Mr. Cadell, James Ballantyne and I) went to Prestonpans, and getting there about one, surveyed the little village, where my aunt and I were lodgers for the sake of sea-bathing, in 1778, I believe. I knew the house of Mr. Warroch, where we lived, a poor cottage, of which the owners and their family are extinct. I recollected my juvenile ideas of dignity attendant on the large gate, a black arch which lets out upon the sea. I saw the church where I yawned under the inflictions of a Dr. M'Cormack, a name in which dulness seems to have been hereditary. I saw the links where I arranged my shells upon the turf, and swam my little skiff in the pools. Many comparisons between the man and the boy—many recollections of my kind aunt—of old George Constable, who, I think, dangled after her—of Dalgetty, a virtuous half-pay lieutenant, who swaggered his solitary walk on the parade, as he called a little open space before the same port. We went to Preston, and took refuge from a thunder-plump in the old tower. I remembered the little garden where I was crammed with gooseberries, and the fear I had of Blind Harry's spectre of Fawdon showing his headless trunk at one of the windows. I remembered also a very good-natured pretty girl (my Mary Duff,) whom I laughed and romped with, and loved as children love. She was a Miss Dalrymple, daughter of Lord

* *Othello*, Act III., Sc. 3. † Barbour's *Bruce*.

* I believe the ancestor who built the House at Edgeworthstown was distinguished by this appellation.

Westhall, a Lord of Session; was afterwards married to Anderson of Winterfield, and her daughter is now the spouse of my colleague, Robert Hamilton. So strangely are our cards shuffled. I was a mere child, and could feel none of the passion which Byron alleges, yet the recollection of this good-humoured companion of my childhood is like that of a morning dream, nor should I greatly like to dispel it by seeing the original, who must now be sufficiently time-honoured.

"Well, we walked over the field of battle; saw the Prince's Park, Cope's Road, marked by slaughter in his disastrous retreat, the thorn-tree which marks the centre of the battle, and all besides that was to be seen or supposed. We saw two broadswords, found on the field of battle, one a Highlander's, an Andrew Ferrara, another the dragoon's sword of that day.* Lastly, we came to Cockenzie, where Mr. Francis Cadell, my publisher's brother, gave us a kind reception. I was especially glad to see the mother of the family, a fine old lady, who was civil to my aunt and me, and I recollect well, used to have us to tea at Cockenzie. Curious that I should long afterwards have an opportunity to pay back this attention to her son Robert. Once more, what a kind of shuffling of the hand dealt us at our nativity. There was Mrs. F. Cadell and one or two young ladies, and some fine fat children. I should be a "Bastard to the Time" did I not tell our fare; we had a tiled whiting, a dish unknown elsewhere, so there is a bone for the gastronomers to pick. Honest John Wood, my old friend, dined with us; I only regret I cannot understand him, as he has a very powerful memory, and much curious information.† The whole day of pleasure was damped by the news of the King's death; it was fully expected, indeed, as the termination of his long illness; but he was very good to me personally, and a kind sovereign. The common people and gentry join in their sorrows. Much is owing to kindly recollections of his visit to this country, which gave all men an interest in him."

When the term ended in July the affair of Sir Walter's retirement was all but settled; and soon afterwards he was informed that he had ceased to be a Clerk of Session, and should thenceforth have, in lieu of his salary, &c. (£1300) an allowance of £800 per annum. This was accompanied by an intimation from the Home Secretary that the Ministers were quite ready to grant him a pension covering the reduction in his income. Considering himself as the bond-slave of his creditors, he made known to them this proposition, and stated that it would be extremely painful to him to accept of it; and with the delicacy and generosity which throughout characterized their conduct towards him, they, without hesitation, entreated him on no account to do injury to his own feelings in such a matter as this. Few things gave him more pleasure than this handsome communication.

Just after he had taken leave of Edinburgh, as he seems to have thought for ever, he received a communication of another sort, as inopportune as any that ever reached him. His Diary for the 13th July says briefly—"I have a letter from a certain young gentleman, announcing that his sister had so far mistaken the intentions of a lame baronet nigh sixty years old, as to suppose him only prevented by modesty from stating certain wishes and hopes, &c. The party is a woman of rank, so my vanity may be satisfied. But I excused myself, with little picking upon the terms."

During the rest of the summer and autumn his daughter and I were at Chiefswood, and saw him of course daily. Laidlaw, too, had been restored to the cottage at Kæside; and though Tom Purdie made a dismal blank, old habits went on, and the course of life seemed little altered from what it had used to be. He looked jaded and worn before evening set in, yet very seldom departed from the strict regimen of his doctors, and often brightened up to all his former glee, though passing the bottle, and sipping toast and water. His grandchildren especially saw no change. However languid, his spirits revived at the sight of them, and the greatest pleasure he had was in pacing Doucie Davie through the green lanes among his woods, with them clustered about him on ponies and donkeys, while Laidlaw, the ladies, and myself, walked by and obeyed his directions about pruning and marking trees. After the immediate alarms of the spring, it might have been even agreeable to witness this placid twilight scene, but for our knowledge that nothing could keep him from toiling many hours daily at his desk, and alas! that he was no longer sustained by the daily commendations of his printer. It was obvious, as the season advanced, that the manner in which Ballantyne communicated with him was sinking into his spirits, and Laidlaw foresaw, as well as myself, that some trying crisis of discussion could not be much longer deferred. A nervous twitching about the muscles of the mouth was always more or less discernible from the date of the attack in February; but we could easily tell, by the aggravation of that symptom, when he had received a packet from the Canongate. It was distressing indeed to think that he might, one of these days, sustain a second seizure, and be left still more helpless, yet with the same undiminished appetite for literary labour. And then if he felt his printer's complaints so keenly, what was to be expected in the case of a plain and undeniable manifestation of disappointment on the part of the public, and consequently of the bookseller?

All this was for the inner circle. Country neighbours went and came without, I believe, observing almost any thing of what grieved the family. Nay, this autumn he was far more troubled with the invasions of strangers, than he had ever been since his calamities of 1826. The astonishing success of the new editions was, as usual, doubled or trebled by rumour. The notion that he had already all but cleared off his incumbrances seems to have been widely prevalent, and no doubt his refusal of a pension tended to confirm it. Abbotsford was, for some weeks at least, besieged much as it had used to be in the golden days of 1823 and 1824; and if sometimes his guests brought animation and pleasure with them, even then the result was a legacy of redoubled lassitude. The Diary, among a very few and far separated entries, has this:

"*September* 5.—In spite of Resolution, I have left my Diary for some weeks, I cannot well tell why. We have had abundance of travelling Counts and Countesses, Yankees, male and female, and a Yankee-Doodle-*Dandy* into the bargain, a smart young Virginia-man. But we have had friends of our own also, the Miss Ardens, young Mrs. Morritt and Anne Morritt, most agreeable visiters. Cadell came out here yesterday with his horn filled with good news. He calculates that in October the debt will be reduced to the sum of £60,000, half of its original amount. This makes me care less about the terms I retire upon. The efforts by which we have advanced thus far are new in literature, and what is gained is secure."

Mr. Cadell's great hope, when he offered this visit, had been that the good news of the *Magnum* might induce Sir Walter to content himself with working at notes and prefaces for its coming volumes, without straining at more difficult tasks. He found his friend, however, by no means disposed to adopt such views; and suggested very kindly, and ingeniously too, by way of *mezzo-termine*, that before entering upon any new novel, he should draw up a sort of *catalogue raisonnée* of the most curious articles in his library and museum. Sir Walter grasped at this, and began next morning to dictate to Laidlaw what he designed to publish in the usual novel shape, under the title of "Relics of Trottco-

* The Laird of Cockenzie kindly sent those swords next day to the armoury at Abbotsford.

† Mr. Wood published a History of the Parish of Cramond, in 1794—an enlarged edition of Sir Robert Douglas's Peerage of Scotland, 2 vols. folio, in 1813—and a Life of the celebrated John Law, of Lauriston, in 1824. In the preface to the Cramond History he describes himself as *scopulis surdior Icari*.

sionnes, or the Gabions of Jonathan Oldbuck." Nothing, as it seemed to all about him, could have suited the time better; but after a few days he said he found this was not sufficient—that he should proceed in it during *horæ subcesivæ*, but must bend himself to the composition of a romance, founded on a story which he had more than once told cursorily already, and for which he had been revolving the various titles of Robert of the Isle—Count Robert de L'Isle—and Count Robert of Paris. There was nothing to be said in reply to the decisive announcement of this purpose. The usual agreements were drawn out; and the Tale was begun.

But before I come to the results of this experiment, I must relieve the reader by Mr. Adolphus's account of some more agreeable things. The death of George IV. occasioned a general election; and the Revolution of France in July, with its rapid imitation in the Netherlands, had been succeeded by such a quickening of hope among the British Liberals, as to render this in general a scene of high excitement and desperate struggling of parties. In Teviotdale, however, all was as yet quiescent. Mr. Adolphus says:

"One day, during my visit of 1830, I accompanied Sir Walter to Jedburgh, when the eldest son of Mr. Scott of Harden (now Lord Polwarth) was for the third time elected member for Roxburghshire. There was no contest; an opposition had been talked of, but was adjourned to some future day. The meeting in the Court-house, where the election took place, was not a very crowded or stirring scene; but among those present, as electors or spectators, were many gentlemen of the most ancient and honourable names in Roxburghshire and the adjoining counties. Sir Walter seconded the nomination. It was the first time I had heard him speak in public, and I was a little disappointed. His manner was very quiet and natural, but seemed to me too humble, and wanting in animation. His air was sagacious and reverend; his posture somewhat stooping; he rested, or rather pressed, the palm of one hand on the head of his stick, and used a very little gesticulation with the other. As he went on, his delivery acquired warmth, but it never became glowing. His points, however, were very well chosen, and his speech, perhaps, upon the whole, was such as a sensible country gentleman should have made to an assembly of his neighbours upon a subject on which they were all well agreed. Certainly the feeling of those present in favour of the candidate required no stimulus.

"The new member was to give a dinner to the electors at three o'clock. In the mean-time Sir Walter strolled round the ancient Abbey. It amused me on this and on one or two other occasions, when he was in frequented places, to see the curiosity with which some zealous stranger would hover about his line of walk or ride, to catch a view of him, though a distant one—for it was always done with caution and respect; and he was not disturbed—perhaps not displeased—by it. The dinner party was in number, I suppose, eighty or ninety, and the festival passed off with great spirit. The croupier, Mr. Baillie of Jerviswood, who had nominated the candidate in the morning, proposed, at its proper time, in a few energetic words, the health of Sir Walter Scott. All hearts were 'thirsty for the noble pledge;' the health was caught up with enthusiasm; and any one who looked round must have seen with pleasure that the popularity of Sir Walter Scott—European, and more than European as it was—had its most vigorous roots at the threshold of his own home. He made a speech in acknowledgment, and this time I was not disappointed. It was rich in humour and feeling, and graced by that engaging manner of which he had so peculiar a command. One passage I remembered, for its whimsical homeliness, long after the other, and perhaps better parts of the speech had passed from my recollection. Mr. Baillie had spoken of him as a man pre-eminent among those who had done honour and service to Scotland. He replied that, in what he had done for Scotland as a writer, he was no more entitled to the merit which had been ascribed to him than the servant who scours the 'brasses' to the credit of having made them; that he had perhaps been a good housemaid to Scotland, and given the country a 'rubbing up;' and in so doing might have deserved some praise for assiduity, and that was all. Afterwards, changing the subject, he spoke very beautifully and warmly of the re-elected candidate who sat by him; alluded to the hints which had been thrown out in the morning of a future opposition and *Reform*, and ended with some verses (I believe they were Burns's, *parcé detorta*,) pressing his hand upon the shoulder of Mr. Scott as he uttered the concluding lines,

> 'But we ha' tried this Border lad,
> And we'll try him yet again.'

"He sat down under a storm of applauses; and there were many present whose applause even he might excusably take some pride in. His eye, as he reposed himself after this little triumph, glowed with a hearty but chastened exultation on the scene before him; and when I met his look it seemed to say, 'I am glad you should see how these things pass among us.'

"His constitution had in the preceding winter suffered one of those attacks which at last prematurely overthrew it. 'Such a shaking hands with death' (I am told he said) 'was formidable;' but there were few vestiges of it which might not be overlooked by those who were anxious not to see them; and he was more cheerful than I had sometimes found him in former years. On one of our carriage excursions, shortly after the Jedburgh dinner, his spirits actually rose to the pitch of singing, an accomplishment I had never before heard him exhibit except in chorus. We had been to Selkirk and Bowhill, and were returning homewards in one of those days so inspiriting in a hill country, when, after heavy rains, the summer bursts forth again in its full splendour. Sir Walter was in his best congenial humour. As we looked up to Carterhaugh, his conversation ran naturally upon Tamlane and Fair Janet, and the ballad recounting their adventures; then it ran upon the *Dii agrestes*, ghosts and wizards, Border anecdotes and history, the bar, his own adventures as advocate and as sheriff; and then returning to ballads, it fell upon the old ditty of Tom o' the Linn, or Thomas O'Linn, which is popular alike, I believe, in Scotland, and in some parts of England, and of which I as well as he had boyish recollections. As we compared versions he could not forbear, in the gayety of his heart, giving out two or three of the stanzas in song. I cannot say that I ever heard this famous lyric sung to a very regular melody, but his *set* of it was extraordinary.

"Another little incident in this morning's drive is worth remembering. We crossed several fords, and after the rain they were wide and deep. A little, long, wise-looking, rough terrier, named Spice, which ran after us, had a cough, and as often as we came to a water, Spice, by the special order of her master, was let into the carriage till we had crossed. His tenderness to his brute dependants was a striking point in the general benignity of his character. He seemed to consult not only their bodily welfare, but their feelings, in the human sense. He was a gentleman even to his dogs. His roughest rebuke to little Spice, when she was inclined to play the wag with a sheep, was, 'Ha! fie! fie!' It must be owned that his 'tail' (as his retinue of dogs was called at Abbotsford,) though very docile and unobtrusive animals in the house, were sometimes a little wild in their frolics out of doors. One day when I was walking with Sir Walter and Miss Scott, we passed a cottage, at the door of which sat on one side a child, and on the other a slumbering cat. Nimrod bounded from us in great gayety, and the unsuspecting cat had scarcely time to squall before she was demolished. The poor child set up a dismal wail. Miss Scott was naturally much distressed, and Sir Walter a good deal out of countenance. However, he put an end

* See Burns's ballad of *The Five Carlines*—an election squib.

to the subject by saying with an assumed stubbornness, 'Well! the cat is worried;' but his purse was in his hand; Miss Scott was despatched to the house, and I am very sure it was not his fault if the cat had a poor funeral. In the confusion of the moment I am afraid the culprit went off without even a reprimand.

"Except in this trifling instance (and it could hardly be called an exception,) I cannot recollect seeing Sir Walter Scott surprised out of his habitual equanimity. Never, I believe, during the opportunities I had of observing him, did I hear from him an acrimonious tone, or see a shade of ill-humour on his features. In a phlegmatic person this serenity might have been less remarkable, but it was surprising in one whose mind was so susceptible, and whose voice and countenance were so full of expression. It was attributable, I think, to a rare combination of qualities;—thoroughly cultivated manners, great kindness of disposition, great patience and self-control, an excellent flow of spirits, and lastly, that steadfastness of nerve which, even in the inferior animals, often renders the most powerful and resolute creature the most placid and forbearing. Once, when he was exhibiting some weapons, a gentleman, after differing from him as to the comparative merits of two sword-blades, inadvertently flourished one of them almost into Sir Walter's eye. I looked quickly towards him, but could not see in his face the least sign of shrinking, or the least approach to a frown. No one, however, could for a moment infer from this evenness of manner and temper, that he was a man with whom an intentional liberty could be taken; and I suppose very few persons during his life ever thought of making the experiment. If it happened at any time that some trivial *etourderie* in conversation required at his hand a slight application of the rein, his gentle *explaining* tone was an appeal to good taste which no common wilfulness could have withstood.

"Two or three times at most during my knowledge of him do I recollect hearing him utter a downright oath, and then it was not in passion or upon personal provocation, nor was the anathema levelled at any individual. It was rather a concise expression of sentiment than a malediction. In one instance it was launched at certain improvers of the town of Edinburgh; in another it was bestowed very evenly upon all political parties in France, shortly after the *glorious days* of July, 1830."

As one consequence of these "glorious days," the unfortunate Charles X. was invited by the English Government to resume his old quarters at Holyrood; and among many other things that about this time vexed and mortified Scott, none gave him more pain than to hear that the popular feeling in Edinburgh had been so much exacerbated against the fallen monarch (especially by an ungenerous article in the great literary organ of the place,) that his reception there was likely to be rough and insulting. Sir Walter thought that on such an occasion his voice might, perhaps, be listened to. He knew his countrymen well in their strength, as well as in their weakness, and put forth this touching appeal to their better feelings, in Ballantyne's newspaper for the 20th of October:—

"We are enabled to announce, from authority, that Charles of Bourbon, the ex-King of France, is about to become once more our fellow-citizen, though probably for only a limited space, and is presently about to repair to Edinburgh, in order again to inhabit the apartments which he long ago occupied in Holyrood House. This temporary arrangement, it is said, has been made in compliance with his own request, with which our benevolent Monarch immediately complied, willing to consult, in every respect possible, the feelings of a Prince under the pressure of misfortunes, which are perhaps the more severe, if incurred through bad advice, error, or rashness. The attendants of the late sovereign will be reduced to the least possible number, and consist chiefly of ladies and children, and his style of life will be strictly retired. In these circumstances, it would be unworthy of us as Scotsmen, or as men, if this most unfortunate family should meet a word or look from the meanest individual tending to aggravate feelings, which must be at present so acute as to receive injury from insults, which in other times could be passed with perfect disregard.

"His late opponents in his kingdom have gained the applause of Europe for the generosity with which they have used their victory, and the respect which they have paid to themselves in moderation towards an enemy. It would be a gross contrast to that part of their conduct which has been most generally applauded, were we, who are strangers to the strife, to affect a deeper resentment than those it concerned closely.

"Those who can recollect the former residence of this unhappy Prince in our northern capital, cannot but remember the unobtrusive and quiet manner in which his little court was then conducted; and now, still further restricted and diminished, he may naturally expect to be received with civility and respect by a nation whose good will he has done nothing to forfeit. Whatever may have been his errors towards his own subjects, we cannot but remember, in his adversity, that he did not in his prosperity forget that Edinburgh had extended her hospitality towards him, but, at the period when the fires consumed so much of the city, sent a princely benefaction to the sufferers, with a letter which made it more valuable, by stating the feelings towards the city of the then royal donor. We also state, without hazard of contradiction, that his attention to individuals connected with this city was uniformly and handsomely rendered to those entitled to claim them. But he never did or could display a more flattering confidence, than when he shows that the recollections of his former asylum here have inclined him a second time to return to the place where he then found refuge.

"If there can be any who retain angry or invidious recollections of late events in France, they ought to remark that the ex-Monarch has, by his abdication, renounced the conflict into which, perhaps, he was engaged by bad advisers; that he can no longer be the object of resentment to the brave, but remains to all the most striking emblem of the mutability of human affairs which our mutable times have afforded. He may say with our own deposed Richard—

> 'With mine own tears I washed away my balm,
> With mine own hands I gave away my crown,
> With mine own tongue deny mine sacred state.'*

He brings among us his 'gray discrowned head;' and in 'a nation of gentlemen,' as we were emphatically termed by the very highest authority,† it is impossible, I trust, to find a man mean enough to insult the slightest hair of it.

"It is impossible to omit stating, that if angry recollections or keen party feelings should make any person consider the exiled and deposed Monarch as a subject of resentment, no token of such feelings could be exhibited without the greater part of the pain being felt by the helpless females, of whom the Duchess of Angouleme, in particular, has been so long distinguished by her courage and her misfortunes.

"The person who writes these few lines is leaving his native city, never to return as a permanent resident. He has some reason to be proud of distinctions received from his fellow-citizens; and he has not the slightest doubt that the taste and good feeling of those whom he will still term so, will dictate to them the quiet, civil, and respectful tone of feeling, which will do honour both to their heads and their hearts, which have seldom been appealed to in vain.

"The Frenchman Melinet, in mentioning the refuge afforded by Edinburgh to Henry VI. in his distress, records it as the most hospitable town in Europe. It is a testimony to be proud of, and sincerely

* *King Richard II.* Act IV. Scene I.

† This was the expression of King George IV., at the close of the first day he spent in Scotland.

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do I hope there is little danger of forfeiting it upon the present occasion."

The effect of this manly admonition was even more complete than the writer had anticipated. The royal exiles were received with perfect decorum, which their modest bearing to all classes, and unobtrusive, though magnificent benevolence to the poor, ere long converted into a feeling of deep and affectionate respectfulness. During their stay in Scotland, the King took more than one opportunity of conveying to Sir Walter his gratitude for this salutary interference on his behalf. The ladies of the royal family had a curiosity to see Abbotsford, but being aware of his reduced health and wealth, took care to visit the place when he was known to be from home. Several French noblemen of the train, however, paid him their respects personally. I remember with particular pleasure a couple of days that the Duke of Laval-Montmorency spent with him: he was also much gratified with a visit from Marshal Bourmont, though unfortunately that came after his ailments had much advanced. The Marshal was accompanied by the Baron d'Haussez, one of the Polignac Ministry, whose published account of his residence in this country contains no specimen of vain imbecility more pitiable than the page he gives to Abbotsford. So far from comprehending any thing of his host's character or conversation, the Baron had not even eyes to observe that he was in a sorely dilapidated condition of bodily health. The reader will perceive by and by that he had had another *fit* only a few days before he received these strangers; and that, moreover, he was engaged at the moment in a most painful correspondence with his printer and bookseller.

I conclude this chapter with a letter to Lady Louisa Stuart, who had, it seems, formed some erroneous guesses about the purport of the forthcoming Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft. That volume had been some weeks out of hand—but, for booksellers' reasons, it was not published until Christmas.

To the Right Hon. Lady Louisa Stuart, care of Lord Montagu.

"Abbotsford, October 31, 1830.

"My dear Lady Louisa,

"I come before your Ladyship for once, in the character of Not Guilty. I am a wronged man, who deny, with Lady Teazle, *the butler and the coach-horse*. Positively, in sending a blow to explode old and worn-out follies, I could not think I was aiding and abetting those of this—at least I had no purpose of doing so. Your Ladyship cannot think me such an owl as to pay more respect to animal magnetism, or scullology, I forget its learned name, or any other *ology* of the present day. The sailors have an uncouth proverb that every man must eat a peck of dirt in the course of his life, and thereby reconcile themselves to swallow unpalatable messes. Even so say I, every age must swallow a certain deal of superstitious nonsense; only, observing the variety which nature seems to study through all her works, each generation takes its nonsense, as heralds say, *with a difference*. I was early behind the scenes, having been in childhood patient of no less a man than the celebrated Dr. Graham, the great quack of that olden day. I had, being, as Sir Hugh Evans says, a fine sprag boy, a shrewd idea that his magnetism was all humbug; but Dr. Graham, though he used a different method, was as much admired in his day as any of the French fops. I did once think of turning on the modern mummers, but I did not want to be engaged in so senseless a controversy, which would, nevertheless, have occupied some time and trouble. The inference was pretty plain, that the same reasons which explode the machinery of witches and ghosts proper to our ancestors, must be destructive of the supernatural nonsense of our own days.

"Your acquaintance with Shakspeare is intimate, and you remember why, and when it is said,

'He words me, girl, he words me.'*

Our modern men of the day have done this to the country. They have devised a new phraseology to convert good into evil, and evil into good, and the ass's ears of John Bull are gulled with it as if words alone made crime or virtue. Have they a mind to excuse the tyranny of Buonaparte? why, the Lord love you, he only squeezed into his government a grain too much of civilization. The fault of Robespierre was too active liberalism; a noble error. Thus the most blood-thirsty anarchy is glossed over by opening the account under a new name. The varnish might be easily scraped off all this trumpery; and I think my friends *the brave Belges* are like to lead to the conclusion that the old names of murder and fire-raising are still in fashion. But what is worse, the natural connexion between the higher and lower classes is broken. The former reside abroad and become gradually, but certainly, strangers to their country's laws, habits, and character. The tenant sees nothing of them but the creditor for rent, following on the heels of the creditor for taxes. Our ministers dissolve the yeomanry, almost the last tie which held the laird and the tenant together. The best and worthiest are squabbling together, like a mutinous crew in a sinking vessel, who make the question, not how they are to get her off the rocks, but by whose fault she came on them. In short—but I will not pursue any further the picture more frightful than any apparition in my Demonology. Would to God I could believe it ideal! I have confidence still in the Duke of Wellington, but even he has sacrificed to the great deity of humbug, and what shall we say to meaner and more ordinary minds? God avert evil, and, what is next best, in mercy remove those who could only witness without preventing it. Perhaps I am somewhat despondent in all this. But totally retired from the world as I now am, depression is a natural consequence of so calamitous a prospect as politics now present. The only probable course of safety would be a confederacy between the good and the honest; and they are so much divided by petty feuds, that I see little chance of it.

"I will send this under Lord Montagu's frank, for it is no matter how long such a roll of lamentation may be in reaching your Ladyship. I do not think it at all likely that I shall be in London next spring, although I suffer Sophia to think so. I remain, in all my bad humour, ever your Ladyship's most obedient and faithful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

* Anthony and Cleopatra. Act V. Scene 2.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

WINTER AT ABBOTSFORD—PARLIAMENTARY REFORM IN AGITATION—WILLIAM LAIDLAW—JOHN NICOLSON—MRS. STREET—FIT OF APOPLEXY IN NOVEMBER—COUNT ROBERT OF PARIS—A FOURTH EPISTLE OF MALAGROWTHER WRITTEN—AND SUPPRESSED—UNPLEASANT DISCUSSIONS WITH BALLANTYNE AND CADELL—NOVEL RESUMED—SECOND DIVIDEND TO CREDITORS, AND THEIR GIFT OF THE LIBRARY, ETC. AT ABBOTSFORD—LAST WILL EXECUTED IN EDINBURGH—FORTUNE'S MECHANISM—LETTER ON POLITICS TO THE HON. H. F. SCOTT—ADDRESS FOR THE COUNTY OF SELKIRK WRITTEN—AND REJECTED BY THE FREEHOLDERS—COUNTY MEETING AT JEDBURGH—SPEECH ON REFORM—SCOTT INSULTED—MR. F. GRANT'S PORTRAIT—OCTOBER, 1830—APRIL, 1832.

THE reader has already seen that Sir Walter had many misgivings in contemplating his final retirement from the situation he had occupied for six-and-twenty years in the Court of Session. Such a breach in old habits is always a serious experiment; but in his case it was very particularly so, because it involved his losing, during the winter months, when men most need society, the intercourse of almost all that remained to him of dear familiar friends. He had besides a love for the very stones of Edinburgh, and the thought that he was never again to sleep under a roof of his own in his native city cost him many a pang. But he never alludes either in his Diary or in his letters (nor do I remember that he ever did so in conversation) to the circumstances which, far more than all beside, occasioned care and regret in the bosom of his family. However he might cling to the notion that his recent ailments sprung merely from a disordered stomach, they had dismissed that dream, and the heaviest of their thoughts was that he was fixing himself in the country just when his health, perhaps his life, might depend any given hour on the immediate presence of a surgical hand. They reflected that the only medical practitioner resident within three miles of him might, in case of another seizure, come too late, even although the messenger should find him at home; but that his practice extended over a wide range of thinly peopled country, and that at the hour of need he might as probably be half a day's

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journey off as at Melrose. We would fain have persuaded him that his library, catalogues, and other papers had fallen into such confusion that he ought to have some clever young student in the house during the winter to arrange them; and had he taken the suggestion in good part, a medical student would of course have been selected. But, whether or not he suspected our real motive, he would listen to no such plan, and his friendly surgeon (Mr. James Clarkson) then did the best he could for us by instructing a confidential domestic, privately, in the use of the lancet. This was John Nicolson; a name never to be mentioned by any of Scott's family without respect and gratitude. He had been in the household from his boyhood, and was about this time (poor Dalgleish retiring from weak health) advanced to the chief place in it. Early and continued kindness had made a very deep impression on this fine handsome young man's warm heart; he possessed intelligence, good sense, and a calm temper; and the courage and dexterity which Sir Walter had delighted to see him display in sports and pastimes, proved henceforth of inestimable service to the master, whom he regarded, I verily believe, with the love and reverence of a son. Since I have reached the period at which human beings owe so much to ministrations of this class, I may as well name by the side of Nicolson Miss Scott's maid, Mrs. Celia Street; a young person whose unwearied zeal, coupled with a modest tact that stamped her one of Nature's gentlewomen, contributed hardly less to the comfort of Sir Walter and his children during the brief remainder of his life.*

Affliction, as it happened, lay heavy at this time on the kind house of Huntley-Burn also. The eldest Miss Ferguson was on her deathbed; and thus, when my wife and I were obliged to move southwards at the beginning of winter, Sir Walter was left almost entirely dependent on his daughter Anne, William Laidlaw, and the worthy domestics whom I have been naming. Mr. Laidlaw attended him occasionally as amanuensis when his fingers were chilblained, and often dined as well as breakfasted with him: and Miss Scott well knew that in all circumstances she might lean to Laidlaw with the confidence of a niece or a daughter.

A more difficult and delicate task never devolved upon any man's friend, than he had about this time to encounter. He could not watch Scott from hour to hour—above all, he could not write to his dictation, without gradually, slowly, most reluctantly taking home to his bosom the conviction that the mighty mind, which he had worshipped through more than thirty years of intimacy, had lost something, and was daily losing something more of its energy. The faculties were there, and each of them was every now and then displaying itself in its full vigour; but the sagacious judgment, the brilliant fancy, the unrivalled memory, were all subject to occasional eclipse—

> "Along the chords the fingers stray'd,
> And an uncertain warbling made."

Ever and anon he paused and looked round him, like one half waking from a dream, mocked with shadows. The sad bewilderment of his gaze showed a momentary consciousness that, like Samson in the lap of the Philistine, "his strength was passing from him, and he was becoming weak like unto other men." Then came the strong effort of aroused will—the cloud dispersed as if before an irresistible current of purer air—all was bright and serene as of old. And then it closed again in yet deeper darkness.

During the early part of this winter the situation of Cadell and Ballantyne was hardly less painful, and still more embarrassing. What doubly and trebly perplexed them was that, while the MS. sent for press seemed worse every budget, Sir Walter's private letters to them, more especially on points of business, continued as clear in thought, and almost so in expression, as formerly; full of the old shrewdness, and firmness, and manly kindness, and even of the old good-humoured pleasantry. About them, except the staggering penmanship, and here and there one word put down obviously for another, there was scarcely any thing to indicate decayed vigour. It is not surprising that poor Ballantyne, in particular, should have shrunk from the notion that any thing was amiss,—except the choice of an unfortunate subject, and the indulgence of more than common carelessness and rapidity in composition. He seems to have done so as he would from some horrid suggestion of the Devil; and accordingly obeyed his natural sense of duty, by informing Sir Walter, in plain terms, that he considered the opening chapters of Count Robert as decidedly inferior to any thing that had ever before come from that pen. James appears to have dwelt chiefly on the hopelessness of any Byzantine fable; and he might certainly have appealed to a long train of examples for the fatality which seems to hang over every attempt to awaken any thing like a lively interest about the persons and manners of the generation in question; the childish forms and bigotries, the weak pomps and drivelling pretensions, the miserable plots and treacheries, the tame, worn-out civilization of those European Chinese. The epoch on which Scott had fixed was, however, one that brought these doomed slaves of vanity and superstition into contact with the vigorous barbarism both of western Christendom and the advancing Ottoman. Sir Walter had, years before, been struck with its capabilities; and who dares to say that, had he executed the work when he sketched the outline of its plan, he might not have achieved as signal a triumph over all critical prejudices, as he had done when he rescued Scottish romance from the mawkish degradation in which Waverley found it?

In himself and his own affairs there was enough to alarm and perplex him and all who watched him; but the aspect of the political horizon also pressed more heavily upon his spirit than it had ever done before. All the evils which he had apprehended from the rupture among the Tory leaders in the beginning of 1827 were now, in his opinion, about to be consummated. The high Protestant party, blinded by their resentment of the abolition of the Test Act and the Roman Catholic disabilities, seemed willing to run any risk for the purpose of driving the Duke of Wellington from the helm. The general election, occasioned by the demise of the crown, was held while the successful revolts in France and Belgium were fresh and uppermost in every mind, and furnished the Liberal candidates with captivating topics, of which they eagerly availed themselves. The result had considerably strengthened the old opposition in the House of Commons; and a single vote, in which the ultra-Tories joined the Whigs, was considered by the ministry as so ominous, that they immediately retired from office. The succeeding cabinet of Earl Grey included names identified, in Scott's view, with the wildest rage of innovation. Their first step was to announce a bill of Parliamentary Reform on a large scale, for which it was soon known they had secured the warm personal support of King William IV.; a circumstance, the probability of which had, as we have seen, been contemplated by Sir Walter during the last illness of the Duke of York. Great discontent prevailed, meanwhile, throughout the labouring classes of many districts, both commercial and rural. Every newspaper teemed with details of riot and incendiarism; and the selection of such an epoch of impatience and turbulence for a legislative experiment of the extremest difficulty and delicacy—one, in fact, infinitely more important than had ever before been agitated within the forms of the constitution—was perhaps regarded by most grave and retired men with feelings near akin to those of the anxious and melancholy invalid at Abbotsford. To annoy him additionally, he found many eminent persons, who had hitherto avowed politics of his own colour, renouncing all their old tenets, and joining the cry of Reform, which to him sounded Revolution, as keen-

* On Sir Walter's death Nicolson passed into the service of Mr. Morritt at Rokeby, where he is now butler. Mrs. Street remained in my house till 1836, when she married Mr. Griffiths, a respectable brewer at Wolworth.

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ly as the keenest of those who had been through life considered apostles of Republicanism. And I must also observe that, as, notwithstanding his own steady Toryism, he had never allowed political differences to affect his private feelings towards friends and companions, so it now happened that among the few with whom he had daily intercourse there was hardly one he could look to for sympathy in his present reflections and anticipations. The affectionate Laidlaw had always been a stout Whig; he now hailed the coming changes as the beginning of a political millennium. Ballantyne, influenced probably by his new ghostly counsellors, was by degrees leaning to a similar view of things. Cadell, his bookseller, and now the principal confidant and assistant from week to week in all his plans and speculations, was a cool, inflexible specimen of the national character, and had always, I presume, considered the Tory creed as a piece of weakness, to be pardoned, indeed, in a poet and an antiquary, but at best pitied in men of any other class.

Towards the end of November Sir Walter had another slight touch of apoplexy. He recovered himself without assistance; but again consulted his physicians in Edinburgh, and by their advice adopted a still greater severity of regimen.

The reader will now understand what his frame and condition of health and spirits were, at the time when he received from Ballantyne a decided protest against the novel on which he was struggling to fix the shattered energies of his memory and fancy.

To Mr. James Ballantyne, Printer, Edinburgh.

"Abbotsford, 8th Dec., 1830.

"My dear James,

"If I were like other authors, as I flatter myself I am not, I should send you an order on my treasurer for a hundred ducats, wishing you all prosperity and a little more taste;* but having never supposed that any abilities I ever had were of a perpetual texture, I am glad when friends tell me what I might be long in finding out myself. Mr. Cadell will show you what I have written to him. My present idea is to go abroad for a few months, if I hold together as long. So ended the Fathers of the novel—Fielding and Smollett—and it would be no unprofessional finish for yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To R. Cadell, Esq., Bookseller, Edinburgh.

"Abbotsford, 8th Dec., 1830.

"My dear Sir,

"Although we are come near to a point to which every man knows he must come, yet I acknowledge I thought I might have put it off for two or three years; for it is hard to lose one's power of working when you have perfect leisure for it. I do not view James Ballantyne's criticism, although his kindness may not make him sensible of it, so much as an objection to the particular topics which is merely fastidious, as to my having failed to please him, an anxious and favourable judge, and certainly a very good one. It would be losing words to say that the names are really no objection, or that they might be in some degree smoothed off by adopting more modern Grecian. This is odd. I have seen when a play or novel would have been damned by introduction of Macgregors or Macgrouthers, or others, which you used to read as a preface to Fairntosh whiskey, on every spirit shop—yet these have been wrought into heroes. James is, with many other kindly critics, perhaps in the predicament of an honest drunkard when crop-sick the next morning, who does not ascribe the malady to the wine he has drunk, but to having tasted some particular dish at dinner which disagreed with his stomach. The fact is, I have not only written a great deal, but, as Bobadil teaches his companions to fence, I have taught a hundred gentlemen to write nearly as well, if not altogether so, as myself.

"Now, such being my belief, I have lost, it is plain, the power of interesting the country, and ought, in justice to all parties, to retire, while I have some credit. But this is an important step, and I will not be obstinate about it, if necessary. I would not act hastily, and still think it right to set up at least half a volume. The subject is essentially an excellent one. If it brings to my friend J. B. certain prejudices not unconnected, perhaps, with his old preceptor Mr. Whale, we may find ways of obviating this; but frankly, I cannot think of flinging aside the half finished volume, as if it were a corked bottle of wine. If there is a decisive resolution for laying aside Count Robert (which I almost wish I had named Anna Comnena,) I shall not easily prevail on myself to begin another.

"I may perhaps take a trip to the Continent for a year or two, if I find Othello's occupation gone, or rather Othello's *reputation*. James seems to have taken his bed upon it—yet has seen Pharsalia. I hope your cold is getting better. I am tempted to say as Hotspur says of his father—

'Zounds! how hath he the leisure to be sick?'†

There is a very material consideration how a failure of Count Robert might affect the Magnum, which is a main object. So this is all at present from, dear sir, yours, very faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Abbotsford, 9th Dec., 1830.

"My dear Cadell,

"I send you sheet B of the unlucky Count—it will do little harm to correct it, whether we ultimately use it or no; for the rest we must *do* as we *dow*, as my mother used to say. I could reduce many expenses in a foreign country, especially equipage and living, which in this country I could not do so well. But it is matter of serious consideration, and we have time before us to think. I write to you rather than Ballantyne, because he is not well, and I look on you as hardened against wind and weather, whereas

'Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
And he retires.'‡

But we must brave bad weather as well as bear it.

"I send a volume of the interleaved Magnum. I know not whether you will carry on that scheme or not at present. I am yours sincerely,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—I expect Marshal Bourmont and a French Minister, Baron d'Haussez, here to-day, to my no small discomfort, as you may believe; for I would rather be alone."

To the Same.

"Abbotsford, 12th Dec., 1830.

"My dear Sir,

"I am much obliged for your kind letter, and have taken a more full review of the whole affair than I was able to do at first. There were many circumstances in the matter which you and J. B. could not be aware of, and which, if you were aware of, might have influenced your judgment, which had, and yet have a most powerful effect upon mine. The deaths of both my father and mother have been preceded by a paralytic shock. My father survived it for nearly two years, a melancholy respite, and not to be desired. I was alarmed with Miss Young's morning visit, when, as you know, I lost my speech. The medical people said it was from the stomach, which might be; but while there is a doubt on a point so alarming, you will not wonder that the subject, or, to use Hare's *lingo*, the *shot*, should be a little anxious. I restricted all my creature comforts, which were never excessive, within a single cigar and a small wine-glass of spirits per day. But one night last month, when I had a friend with me, I had a slight vertigo when going to bed, and fell down in my dressing-room, though but for one instant. Upon this I wrote to Dr. Abercromby, and in consequence of his advice, I have restricted myself yet farther, and have cut off the cigar, and almost half of the mountain-dew. Now, in the midst of all this, I began my work with as much attention as I could; and having taken pains with my story, I find it is not relished, nor indeed tolerated by those who have no interest in condemning it, but a strong interest in putting even a face upon their consciences. Was not this, in the circumstances, a damper to an invalid, already afraid that the sharp edge might be taken off his intellect, though he was not himself sensible of that? and did it not seem, of course, that nature was rather calling for repose than for further efforts in a very exciting and feverish style of composition? It would have been the height of injustice and cruelty to impute want of friendship or sympathy to J. B.'s discharge of a doubtful, and I am sensible, a perilous task. True

——'The first bringer of unwelcome news,
Hath but a losing office'—‡

and it is a falling in the temper of the most equal-minded men, that we find them liable to be less pleased with the tidings that they have fallen short of their aim than if they had been told they had hit the mark; but I never had the least thought of blaming him, and indeed my confidence in his judgment is the most forcible part of the whole affair. It is the consciousness of his sincerity which makes me doubt whether I can proceed with the County Paris. I am most anxious to do justice to all concerned.

* Archbishop of Grenada in Gil Blas.

† 1 *King Henry IV.* Act IV. Sc. 1.
‡ Othello. Act V. Sc. 2.
‡ 2 King Henry IV. Act I. Sc. 1.

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and yet, for the soul of me, I cannot see what is likely to turn out for the best. I might attempt the Perilous Castle of Douglas, but I fear the subject is too much used, and that I might again fail in it. Then being idle will never do, for a thousand reasons; all this I am thinking of till I am half sick. I wish James, who gives such stout advice when he thinks we are wrong, would tell us how to put things right. One is tempted to cry, 'Wo worth thee! is there no help in thee?' Perhaps it may be better to take no resolution till we all meet together.

"I certainly am quite decided to fulfil all my engagements, and, so far as I can, discharge the part of an honest man, and if any thing can be done mean-time for the Magnum, I shall be glad to do it.

"I trust James and you may get afloat next Saturday. You will think me like Murray in the farce—'I eat well, drink well, and sleep well, but that's all, Tom, that's all.' We will wear the thing through one way or other if we were once afloat, but you see all this is a scrape.

Yours truly, W. Scott."

This letter, Mr. Cadell says, "struck both James B. and myself with dismay." They resolved to go out to Abbotsford, but not for a few days, because a general meeting of the creditors was at hand, and there was reason to hope that its results would enable them to appear as the bearers of sundry pieces of good news. Mean-time, Sir Walter himself rallied considerably, and resolved, by way of testing his powers, while the novel hung suspended, to write a fourth epistle of Malachi Malagrowther on the public affairs of the period. The announcement of a political dissertation, at such a moment of universal excitement, and from a hand already trembling under the misgivings of a fatal malady, might well have filled Cadell and Ballantyne with new "dismay," even had they both been prepared to adopt, in the fullest extent, such views of the dangers of our state, and the remedies for them, as their friend was likely to dwell upon. They agreed that whatever they could safely do to avert this experiment must be done. Indeed they were both equally anxious to find, if it could be found, the means of withdrawing him from all literary labour, save only that of annotating his former novels. But they were not the only persons who had been, and then were, exerting all their art for that same purpose. His kind and skilful physicians, Doctors Abercromby and Ross of Edinburgh, had over and over preached the same doctrine, and assured him, that if he persisted in working his brain, nothing could prevent his malady from recurring, ere long, in redoubled severity. He answered—"As for bidding me not work, Molly might as well put the kettle on the fire, and say, *now, don't boil.*" To myself, when I ventured to address him in a similar strain, he replied, "I understand you, and I thank you from my heart, but I must tell you at once how it is with me. I am not sure that I am quite myself in all things; but I am sure that in one point there is no change. I mean that I foreseee distinctly, that if I were to be idle I should go mad. In comparison to this, death is no risk to shrink from."

The meeting of trustees and creditors took place on the 17th—Mr. George Forbes (brother to the late Sir William) in the chair. There was then announced another dividend on the Ballantyne estate of three shillings in the pound—thus reducing the original amount of the debt to about L.54,000. It had been not unnaturally apprehended that the convulsed state of politics might have checked the sale of the *Magnum Opus*; but this does not seem to have been the case to any extent worth notice. The meeting was numerous, and not contented with a renewed vote of thanks to their debtor, they passed unanimously the following resolution, which was moved by Mr. (now Sir James) Gibson Craig, and seconded by the late Mr. Thomas Allan—both, by the way, leading Whigs:

"That Sir Walter Scott be requested to accept of his furniture, plate, linens, paintings, library, and curiosities of every description, as the best means the creditors have of expressing their very high sense of his most honourable conduct, and in grateful acknowledgment for the unparalleled and most successful exertions he has made, and continues to make for them."

Sir Walter's letter, in answer to the chairman's communication, was as follows:—

To George Forbes, Esq., Edinburgh.

"Abbotsford, December 18, 1830.

"My dear Sir,

"I was greatly delighted with the contents of your letter, which not only enables me to eat with my own spoons, and study my own books, but gives me the still higher gratification of knowing that my conduct has been approved by those who were concerned.

"The best thanks which I can return is by continuing my earnest and unceasing attention—which, with a moderate degree of the good fortune which has hitherto attended my efforts, may enable me to bring these affairs to a fortunate conclusion. This will be the best way in which I can show my sense of the kind and gentlemanlike manner in which the meeting have acted.

"To yourself, my dear sir, I can only say, that good news become doubly acceptable when transmitted through a friendly channel; and considering my long and intimate acquaintance with your excellent brother and father, as well as yourself and other members of your family, your letter must be valuable in reference to the hand from which it comes, as well as to the information which it contains.

"I am sensible of your uniform kindness, and the present instance of it. Very much, my dear sir, your obliged humble servant,

Walter Scott."

On the 18th, Cadell and Ballantyne proceeded to Abbotsford, and found Sir Walter in a placid state—having evidently been much soothed and gratified with the tidings from Edinburgh. His whole appearance was greatly better than they had ventured to anticipate; and deferring literary questions till the morning, he made this gift from his creditors the chief subject of his conversation. He said it had taken a heavy load off his mind; he apprehended that, even if his future works should produce little money, the profits of the *Magnum*, during a limited number of years, with the sum which had been insured on his life, would be sufficient to obliterate the remaining moiety of the Ballantyne debt: he considered the library and museum now conveyed to him as worth at the least L.10,000, and this would enable him to make some provision for his younger children. He said that he designed to execute his last will without delay, and detailed to his friends all the particulars which the document ultimately embraced. He mentioned to them that he had recently received, through the Lord Chief Commissioner Adam, a message from the new King, intimating his Majesty's disposition to keep in mind his late brother's kind intentions with regard to Charles Scott; and altogether his talk, though grave, and on grave topics, was the reverse of melancholy.

Next morning, in Sir Walter's study, Ballantyne read aloud the political essay—which had (after the old fashion) grown to an extent far beyond what the author contemplated when he began his task. To print it in the Weekly Journal, as originally proposed, would now be hardly compatible with the limits of that paper: Sir Walter had resolved on a separate publication.

I believe no one ever saw this performance but the bookseller, the printer, and William Laidlaw; and I cannot pretend to have gathered any clear notion of its contents, except that the *panacea* was the re-imposition of the income-tax; and that after much reasoning in support of this measure, Sir Walter attacked the principle of Parliamentary Reform *in toto*. We need hardly suppose that he advanced any objections which would seem new to the students of the debates in both Houses during 1831 and 1832; his logic carried no conviction to the breast of his faithful amanuensis; but Mr. Laidlaw assures me, nevertheless, that in his opinion no composition of Sir Walter's happiest day contained any thing more admirable than the bursts of indignant and pathetic eloquence which here and there "set off a halting argument."

The critical arbiters, however, concurred in condemning the production. Cadell spoke out; he as-

* Sir Mark Chace in the farce of "A Roland for an Oliver."

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sured Sir Walter, that from not being in the habit of reading the newspapers and periodical works of the day, he had fallen behind the common rate of information on questions of practical policy; that the views he was enforcing had been already expounded by many Tories, and triumphantly answered by organs of the Liberal party; but that, be the intrinsic value and merit of these political doctrines what they might, he was quite certain that to put them forth at that season would be a measure of extreme danger for the author's personal interest: that it would throw a cloud over his general popularity, array a hundred active pens against any new work of another class that might soon follow, and perhaps even interrupt the hitherto splendid success of the Collection on which so much depended. On all these points Ballantyne, though with hesitation and diffidence, professed himself to be of Cadell's opinion. There ensued a scene of a very unpleasant sort; but by and by a kind of compromise was agreed to—the plan of a separate pamphlet, with the well-known *nom de guerre* of Malachi, was dropt; and Ballantyne was to stretch his columns so as to find room for the lucubration, adopting all possible means to mystify the public as to its parentage. This was the understanding when the conference broke up; but the unfortunate manuscript was soon afterwards committed to the flames. James Ballantyne accompanied the proof-sheet with many minute criticisms on the conduct as well as expression of the argument: the author's temper gave way—and the commentary shared the fate of the text.

Mr. Cadell opens a very brief account of this affair with expressing his opinion, that "Sir Walter never recovered it;" and he ends with an altogether needless apology for his own part in it. He did only what was his duty by his venerated friend; and he did it, I doubt not, as kindly in manner as in spirit. Even if the fourth Epistle of Malachi had been more like its precursors than I can well suppose it to have been, nothing could have been more unfortunate for Sir Walter than to come forward at that moment as a prominent antagonist of Reform. Such an appearance might very possibly have had the consequences to which the bookseller pointed in his remonstrance; but at all events it must have involved him in a maze of replies and rejoinders; and I think it too probable that some of the fiery disputants of the periodical press, if not of St. Stephen's Chapel, might have been ingenious enough to connect any real or fancied flaws in his argument with those circumstances in his personal condition which had for some time been darkening his own reflections with dim auguries of the fate of Swift and Marlborough. His reception of Ballantyne's affectionate candour may suggest what the effect of really hostile criticism would have been. The end was, that seeing how much he stood in need of some comfort, the printer and bookseller concurred in urging him not to despair of Count Robert. They assured him that he had attached too much importance to what had formerly been said about the defects of its opening chapters; and he agreed to resume the novel, which neither of them ever expected he would live to finish. "If we did wrong," says Cadell, "we did it for the best: we felt that to have spoken out as fairly on this as we had done on the other subject, would have been to make ourselves the bearers of a death-warrant." I hope there are not many men who would have acted otherwise in their painful situation.

On the 20th, after a long interval, Sir Walter once more took up his Journal: but the entries are few and short:—*e. g.*

"*December* 20, 1830.—Vacation and session are now the same to me. The long remove must then be looked to for the final signal to break up, and that is a serious thought.

"A circumstance of great consequence to my habits and comforts was my being released from the Court of Session. My salary, which was L.1300, was reduced to L.800. My friends, before leaving office, were desirous to patch up the deficiency with a pension. I did not see well how they could do this without being charged with obloquy, which they shall not be on my account. Besides, though L.500 a-year is a round sum, yet I would rather be independent than I would have it.

"I had also a kind communication about interfering to have me named a P. Counsellor. But besides that, when one is old and poor, one should avoid taking rank, I would be much happier if I thought any act of kindness was done to help forward Charles; and having said so much, I made my bow, and declared my purpose of remaining satisfied with my knighthood. All this is rather pleasing. Yet much of it looks like winding up my bottom for the rest of my life. But there is a worse symptom of settling accompts, of which I have felt some signs. Ever since my fall in February, it is very certain that I have seemed to speak with an impediment. To add to this, I have the constant increase of my lameness—the thigh-joint, knee-joint, and ankle-joint. I move with great pain in the whole limb, and am at every minute, during an hour's walk, reminded of my mortality. I should not care for all this, if I were sure of dying handsomely; and Cadell's calculations might be sufficiently firm, though the author of Waverley had pulled on his last nightcap. Nay, they might be even more trust-worthy, if remains and memoirs, and such like, were to give a zest to the posthumous. But the fear is, lest the blow be not sufficient to destroy life, and that I should linger on 'a driveller and a show.'

"*December* 24.—This morning died my old acquaintance and good friend, Miss Bell Ferguson, a woman of the most excellent conditions. The last two, or almost three years, were very sickly. A bitter cold day. Anne drove me over to Huntly-Burn. I found Colonel Ferguson, and Captain John, R. N., in deep affliction, expecting Sir Adam hourly. I wrote to Walter about the project of my Will.

"*December* 29.—Attended poor Miss Bell Ferguson's funeral. I sat by the Reverend Mr. Thomson. Though ten years younger than him, I found the barrier between him and me much broken down. The difference of ten years is little after sixty has passed. In a cold day I saw poor Bell laid in her cold bed. Life never parted with a less effort.

"*January* 1, 1831.—I cannot say the world opens pleasantly for me this new year. There are many things for which I have reason to be thankful; especially that Cadell's plans seem to have succeeded—and he augurs that the next two years will well-nigh clear me. But I feel myself decidedly wrecked in point of health, and am now confirmed I have had a paralytic touch. I speak and read with embarrassment, and even my hand-writing seems to stammer. This general failure

> 'With mortal crisis doth portend,
> My days to appropinque an end.'*

I am not solicitous about this, only if I were worthy I would pray God for a sudden death, and no interregnum between I cease to exercise reason and I cease to exist.

"*January* 5.—Very indifferent, with more awkward feelings than I can well bear up against. My voice sunk and my head strangely confused. When I begin to form my ideas for conversation expressions fail me, yet in solitude they are sufficiently arranged. I incline to hold that these ugly symptoms are the work of imagination; but, as Dr. Adam Ferguson, a firm man, if ever there was one in the world, said on such an occasion, *what is worse than imagination?* As Anne was vexed and frightened, I allowed her to send for young Clarkson. Of course he could tell but little save what I knew before.

"*January* 7.—A fine frosty day, and my spirits lighter. I have a letter of great comfort from Walter, who, in a manly, handsome, and dutiful manner, expresses his desire to possess the library and moveables of every kind at Abbotsford, with such a valuation laid upon them as I shall choose to impose. This removes the only delay to making my Will.

* Hudibras.

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"*January* 8.—Spent much time in writing instructions for my last will and testament. Have up two boys for shop-lifting—remained at Galashiels till four o'clock and returned starved. Could work none, and was idle all evening—try to-morrow. *Jan.* 9.—Went over to Galashiels, and was busied the whole time till three o'clock about a petty thieving affair, and had before me a pair of gallows'-birds, to whom I could say nothing for total want of proof, except, like the sapient Elbow, 'thou shalt continue there, know thou, thou shalt continue.' A little gallows-brood they were, and their fate will catch it. Sleepy, idle, and exhausted on this. Wrought little or none in the evening. *Jan.* 10.—Wrote a long letter to Henry Scott, who is a fine fellow, and what I call a Heart of Gold. He has sound parts, good sense, and is a true man. O, that I could see a strong party banded together for the King and country, and if I see I can do any thing, or have a chance of it, I will not fear for the skin-cutting. It is the selfishness of this generation that drives me mad.

'A hundred pounds!
Ha! thou hast touch'd me nearly.'

The letter here alluded to contains some striking sentences.

To Henry Francis Scott, Esq. Younger of Hayden, M. P.
"Abbotsford, 10th January, 1831.

"My dear Henry,

"* * * Unassisted by any intercourse with the existing world, but thinking over the present state of matters with all the attention in my power, I see but one line which can be taken by public men, that is really open, manly, and consistent. In the medical people's phrase, *Principiis obsta*: Oppose any thing that can in principle innovate on the Constitution, which has placed Great Britain at the head of the world, and will keep her there, unless she chooses to descend of her own accord from that eminence. There may, for aught I know, be with many people reasons for deranging it; but I take it on the broad basis that nothing will be ultimately gained by any one who is not prepared to go full republican lengths. To place elections on a more popular foot, would produce advantage in no view whatever. Increasing the numbers of the electors would not distinguish them with more judgment for selecting a candidate, nor render them less venal, though it might make their price cheaper. But it would expose them to a worse species of corruption than that of money—the same that has been and is practised more or less in all republics—I mean that the intellects of the people will be liable to be besotted by oratory *ad captandum*, more dangerous than the worst intoxicating liquors. As for the chance of a beneficial alteration in the representatives, we need only point to Preston, and other such like places, for examples of the sense, modesty, and merit which would be added to our legislation by a democratic extension of the franchise. To answer these doubts, I find one general reply among those not actually calling themselves Whigs—who are now too deeply pledged to acknowledge their own rashness. All others reply by a reference to the *spirit of the people*—intimating a passive, though apparently unwilling resignation to the will of the *multitude*. When you bring them to the point, they grant all the dangers you state, and then comes their melancholy—*What can we do?* The fact is, these timid men see they are likely to be called on for a pecuniary sacrifice, in the way of income-tax or otherwise, perhaps for military service in some constitutional fashion, certainly to exert themselves in various ways, and rather than do so they will let the public take a risk. An able young man, not too much afraid of his own voice, nor over-modest, but who remembers that any one who can speak intelligibly is always taken current at the price at which he estimates himself, might at this crisis do much by tearing off the liniments with which they are daubing the wounds of the country, and crying peace, peace, when we are steering full sail towards civil war.

"I am old enough to remember well a similar crisis. About 1792, when I was entering life, the admiration of the godlike system of the French Revolution was so rife, that only a few old-fashioned Jacobites and the like ventured to hint a preference for the land they lived in; or pretended to doubt that the new principles must be infused into our worn-out constitution. Burke appeared, and all the gibberish about the superior legislation of the French dissolved like an enchanted castle when the destined knight blows his horn before it. The talents, the almost prophetic powers of Burke are not needed on this occasion, for men can *now* argue from the past. We can point to the old British ensign floating from the British citadel; while the tricolour has been to gather up from the mire and blood—the shambles of a thousand defeats—a prosperous standard to rally under. Still, however, this is a moment of dulness and universal apathy, and I fear that, unless an Orlando should blow the horn, it might fail to awaken the sleepers. But though we cannot do all, we should at least do each of us whatever we can.

"I would fain have a society formed for extending mutual understanding. Place yourselves at the head, and call yourselves sons of St. Andrew, any thing or nothing—but let there be a mutual understanding. Unite and combine. You will be surprised to see how soon you will become fashionable. It was by something of this kind that the stand was made in 1791–2; *vis unita fortior*. I earnestly recommend to Charles Baillie, Johnstone of Alva, and yourself, to lose no opportunity to gather together the opinions of your friends; especially of your companions, for it is only among the young, I am sorry to say, that energy and real patriotism are now to be found. If it should be thought fit to admit peers, which will depend on the plans and objects adopted, our Chief ought naturally to be at the head. As for myself, no personal interests shall prevent my doing my best in the cause which I have always conceived to be that of my country. But I suspect there is little of me left to make my services worth the having. Why should not old Scotland have a party among her own children?—Yours very sincerely, my dear Henry,

WALTER SCOTT."

DIARY, *January* 11.—Wrote and sent off about three of my own pages in the morning, then walked with Swanston. I tried to write before dinner, but with drowsiness and pain in my head, made little way. A man carries no scales about him to ascertain his own value. I always remember the prayer of Virgil's sailor in extremity.

'Non jam prima peto Mnestheus, nec vincere certo,
Quanquam O!—Sed superent quibus hoc, Neptune, dedisti!
Extremos pudeat rediisse: hoc vincite, cives,
Et prohibete nefas!'*

We must to our oar; but I think this and another are all that even success would tempt me to write.

"*January* 17.—I had written two hours, when various visiters began to drop in. I was sick of these interruptions, and dismissed Mr. Laidlaw, having no hope of resuming my theme with spirit. God send me more leisure and fewer friends to peck it away by tea-spoonfuls. Another fool sends to entreat an autograph, which he should be ashamed in civility to ask, as I am to deny. I got notice of poor Henry Mackenzie's death. He has long maintained a niche in Scottish literature, gayest of the gay, though most sensitive of the sentimental.

January 18.—Dictated to Laidlaw till about one o'clock, during which time it was rainy. Afterwards I walked, sliding about in the mud, and very uncomfortable. In fact, there is no mistaking the three sufficients,† and Fate is now straitening its circumvallations around me.

'Come what come may,
Time and the hour run through the roughest day.'‡

"*January* 19.—Mr. Laidlaw came down at ten, and we wrote till one. This is an important help to me, as it saves both my eyesight and nerves, which last are cruelly affected by finding those who look out of the windows grow gradually darker and darker. Rode out, or, more properly, was carried out into the woods to see the course of a new road, which may serve to carry off the thinnings of the trees, and for rides. It is very well lined, and will serve both for beauty and convenience. Mr. Laidlaw engages to come back to dinner, and finish two or three more pages. Met my agreeable and ladylike neighbour, Mrs. Brewster, on my pony, and I was actually ashamed to be seen by her.

'Sir Denis Brand, and on so poor a steed!'§

"I believe detestable folly of this kind is the very last that leaves us. One would have thought I ought to have little vanity at this time o' day; but it is an abiding appurtenance of the old Adam, and

* Æneid. V.
† Sir W. alludes to Mrs. Piozzi's Tale of the Three Sufficient Warnings.
‡ *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 3.
§ Crabbe's *Borough*, Letter xiii.

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I write for penance what, like a fool, I actually felt. I think the peep, real or imaginary, at the gates of death, should have given me firmness not to mind little afflictions."

On the 31st of January, Miss Scott being too unwell for a journey, Sir Walter went alone to Edinburgh, for the purpose of executing his last will. He (for the first time in his native town) took up his quarters at a hotel; but the noise of the street disturbed him during the night (another evidence how much his nervous system had been shattered,) and next day he was persuaded to remove to his bookseller's house in Athol Crescent. In the apartment allotted to him there he found several little pieces of furniture, which some kind person had purchased for him at the sale in Castle Street, and which he presented to Mrs. Cadell. "Here," says his letter to Mrs. Lockhart, "I saw various things that belonged to poor No. 39. I had many sad thoughts on seeing and handling them—but they are in kind keeping, and I was glad they had not gone to strangers."

There came on next day a storm of such severity that he had to remain under this friendly roof until the 9th of February. His host perceived that he was unfit for any company but the quietest, and had sometimes one old friend, Mr. Thomson, Mr. Clerk, or Mr. Skene to dinner—but no more. He seemed glad to see them—but they all observed him with pain. He never took the lead in conversation, and often remained altogether silent. In the mornings he wrote usually for several hours at Count Robert; and Mr. Cadell remembers in particular, that on Ballantyne's reminding him that a motto was wanted for one of the chapters already finished, he looked out for a moment at the gloomy weather, and penned these lines—

"The storm increases—'tis no sunny shower,
Foster'd in the moist breast of March or April,
Or such as parched summer cools his lips with.
Heaven's windows are flung wide; the inmost deeps
Call in hoarse greeting one upon another;
On comes the flood in all its foaming horrors,
And where's the dike shall stop it!"

(*The Deluge: a Poem.*)

On the 4th of February the will was signed, and attested by Nicolson, to whom Sir Walter explained the nature of the document, adding, "I deposite it for safety in Mr. Cadell's hands, and I still hope it may be long before he has occasion to produce it." Poor Nicolson was much agitated, but stammered out a deep *amen*.

Another object of this journey was to consult, on the advice of Dr. Ebenezer Clarkson, a skilful mechanist, by name *Fortune*, about a contrivance for the support of the lame limb, which had of late given him much pain, as well as inconvenience. Mr. Fortune produced a clever piece of handiwork, and Sir Walter felt at first great relief from the use of it: insomuch that his spirits rose to quite the old pitch, and his letter to me upon the occasion overflows with merry applications of sundry maxims and verses about *Fortune*. "*Fortes Fortuna adjuvat*"—he says—"never more sing I

'Fortune, my Foe, why dost thou frown on me?
And will my Fortune never better be?
Wilt thou, I say, for ever breed my pain?
And wilt thou ne'er return my joys again?'"

No—let my ditty be henceforth—

'Fortune, my friend, how well thou favourest me!
A kinder Fortune man did never see!
Thou propp'st my thigh, thou ridd'st my knee of pain,
I'll walk, I'll mount—I'll be a man again.'"

This expedient was undoubtedly of considerable service; but the use of it was not, after a short interval, so easy as at first: it often needed some little repair, too, and then in its absence he felt himself more helpless than before. Even then, however, the name was sure to tempt some ludicrous twisting of words. A little after this time he dictated a reviewal (never published) of a book called *Robson's British Herald*; and in mentioning it to me, he says, "I have given Laidlaw a long spell today at the saltires and fesses. No thanks to me, for my machine is away to be tightened in one bit, and loosened in another. I was telling Willie Laidlaw that I might adopt, with a slight difference, the motto of the noble Tullibardine:—'Furth Fortune and *fill* the Fetters.'"*

Of this excursion to Edinburgh, the Diary says: "*Abbotsford, February* 9.—The snow became impassable, and in Edinburgh I remained immovably fixed for ten days, never getting out of doors, save once or twice to dinner, when I went and returned in a sedan-chair. Cadell made a point of my coming to his excellent house, where I had no less excellent an apartment and the most kind treatment; that is, no making a show of me, for which I was in but bad tune. Abercromby and Rose had me bled with cupping-glasses, reduced me confoundedly, and restricted me of all creature comforts. But they did me good, as I am sure they sincerely meant to do; I got rid of a giddy feeling which I had been plagued with, and have certainly returned much better. I did not neglect my testamentary affairs. I executed my last will, leaving Walter burdened with L.1000 to Sophia, L.2000 to Anne, and the same to Charles. He is to advance them this money if they want it; if not, to pay them interest. All this is his own choice, otherwise I would have sold the books and rattletraps. I have made provisions for clearing my estate by my publications, should it be possible; and should that prove possible, from the time of such clearance being effected, to be a fund available to all my children who shall be alive or leave representatives. My bequests must many of them seem hypothetical.

"During this unexpected stay in town I dined with the Lord Chief Commissioner, with the Skenes twice, with Lord Medwyn, and was as happy as anxiety about my daughter would permit me. The appearance of the streets was most desolate; the hackney-coaches strolling about like ghosts with four horses; the foot passengers few, except the lowest of the people. I wrote a good deal of Count Robert, yet, I cannot tell why, my pen stammers egregiously, and I write horridly incorrect. I longed to have friend Laidlaw's assistance.

"A heavy and most effective thaw coming on, I got home about five at night, and found the haugh covered with water; dogs, pigs, cows, to say nothing of human beings, all that slept at the offices in danger of being drowned. They came up to the mansion-house about midnight, with such an infernal clamour, that Anne thought we were attacked by Captain Swing and all the Radicals."

After this the Diary offers but a few unimportant entries during several weeks. He continued working at the Novel, and when discouraged about it, gave a day to his article on Heraldry: but he never omitted to spend many hours, either in writing or in dictating something; and Laidlaw, when he came down a few minutes beyond the appointed time, was sure to be rebuked. At the beginning of March, he was anew roused about political affairs; and bestowed four days on drawing up an address against the Reform Bill, which he designed to be adopted by the Freeholders of the Forest. They, however, preferred a shorter one from the pen of a plain country gentleman (the late Mr. Elliott Lockhart of Borthwickbrae,) who had often represented them in Parliament: and Sir Walter, it is probable, felt this disappointment more acutely than he has chosen to indicate in his Journal.

"*February* 10.—I set to work with Mr. Laidlaw, and had after that a capital ride; my pony, little used, was somewhat frisky, but I rode on to Huntly-Burn. Began my diet on my new regime, and like it well, especially porridge to supper. It is wonderful how old tastes rise.—*Feb.* 23, 24, 25.—These three days I can hardly be said to have varied from my

* I believe this is the only verse of the old song (often alluded to by Shakspeare and his contemporaries) that has as yet been recovered.

* "*Fill* the fetters," in the original. No bad motto for the Duke of Athole's ancestors—great predatory chiefs of the Highland frontier.

ordinary. Rose at seven, dressed before eight—wrote letters, or did any little business till a quarter past nine. Then breakfasted. Mr. Laidlaw comes from ten till one. Then take the pony, and ride—*quantum mutatus*—two or three miles, John Swanston walking by my bridle-rein lest I fall off. Come home about three or four. Then to dinner on a single plain dish and half a tumbler, or, by'r Lady, three fourths of a tumbler of whiskey and water. Then sit till six o'clock, when enter Mr. Laidlaw again, who works commonly till eight. After this, work usually alone till half-past ten; sup on porridge and milk, and so to bed. The work is half done. If any one asks what time I take to think on the composition, I might say, in one point of view, it was seldom five minutes out of my head the whole day—in another light, it was never the serious subject of consideration at all, for it never occupied my thoughts for five minutes together, except when I was dictating. *Feb.* 27.—Being Saturday, no Mr. Laidlaw came yesterday evening, nor to-day, being Sunday.—*Feb.* 28.—Past ten, and Mr. Laidlaw, the model of clerks in other respects, is not come yet. He has never known the value of time, so is not quite accurate in punctuality; but that, I hope, will come, if I can drill him into it without hurting him. I think I hear him coming. I am like the poor wizard, who is first puzzled how to raise the devil, and then how to employ him. Worked till one, then walked with great difficulty and pain.—*March* 5.—I have a letter from our member, Whytebank, adjuring me to assist the gentlemen of the county with an address against the Reform Bill, which menaces them with being blended with Peebles-shire, and losing, of consequence, one-half of their functions. Sandie Pringle conjures me not to be very nice in choosing my epithets. Torwoodle comes over and speaks to the same purpose, adding, it will be the greatest service I can do the country, &c. This, in a manner, drives me out of a resolution to keep myself clear of politics, and let them 'fight dog, fight bear.' But I am too easy to be persuaded to bear a hand. The young Duke of Buccleuch comes to visit me also; so I promised to shake my duds, and give them a cast of my calling—fall back, fall edge.

"*March* 7, 8, 9, 10.—In these four days I drew up, with much anxiety, an address in reprobation of the Bill, both with respect to Selkirkshire, and in its general purport. Mr. Laidlaw, though he is on t'other side on the subject, thinks it the best thing I ever wrote; and I myself am happy to find that it cannot be said to smell of the apoplexy. But it was too declamatory, too much like a pamphlet, and went far too generally into opposition, to please the county gentlemen, who are timidly inclined to dwell on their own grievances, rather than the public wrongs. Must try to get something for Mr. Laidlaw, for I am afraid I am twaddling. I do not think my head is weakened—yet a strange vacillation makes me suspect. Is it not thus that men begin to fail,—becoming, as it were, infirm of purpose?—

> —'That way madness lies—let me shun that,
> No more of that.'—

Yet why be a child about it? What must be, will be.

"*March* 11.—This day we had our meeting at Selkirk. I found Borthwickbrae (late member) had sent the frame of an address, which was tabled by Mr. Andrew Lang. It was the reverse of mine in every respect. It was short and to the point. It only contained a remonstrance against the incorporation with Selkirkshire, and left it to be inferred that they opposed the bill in other respects. As I saw that it met the ideas of the meeting (six in number) better by far than mine, I instantly put that in my pocket. But I endeavoured to add to their complaint of a private wrong a general clause, stating their sense of the hazard of passing at once a bill full of such violent innovations. But though Harden, Alva, and Torwoodlee voted for this measure, it was refused by the rest of the meeting, to my disappointment. I was a fool to 'stir such a dish of skimmed milk with so honourable an action.'* If some of the gentlemen of the press, whose livelihood is lying, were to get hold of this story, what would they make of it? It gives me a right to decline future interference, and let the world wag—'Transeat cum cæteris erroribus.'—I only gave way to one jest. A rat-catcher was desirous to come and complete his labours in my house, and I, who thought he only talked and laughed with the servants, recommended him to go to the head-courts and meetings of freeholders, where he would find rats in plenty.

"I will make my opinion public at every place where I shall be called upon or expected to appear; but I will not thrust myself forward again. May the Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this vow!"

He kept it in all its parts. Though urged to take up his pen against the ministerial Reform Bill, by several persons of high consequence, who, of course, little knew his real condition of health, he resolutely refused to make any such experiment again. But he was equally resolved to be absent from no meeting at which, as Sheriff or Deputy-Lieutenant, he might naturally be expected to appear in his place, and record his aversion to the Bill. The first of these meetings was one of the freeholders of Roxburgh, held at Jedburgh, on the 21st of March, and there, to the distress and alarm of his daughter, he insisted on being present, and proposing one of the Tory resolutions,—which he did in a speech of some length, but delivered in a tone so low, and with such hesitation in utterance, that only a few detached passages were intelligible to the bulk of the audience.

"We are told" (said he) "on high authority, that France is the model for us,—that we and all the other nations ought to put ourselves to school there, and endeavour to take out our degrees at *the University of Paris.*†—The French are a very ingenious people; they have often tried to borrow from us, and now we should repay the obligation by borrowing a leaf from them. But I fear there is an incompatibility between the tastes and habits of France and Britain, and that we may succeed as ill in copying them as they have hitherto done in copying us. We in this district are proud, and with reason, that the first chain-bridge was the work of a Scotchman. It still hangs where he erected it, a pretty long time ago. The French heard of our invention, and determined to introduce it, but with great improvements and embellishments. A friend of my own saw the thing tried. It was on the Seine at Marly. The French chain-bridge looked lighter and airier than the prototype. Every Englishman present was disposed to confess that we had been beat at our own trade. But by and by the gates were opened, and the multitude were to pass over. It began to swing rather formidably beneath the pressure of the good company; and by the time the architect, who led the procession in great pomp and glory, reached the middle, the whole gave way, and he, worthy, patriotic artist, was the first who got a ducking. They had forgot the great middle bolt,—or rather, this ingenious person had conceived that to be a clumsy looking feature, which might safely be dispensed with, while he put some invisible gimcrack of his own to supply its place."—— Here Sir Walter was interrupted by violent hissing and hooting from the populace of the town, who had flocked in and occupied the greater part of the Court-House. He stood calmly till the storm subsided, and resumed; but the friend whose notes are before me, could not catch what he said, until his voice rose with another illustration of the old style. "My friends," he said, "I am old and failing, and you think me full of very silly prejudices; but I have seen a good deal of public men, and thought a good deal of public affairs in my day, and I can't help suspecting, that the manufacturers of this new constitution are like a parcel of schoolboys taking to pieces a watch which used to go tolerably well for all practical purposes, in the conceit that they can put it together again far better than the old watchmaker. I fear they will

* *Hotspur* in King Henry IV., Act II., Scene 3.

† See Edinburgh Review for October, 1830, p. 22.

fail when they come to the re-construction, and I should not, I confess, be much surprised if it were to turn out that their first step had been to break the main-spring."—Here he was again stopped by a confused Babel of contemptuous sounds, which seemed likely to render further attempts ineffectual. He, abruptly and unheard, proposed his Resolution, and then turning to the riotous artisans, exclaimed, "I regard your gabble no more than the geese on the green." His countenance glowed with indignation, as he resumed his seat on the bench. But when, a few moments afterwards, the business being over, he rose to withdraw, every trace of passion was gone. He turned round at the door, and bowed to the assembly. Two or three, not more, renewed their hissing; he bowed again, and took leave in the words of the doomed gladiator, which I hope none who had joined in these insults understood—"MORITURUS VOS SALUTO."

Of this meeting there is but a very slight notice in one of the next extracts from his Diary; another of them refers to that remarkable circumstance in English history, the passing of the first Reform Bill in the Commons, on the 22d of March, by a majority of *one;* and a third to the last really good portrait that was painted of himself. This was the work of Mr. Francis Grant (brother of the Laird of Kilgraston,) whose subsequent career has justified the Diarist's prognostications. This excellent picture, in which, from previous familiarity with the subject, he was able to avoid the painful features of recent change, was done for his and Sir Walter's friend, Lady Ruthven.

"*March* 20.—Little of this day, but that it was so uncommonly windy that I was almost blown off my pony, and was glad to grasp the mane to prevent its actually happening. I began the third volume of Count Robert of Paris, which has been on the anvil during all these vexatious circumstances of politics and health. But the blue heaven bends over all. It may be ended in a fortnight, if I keep my scheme. But I *will* take time enough. I thought I was done with politics, but it is easy getting into the mess, but difficult, and sometimes disgraceful to get out. I have a letter from Sheriff Oliver, desiring me to go to Jedburgh on Monday, and show countenance by adhering to a set of propositions. Though not well drawn, they are uncompromising enough, so I will not part company.

"*March* 22.—Went yesterday at nine o'clock to the meeting; a great number present, with a mob of Reformers, who showed their sense of propriety by hissing, hooting, and making all sorts of noises. And these unwashed artificers are from henceforth to select our legislators. What can be expected from them except such a thick-headed plebeian as will be 'a hair-brained Hotspur, guided by a whim?' There was some speaking, but not good. I said something, for I could not sit quiet. I did not get home till past nine, having fasted the whole time.

"*March* 25.—The measure carried by a single vote. In other circumstances one would hope for the interference of the House of Lords, but it is all hab nab at a venture, as Cervantes says. The worst is, that there is a popular party who want personal power, and are highly unfitted to enjoy it. It has fallen easily, the old constitution; no buffying Mirabeau to assail, no eloquent Maury to defend. It has been thrown away like a child's broken toy. Well—the good sense of the people is much trusted to; we shall see what it will do for us. The curse of Cromwell on those whose conceit brought us to this pass. *Sed transeat.* It is vain to mourn what cannot be mended.

"*March* 26.—Frank Grant and his lady came here.* Frank will, I believe, if he attends to his profession, be one of the celebrated men of the age. He has long been well known to me as the companion of my sons and the partner of my daughters. In youth, that is, in extreme youth, he was passionately fond of fox-hunting and other sports, but not of any species of gambling. He had also a strong passion for painting, and made a little collection. As he had sense enough to feel that a younger brother's fortune would not last long under the expenses of a good stud and a rare collection of *chefs d'œuvre*, he used to avow his intention to spend his patrimony, about £10,000, and then again to make his fortune by the law. The first he soon accomplished. But the law is not a profession so easily acquired, nor did Frank's talents lie in that direction. His passion for painting turned out better. Connoisseurs approved of his sketches, both in pencil and oil, but not without the sort of criticisms made on these occasions—that they were admirable for an amateur—but it could not be expected that he should submit to the actual drudgery absolutely necessary for a profession—and all that species of criticism which gives way before natural genius and energy of character. In the mean-time Frank saw the necessity of doing something to keep himself independent, having, I think, too much spirit to become a *Jock the Laird's brither*, drinking out the last glass of the bottle, riding the horses which the laird wishes to sell, and drawing sketches to amuse the lady and the children. He was above all this, and honourably resolved to cultivate his taste for painting, and become a professional artist. I am no judge of painting, but I am conscious that Francis Grant possesses, with much cleverness, a sense of beauty derived from the best source, that is, the observation of really good society, while, in many modern artists, the want of that species of feeling is so great as to be revolting. His former acquaintances render his immediate entrance into business completely secure, and it will rest with himself to carry on his success. He has, I think, that degree of force of character which will make him keep and enlarge any reputation which he may acquire. He has confidence, too, in his own power, always requisite for a young gentleman trying things of this sort, whose aristocratic pretensions must be envied. *March* 29.—Frank Grant is still with me, and is well pleased. I think very advisedly so, with a cabinet picture of myself, armour and so forth, together with my two noble stag-hounds. The dogs sat charmingly, but the picture took up some time."

I must insert a couple of letters written about this time. That to the Secretary of the Literary Fund, one of the most useful and best managed charities in London, requires no explanation. The other was addressed to the Rev. Alexander Dyce, on receiving a copy of that gentleman's edition of Greene's Plays, with a handsome dedication. Sir Walter, it appears, designed to make Greene and Webster the subject of an article in the Quarterly Review. It is proper to observe that he had never met their editor, though two or three letters had formerly passed between them. The little volume which he sent in return to Mr. Dyce, was "the Trial of Duncan Terig and Alexander Macdonald,"—one of the Bannatyne Club books.

To B. Nichols, Esq., Registrar of the Literary Fund, London.

"Abbotsford, 29th March, 1831.

"Sir,

"I am honoured with your obliging letter of the 25th current, flattering me with the information that you had placed my name on the list of stewards for the Literary Fund, at which, I am sorry to say, it will not be in my power to attend, as I do not come to London this season. You, sir, and the other gentlemen who are making such efforts in behalf of literature, have a right to know, why a person, who has been much favoured by the public, should decline joining an institution whose object it is to relieve those who have been less fortunate than himself, or, in plain words, to contribute to the support of the poor of my own guild. If I could justly accuse myself of this species of selfishness, I should think that I did a very wrong thing. But the wants of those whose distresses and merits are known to me, are of such a nature, that what I have the means of sparing for the relief of others, is not nearly equal to what I wish. Any thing which I might contribute to your Fund would, of course, go to the relief of other objects, and the encouragement of excellent persons, doubtless, to whom I am a stranger

* Mr. Francis Grant had recently married Miss Norman, a niece of the Duke of Rutland's.

and from having some acquaintance with the species of distress to be removed, I believe I shall aid our general purpose best, by doing such service as I can to misery which cannot be so likely to attract your eyes.

"I cannot express myself sufficiently upon the proposal which supposes me willing to do good, and holds out an opportunity to that effect. I am, with great respect to the trustees and other gentlemen of the Fund, sir, your obliged humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Rev. Alexander Dyce, London.

"Abbotsford, March 31, 1831.

"Dear Sir,

"I had the pleasure of receiving Greene's Plays, with which, as works of great curiosity, I am highly gratified. If the editor of the Quarterly consents, as he probably will, I shall do my endeavour to be useful, though I am not sure when I can get admission. I shall be inclined to include Webster, who, I think, is one of the best of our ancient dramatists; if you will have the kindness to tell the bookseller to send it to Whittaker, under cover to me, care of Mr. Cadell, Edinburgh, it will come safe, and be thankfully received. Marlowe and others I have,—and some acquaintance with the subject, though not much.

"I have not been well; threatened with a determination of blood to the head; but by dint of bleeding and regimen, I have recovered. I have lost, however, like Hamlet, all habit of my exercise, and, once able to walk thirty miles a day, or ride a hundred, I can hardly walk a mile, or ride a pony four or five.

"I will send you, by Whittaker, a little curious tract of murder, in which a ghost is the principal evidence. The spirit did not carry his point, however; for the apparition, though it should seem the men were guilty, threw so much ridicule on the whole story, that they were acquitted.*

"I wish you had given us more of Greene's prose works. I am, with regard, dear sir, yours sincerely,

WALTER SCOTT."

To resume the Diary—"*March* 30.—Bob Dundas† and his wife (Miss Durham that was) came to spend a day or two. I was heartily glad to see him, being my earliest and best friend's son. John Swinton, too, came on the part of an Anti-Reform meeting in Edinburgh, who exhorted me to take up the pen, but I declined and pleaded health, which God knows I have a right to urge. I might have urged also the chance of my breaking down, but that would be a cry of *wolf*, which might very well prove real.—*April* 2.—Mr. Henry Liddell, eldest son of Lord Ravensworth, arrives here. I like him and his brother Tom very much, although they are what may be called fine men. Henry is accomplished, is an artist and musician, and certainly has a fine taste for poetry, though he may never cultivate it.—*April* 8.—This day I took leave of poor Major John Scott,‡ who, being afflicted with a distressing asthma, has resolved upon selling his house of Ravenswood, which he had dressed up with much neatness, and going abroad. Without having been intimate friends, we were always affectionate relations, and now we part probably never to meet in this world. He has a good deal of the character said to belong to the family. Our parting with mutual feeling may be easily supposed."

The next entry relates to the last public appearance that the writer ever made, under circumstances at all pleasant, in his native country. He had taken great interest about a new line of mail-road between Selkirk and Edinburgh, which runs in view of Abbotsford across the Tweed; but he never saw it completed.

"*April* 11.—This day I went with Anne, and Miss Jane Erskine,§ to see the laying of the stones of foundation for two bridges in my neighbourhood over Tweed and the Ettrick. There were a great many people assembled. The day was beautiful, the scene was romantic, and the people in good spirits and good-humour. Mr. Paterson of Galashiels* made a most excellent prayer: Mr. Smith† gave a proper repast to the workmen, and we subscribed sovereigns a piece to provide for any casualty. I laid the foundation-stone of the bridge over Tweed, and Mr. C. B. Scott of Woll,‡ the foundation-stone of that of Ettrick. The general spirit of good-humour made the scene, though without parade, extremely interesting.

"*April* 12.—We breakfasted with the Fergusons, after which Anne and Miss Erskine walked up the Rhymer's Glen. I could as easily have made a pilgrimage to Rome with peas in my shoes unboiled. I drove home, and began to work about ten o'clock. At one o'clock I rode, and sent off what I had finished. Mr. Laidlaw dined with me. In the afternoon we wrote five or six pages more. I am, I fear, sinking a little from having too much space to fill, and a want of the usual inspiration—which makes me, like the chariot-wheels of Pharaoh in the sands of the Red Sea, drive heavily. It is the less matter if this prove, as I suspect, the last of this fruitful family.—*April* 13.—Corrected proofs in the morning. At ten o'clock began where I had left off at my romance. Laidlaw begins to smite the rock for not giving forth the water in quantity sufficient. I have against me the disadvantage of being called the Just, and every one of course is willing to worry me. But they have been long at it, and even those works which have been worst received at their first appearance, now keep their ground fairly enough. So we'll try our old luck another voyage. It is a close thick rain, and I cannot ride, and I am too dead lame to walk in the house. So feeling really exhausted, I will try to sleep a little.—My nap was a very short one, and was agreeably replaced by Basil Hall's Fragments of Voyages. Every thing about the inside of a vessel is interesting, and my friend B. H. has the good sense to know this is the case. I remember when my eldest brother took the humour of going to sea, James Watson used to be invited to George's Square to tell him such tales of hardships as might disgust him with the service. Such were my poor mother's instructions. But Captain Watson could not by all this render a sea life disgusting to the young midshipman, or to his brother, who looked on and listened. Hall's accounts of the assistance given to the Spaniards at Cape Finisterre, and the absurd behaviour of the Junta, are highly interesting. A more inefficient, yet a more resolved class of men than the Spaniards, were never conceived.—*April* 16.—Lord Meadowbank and his son. Skene walks with me. Weather enchanting. About one hundred leaves will now complete Robert of Paris. Query, if the last? Answer—Not knowing, can't say. I think it will."——

The Captain Watson, R. N., alluded to in one of these extracts, was distantly related to Sir Walter's mother. His son, Mr. John Watson Gordon, has risen to great eminence as a painter; and his portraits of Scott and Hogg rank among his best pieces. That of the Ettrick Shepherd is indeed perfect; and Sir Walter's has only the disadvantage of having been done a little too late. These masterly pictures are both in Mr. Cadell's possession.

CHAPTER LXXX.

APOPLECTIC PARALYSIS—MISS FERRIER—DR. MACKINTOSH MACKAY—SCENES AT JEDBURGH AND SELKIRK—CASTLE DANGEROUS—EXCURSION TO DOUGLASDALE, CHURCH OF ST. BRIDE'S, ETC.—TURNER'S DESIGNS FOR THE POETRY—LAST VISITS TO SMAILHOLM—REMERSIDE—ETTRICK, ETC.—VISIT OF CAPTAIN BURNS—MR. ADOLPHUS—AND MR. WORDSWORTH—"YARROW REVISITED," AND SONNET ON THE EILDONS.—APRIL—OCTOBER, 1831.

THE next entry in the Diary is as follows:—

"From Saturday, 16th April, to Sunday, 24th of the same month, unpleasantly occupied by ill health

* See Scott's Letters on Demonology, vol. I.

† Mr. Dundas of Arniston.

‡ This gentleman, a brother to the Laird of Raeburn, had made some fortune in the East Indies, and bestowed the name of *Ravenswood* on a villa which he built near Melrose. He died in 1831.

§ A daughter of Lord Kinnedder's.

* The Rev. N. Paterson, now one of the Ministers of Glasgow.

† Mr. John Smith of Darnick, the builder of Abbotsford, and architect of these bridges.

‡ This gentleman died in Edinburgh on 4th February, 1836.

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and its consequences. A distinct stroke of paralysis, affecting both my nerves and speech, though beginning only on Monday with a very bad cold. Doctor Abercromby was brought out by the friendly care of Cadell, but young Clarkson had already done the needful, that is, had bled and blistered, and placed me on a very reduced diet. Whether precautions have been taken in time, I cannot tell. I think they have, though severe in themselves, beat the disease; but I am alike prepared."

The preceding paragraph has been deciphered with difficulty. The blow which it records was greatly more severe than any that had gone before it. Sir Walter's friend, Lord Meadowbank, had come to Abbotsford, as usual when on the Jedburgh circuit; and he would make an effort to receive the Judge in something of the old style of the place; he collected several of the neighbouring gentry to dinner, and tried to bear his wonted part in the conversation. Feeling his strength and spirits flagging, he was tempted to violate his physician's directions, and took two or three glasses of champagne, not having tasted wine for several months before. On retiring to his dressing-room, he had this severe shock of apoplectic paralysis, and kept his bed under the surgeon's hands for several days.

Shortly afterwards his eldest son and his daughter Sophia arrived at Abbotsford. It may be supposed that they would both have been near him instantly, had that been possible; but, not to mention the dread of seeming to be alarmed about him, Major Scott's regiment was stationed in a very disturbed district, and his sister was still in a disabled state from the relics of a rheumatic fever. I followed her a week later, when we established ourselves at Chiefswood for the rest of the season. Charles Scott had some months before this time gone to Naples, as an attaché to the British Embassy there. During the next six months, the Major was at Abbotsford every now and then—as often as circumstances could permit him to be absent from his Hussars.

DIARY,—"*April* 27, 1831.—They have cut me off from animal food and fermented liquors of every kind; and, thank God, I can fast with any one. I walked out and found the day delightful; the woods too looking charming, just bursting forth to the tune of the birds. I have been whistling on my wits like so many chickens, and cannot miss any of them. I feel on the whole better than I have yet done. I believe I have fined and recovered, and so may be thankful.—*April* 28, 29.—Walter made his appearance here, well and stout, and completely recovered from his stomach complaints by abstinence. He has youth on his side; and I in age must submit to be a Lazarus. The medical men persist in recommending a seton. I am no friend to these remedies, and will be sure of the neccssity before I yield consent. The dying like an Indian under tortures is no joke; and as Commodore Trunnion says, I feel heart-whole as a biscuit. *April* 30—*May* 1.—Go on with Count Robert half a dozen leaves per day. I am not much behind with my hand-work. The task of pumping my brains becomes inevitably harder when

'Both chain pumps are choked below;'

and though this may not be the case literally, yet the apprehension is well-nigh as bad.—*May* 3.—Sophia arrives—with all the children looking well and beautiful, except poor Johnnie, who looks pale. But it is no wonder, poor thing!—*May* 4.—I have a letter from Lockhart, promising to be down by next Wednesday. I shall be glad to see and consult with Lockhart. My pronunciation is a good deal improved. My time glides away ill employed, but I am afraid of the palsy. I should not like to be pinned to my chair. I believe even that kind of life is more endurable than we could suppose—yet the idea is terrible to a man who has been active. Your wishes are limited to your little circle. My own circle in bodily matters is narrowing daily; not so in intellectual matters—but of that I am perhaps a worse judge. The plough is nearing the end of the furrow.

"*May* 5.—A fleece of letters, which must be answered I suppose,—all from persons my zealous admirers of course, and expecting a degree of generosity, which will put to rights all their maladies, physical and mental, and that I can make up whatever losses have been their lot, raise them to a desirable rank, and will stand their protector and patron. I must, they take it for granted, be astonished at having an address from a stranger; on the contrary, I would be astonished if any of these extravagant epistles came from any one who had the least title to enter into correspondence. My son Walter takes leave of me to-day, to return to Sheffield. At his entreaty I have agreed to put in a seton, which they seem all to recommend. My own opinion is, this addition to my tortures will do me no good—but I cannot hold out against my son.

"*May* 6, 7, 8.—Here is a precious job. I have a formal remonstrance from these critical people, Ballantyne and Cadell, against the last volume of Count Robert, which is within a sheet of being finished. I suspect their opinion will be found to coincide with that of the public; at least it is not very different from my own. The blow is a stunning one, I suppose, for I scarcely feel it. It is singular, but it comes with as little surprise as if I had a remedy ready, yet, God knows, I am at sea in the dark, and the vessel leaky, I think, into the bargain. I cannot conceive that I should have tied a knot with my tongue which my teeth cannot untie. We shall see.—I have suffered terribly, that is the truth, rather in body than in mind, and I often wish I could lie down and sleep without waking. But I will fight it out if I can. It would argue too great an attachment of consequence to my literary labours to sink under critical clamour. Did I know how to begin, I would begin again this very day, although I knew I should sink at the end. After all, this is but fear and faintness of heart, though of another kind from that which trembleth at a loaded pistol. My bodily strength is terribly gone; perhaps my mental too."

On my arrival, (May 10th,) I found Sir Walter to have rallied considerably; yet his appearance, as I first saw him, was the most painful sight I had ever then seen. Knowing at what time I might be expected, he had been lifted on his pony, and advanced about half a mile on the Selkirk road to meet me. He moved at a foot-pace, with Laidlaw at one stirrup, and his forester Swanston (a fine fellow, who did all he could to replace Tom Purdie) at the other. Abreast was old Peter Mathieson on horseback, with one of my children astride before him on a pillion. Sir Walter had had his head shaved, and wore a black silk night-cap under his blue bonnet. All his garments hung loose about him; his countenance was thin and haggard, and there was an obvious distortion in the muscles of one cheek. His look, however, was placid—his eye as bright as ever—perhaps brighter than it ever was in health; he smiled with the same affectionate gentleness, and though at first it was not easy to understand every thing he said, he spoke cheerfully and manfully.

He had resumed, and was trying to recast, his novel. All the medical men had urged him, by every argument, to abstain from any such attempts; but he smiled on them in silence, or answered with some jocular rhyme. One note has this postscript—a parody on a sweet lyric of Burns's—

"Dour, dour, and eident was he,
Dour and eident but-and-ben—
Dour against their barley-water,
And eident on the Bramah pen."

He told me that in the winter he had more than once tried writing with his own hand, because he had no longer the same "pith and birr" that formerly rendered dictation easy to him; but that the experiment failed. He was now sensible he could do nothing without Laidlaw to hold "the Bramah pen," adding, "Willie is a kind clerk—I see by his looks when I am pleasing him, and that pleases me." And, however the cool critic may now estimate *Count Robert*, no one who then saw the author could wonder that Laidlaw's prevalent feeling

in writing those pages should have been admiration. Under the full consciousness that he had sustained three or four strokes of apoplexy or palsy, or both combined, and tortured by various attendant ailments, cramp, rheumatism in half his joints, daily increasing lameness, and now of late gravel, (which was, though last, not least,) he retained all the energy of his will, struggled manfully against this sea of troubles, and might well have said seriously, as he more than once both said and wrote playfully,

"'Tis not in mortals to command success,
But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it."*

To assist them in amusing him in the hours which he spent out of his study, and especially that he might be tempted to make those hours more frequent, his daughters had invited his friend the authoress of *Marriage* to come out to Abbotsford; and her coming was serviceable. For she knew and loved him well, and she had seen enough of affliction akin to his, to be well skilled in dealing with it. She could not be an hour in his company without observing what filled his children with more sorrow than all the rest of the case. He would begin a story as gayly as ever, and go on, in spite of the hesitation in his speech, to tell it with highly picturesque effect—but before he reached the point, it would seem as if some internal spring had given way—he paused, and gazed round him with the blank anxiety of look that a blind man has when he has dropped his staff. Unthinking friends sometimes pained him sadly by giving him the catch-word abruptly. I noticed the delicacy of Miss Ferrier on such occasions. Her sight was bad, and she took care not to use her glasses when he was speaking; and she affected to be also troubled with deafness, and would say, "Well, I am getting as dull as a post; I have not heard a word since you said so and so"—being sure to mention a circumstance behind that at which he had really halted. He then took up the thread with his habitual smile of courtesy—as if forgetting his case entirely in the consideration of the lady's infirmity.

He had also a visit from the learned and pious Dr. M. Mackay, then minister of Laggan, but now of Dunoon—the chief author of the Gaelic Dictionary, then recently published under the auspices of the Highland Society; and this gentleman also accommodated himself, with the tact of genuine kindness, to the circumstances of the time.

In the family circle Sir Walter seldom spoke of his illness at all, and when he did it was always in the hopeful strain. In private to Laidlaw and myself, his language corresponded exactly with the tone of the Diary—he expressed his belief that the chances of recovery were few—very few—but always added, that he considered it his duty to exert what faculties remained to him, for the sake of his creditors, to the very last. "I am very anxious," he repeatedly said to me, "to be done, one way or other, with this Count Robert, and a little story about the Castle Dangerous, which also I had long had in my head—but after that I will attempt nothing more—at least not until I have finished all the notes for the Novels, &c.; for, in case of my going off at the next slap, you would naturally have to take up that job, and where could you get at all my old wives' stories?"

I felt the sincerest pity for Cadell and Ballantyne at this time; and advised him to lay Count Robert aside for a few weeks, at all events, until the general election now going on should be over. He consented—but immediately began another series of Tales on French History—which he never completed. The Diary says:—

"*May* 12.—Resolved to lay by Robert of Paris, and take it up when I can work. Thinking on it really makes my head swim, and that is not safe. Miss Ferrier comes out to us. This gifted personage, besides having great talents, has conversation the least *exigeante* of any author, female at least, whom I have ever seen among the long list I have encountered with; simple, full of humour, and exceedingly ready at repartee; and all this without the least affectation of the blue stocking.

"*May* 13.—Mr., or more properly, Dr. MacIntosh Mackay comes out to see me, a simple learned man, and a Highlander who weighs his own nation justly—a modest and estimable person. Reports of mobs at all the elections, which I fear will prove true. They have much to answer for who, in gayety of heart, have brought a peaceful and virtuous population to such a pass.

"*May* 14.—Rode with Lockhart and Mr. Mackay through the plantations, and spent a pleasanter day than of late months. Story of a haunted glen in Laggan. A chieftain's daughter or cousin loved a man of low degree. Her kindred discovered the intrigue, and punished the lover's presumption by binding the unhappy man, and laying him naked in one of the large owl's nests common in a Highland forest. He expired in agony of course, and his mistress became distracted, roamed wildly in the glen till she died, and her phantom, finding no repose, haunted it after her death to such a degree, that the people shunned the road by day as well as night. Mrs. Grant tells the story with the addition, that her husband, then minister of Laggan, formed a religious meeting in the place, and by the exercise of public worship there overcame the popular terror of the Red Woman. Dr. Mackay seems to think that she was rather banished by a branch of the Parliamentary road running up the glen, than by the prayers of his predecessor. Dr. Mackay, it being Sunday, favoured us with an excellent discourse on the Socinian controversy, which I wish my friend Mr. * * * had heard.—*May* 15.—Dr. M. left us early this morning; and I rode and studied as usual, working at the Tales of my Grandfather. Our good and learned Doctor wishes to go down the Tweed to Berwick. It is a laudable curiosity, and I hope will be agreeably satisfied."

On the 18th, I witnessed a scene which must dwell painfully upon many memories besides mine. The rumours of brick-bat and bludgeon work at the hustings of this month were so prevalent, that Sir Walter's family, and not less zealously the Tory candidate for Roxburghshire himself, tried every means to dissuade him from attending the election for that county. We thought over night that we had succeeded, and, indeed, as the result of the vote was not at all doubtful, there was not the shadow of a reason for his appearing on this occasion. About seven in the morning, however, when I came down stairs intending to ride over to Jedburgh, I found he had countermanded my horse, ordered the carriage to the door, and was already impatient to be off for the scene of action. We found the town in a most tempestuous state: in fact, it was almost wholly in the hands of a disciplined rabble, chiefly weavers from Hawick, who marched up and down with drums and banners, and then, after filling the Court-hall, lined the streets, grossly insulting every one who did not wear the reforming colours. Sir Walter's carriage, as it advanced towards the house of the Shortreed family, was pelted with stones; one or two fell into it, but none touched him. He breakfasted with the widow and children of his old friend, and then walked to the Hall between me and one of the young Shortreeds. He was saluted with groans and blasphemies all the way—and I blush to add that a woman spat upon him from a window; but this last contumely I think he did not observe. The scene within was much what has been described under the date of March 21st, except that though he attempted to speak from the Bench, not a word was audible, such was the frenzy. Young Harden was returned by a great majority, 40 to 19, and we then with difficulty gained the inn where the carriage had been put up. But the aspect of the street was by that time such, that several of the gentlemen on the Whig side came and entreated us not to attempt starting from the front of our inn. One of them, Lieutenant R. Elliot of the Royal

* Addison's Cato.

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Navy, lived in the town, or rather in a villa adjoining it, to the rear of the Spread Eagle. Sir Walter was at last persuaded to accept this courteous adversary's invitation, and accompanied him through some winding lanes to his residence. Peter Mathieson by and by brought the carriage thither, in the same clandestine method, and we escaped from Jedburgh—with one shower more of stones at the Bridge. I believe there would have been a determined onset at that spot, but for the zeal of three or four sturdy Darnickers (Joseph Shillinglaw, carpenter, being their Coryphæus,) who had, unobserved by us, clustered themselves beside the footman in the rumble.

The Diary contains this brief notice:—"*May* 18.—Went to Jedburgh, greatly against the wishes of my daughters. The mob were exceedingly vociferous and brutal, as they usually are nowadays. The population gathered in formidable numbers—a thousand from Hawick also—sad blackguards. The day passed with much clamour and no mischief. Henry Scott was re-elected—for the last time, I suppose. *Troja fuit.* I left the borough in the midst of abuse, and the gentle hint of *Burk Sir Walter.* Much obliged to the brave lads of Jeddart."

Sir Walter fully anticipated a scene of similar violence at the Selkirk election, which occurred a few days afterwards; but though here also, by help of weavers from a distance, there was a sufficiently formidable display of radical power, there occurred hardly any thing of what had been apprehended. Here the Sheriff was at home—known intimately to every body, himself probably knowing almost all of man's estate by head mark, and, in spite of political fanaticism, all but universally beloved as well as feared. The only person who ventured actually to hustle a Tory elector on his way to the poll, attracted Scott's observation at the moment when he was getting out of his carriage; he instantly seized the delinquent with his own hand—the man's spirit quailed, and no one coming to the rescue, he was safely committed to prison until the business of the day was over. Sir Walter had *ex officio* to preside at this election, and, therefore, his family would probably have made no attempt to dissuade him from attending it, even had he staid away from Jedburgh. Among the exaggerated rumours of the time, was one that Lord William Graham, the Tory candidate for Dunbartonshire, had been actually massacred by the rabble of his county town. He had been grievously maltreated, but escaped murder, though, I believe, narrowly. But I can never forget the high glow which suffused Sir Walter's countenance when he heard the overburdened story, and said calmly, in rather a clear voice, the trace of his calamitous affliction almost disappearing for the moment,—"Well—Lord William died at his post—

"Non aliter cineres mando jacere meos."*

I am well pleased that the ancient capital of *the Forest* did not stain its fair name upon this miserable occasion; and I am sorry for Jedburgh and Hawick. This last town stands almost within sight of Branksome Hall, overhanging also *sweet Teviot's silver tide.* The civilized American or Australian will curse these places, of which he would never have heard but for Scott, as he passes through them in some distant century, when perhaps all that remains of our national glories may be the high literature adopted and extended in new lands planted from our blood.

No doubt these disturbances of the general election had an unfavourable influence on the invalid. When they were over, he grew calmer and more collected; the surgical experiment appeared to be beneficial; his speech became, after a little time, much clearer, and such were the symptoms of energy still about him, that I began to think a restoration not hopeless. Some business called me to London about the middle of June, and when I returned at the end of three weeks, I had the satisfaction to find that he had been gradually amending.

* Martial i. 89.

But, alas, the first use he made of this partial renovation, had been to expose his brain once more to an imaginative task. He began his Castle Dangerous—the ground-work being again an old story which he had told in print, many years before, in a rapid manner. And now, for the first time, he left Ballantyne out of his secret. He thus writes to Cadell on the 3d of July:—"I intend to tell this little matter to nobody but Lockhart. Perhaps not even to him; certainly not to J. B., who having turned his back on his old political friends, will no longer have a claim to be a secretary in such matters, though I shall always be glad to befriend him."

James's criticisms on Count Robert had wounded him—the Diary, already quoted, shows how severely. The last visit this old ally ever paid at Abbotsford, occurred a week or two after. His newspaper had by this time espoused openly the cause of the Reform Bill—and some unpleasant conversation took place on that subject, which might well be a sore one for both parties, and not least, considering the whole of his personal history, for Mr. Ballantyne. Next morning, being Sunday, he disappeared abruptly, without saying farewell; and when Scott understood that he had signified an opinion that the reading of the church service, with a sermon from South or Barrow, would be a poor substitute for the mystical eloquence of some new idol down the vale, he expressed considerable disgust. They never met again in this world. In truth, Ballantyne's health also was already much broken; and if Scott had been entirely himself, he would not have failed to connect that circumstance in a charitable way with this never strong-minded man's recent abandonment of his own old *terra firma*, both religious and political. But this is a subject on which we have no title to dwell. Sir Walter's misgivings about himself, if I read him aright, now rendered him desirous of external support; but this novel inclination his spirit would fain suppress and disguise even from itself.

When I again saw him on the 13th of this month, he showed me several sheets of the new romance, and told me how he had designed at first to have it printed by somebody else than Ballantyne, but that on reflection, he had shrunk from hurting his feelings on so tender a point. I found, however, that he had neither invited nor received any opinion from James as to what he had written, but that he had taken an alarm lest he should fall into some blunder about the scenery fixed on (which he had never seen but once when a schoolboy,) and had kept the sheets in proof until I should come back and accompany him in a short excursion to Lanarkshire. He was anxious in particular to see the tombs in the Church of St. Bride, adjoining the site of his "Castle Dangerous," of which Mr. Blore had shown him drawings; and he hoped to pick up some of the minute traditions, in which he had always delighted, among the inhabitants of Douglasdale.

We set out early on the 18th, and ascended the Tweed, passing in succession Yair, Ashestiel, Innerleithing, Traquair, and many more scenes dear to his early life, and celebrated in his writings. The morning was still, but gloomy, and at length we had some thunder. It seemed to excite him vividly, and on coming soon afterwards within view of that remarkable edifice (Drochel Castle) on the moorland ridge between Tweed and Clyde, which was begun, but never finished, by the Regent Morton—a gigantic ruin typical of his ambition—Sir Walter could hardly be restrained from making some effort to reach it. Morton, too, was a Douglas, and that name was at present his charm of charms. We pushed on to Biggar, however, and reaching it towards sunset, were detained there for some time by want of post-horses. It was soon discovered who he was; the population of the little town turned out; and he was evidently gratified with their respectful curiosity. It was the first time I observed him otherwise than annoyed upon such an occasion. Jedburgh, no doubt, hung on his mind, and he

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might be pleased to find that political differences did not interfere every where with his reception among his countrymen. But I fancy the cause lay deeper.

Another symptom that distressed me during this journey was, that he seemed constantly to be setting tasks to his memory. It was not as of old, when if any one quoted a verse, he, from the fulness of his heart, could not help repeating the context. He was obviously in fear that this prodigious engine had lost, or was losing its tenacity, and taking every occasion to rub and stretch it. He sometimes failed, and gave it up with *miseria cogitandi* in his eye. At other times he succeeded to admiration, and smiled as he closed his recital. About a mile beyond Biggar, we overtook a parcel of carters, one of whom was maltreating his horse, and Sir Walter called to him from the carriage-window in great indignation. The man looked and spoke insolently; and as we drove on, he used some strong expressions about what he would have done had this happened within the bounds of his sheriffship. As he continued moved in an uncommon degree, I said jokingly, that I wondered his porridge diet had left his blood so warm, and quoted Prior's

> "Was ever Tartar fierce or cruel
> Upon a mess of water-gruel?"

He smiled graciously, and extemporized this variation of the next couplet—

> "Yet who shall stand the Sheriff's force,
> If *Selkirk* carter beats his horse?"*

This seemed to put him into the train of Prior, and he repeated several striking passages both of the Alma and the Solomon. He was still at this when we reached a longish hill, and he got out to walk a little. As we climbed the ascent, he leaning heavily on my shoulder, we were met by a couple of beggars, who were, or professed to be, old soldiers both of Egypt and the Peninsula. One of them wanted a leg, which circumstance alone would have opened Scott's purse-strings, though for *ex facie* a sad old blackguard; but the fellow had recognised his person, as it happened, and in asking an alms bade God bless him fervently by his name. The mendicants went on their way, and we stood breathing on the knoll. Sir Walter followed them with his eye, and planting his stick firmly on the sod, repeated without break or hesitation Prior's verses to the historian Mezeray. That he applied them to himself was touchingly obvious, and therefore I must copy them.

> "Whate'er thy countrymen have done,
> By law and wit, by sword and gun,
> In thee is faithfully recited;
> And all the living world that view
> Thy works, give thee the praises due—
> At once instructed and delighted.
>
> "Yet for the fame of all these deeds,
> What beggar in the Invalides,
> With lameness broke, with blindness smitten,
> Wished ever decently to die,
> To have been either Mezeray—
> Or any monarch he has written?
>
> "'Tis strange, dear author, yet it true is,
> That down from Pharamond to Louis
> All covet life, yet call it pain,
> And feel the ill, yet shun the cure.
> Can sense this paradox endure?
> Resolve me, Cambray, or Fontaine.
>
> "The man in graver tragic known,
> Though his best part long since was done,
> Still on the stage desires to tarry.
> And he who play'd the harlequin,
> After the jests, still loads the scene,
> Unwilling to retire, though weary."

We spent the night at the Inn of Douglas Mill, and at an early hour next morning proceeded to inspect, under the care of one of Lord Douglas's tenants, Mr. Haddow, the Castle, the strange old *bourg*, **the Church**, long since deserted as a place of worship, and the very extraordinary monuments of the most heroic and powerful family in the annals of Scotland. That works of sculpture equal to any of the fourteenth century in Westminster Abbey (for such they certainly were, though much mutilated by Cromwell's soldiery) should be found in so remote an inland place, attests strikingly the boundless resources of those haughty lords "whose coronet," as Scott says, "so often counterpoised the crown." The effigy of the best friend of Bruce is among the number, and represents him cross-legged, as having fallen in battle with the Saracen, when on his way to Jerusalem with the heart of his king. The whole people of the barony gathered round the doors, and two persons of extreme old age, one so old that he well remembered *Duke Willie*—that is to say, the Conqueror of Culloden—were introduced to tell all their local legends, while Sir Walter examined by torchlight these silent witnesses of past greatness. It was a strange and a melancholy scene, and its recollection prompted some passages in Castle Dangerous, which might almost have been written at the same time with Lammermoor. The appearance of the village, too, is most truly transferred to the novel; and I may say the same of the surrounding landscape. We descended into a sort of crypt in which the Douglasses were buried until about a century ago, when there was room for no more; the leaden coffins around the wall being piled on each other, until the lower ones had been pressed as flat as sheets of pasteboard, while the floor itself was entirely paved with others of comparatively modern date, on which coronets and inscriptions might still be traced. Here the silver case that once held the noble heart of the Good Lord James himself, is still pointed out. It is in the form of a heart, which, in memory of his glorious mission and fate, occupies ever since the chief place in the blazon of his posterity:—

> "The bloody heart blazed in the van,
> Announcing Douglas' dreaded name."

This charnel-house, too, will be recognised easily. Of the redoubted Castle itself, there remains but a small detached fragment covered with ivy, close to the present mansion; but he hung over it long, or rather sat beside it, drawing outlines on the turf, and arranging in his fancy the sweep of the old precincts. Before the subjacent and surrounding lake and morass were drained, the position must indeed have been the perfect model of solitary strength. The crowd had followed us, and were lingering about to see him once more as he got into his carriage. They attended him to the spot where it was waiting, in perfect silence. It was not like a mob, but a procession. He was again obviously gratified, and saluted them with an earnest yet placid air, as he took his leave. He expresses in his introduction much thankfulness for the attention of Mr. Haddow, and also of Lord Douglas's chamberlain, Mr. Finlay, who had joined us at the Castle.

It was again a darkish cloudy day, with some occasional mutterings of distant thunder, and perhaps the state of the atmosphere told upon Sir Walter's nerves; but I had never before seen him so sensitive as he was all the morning after this inspection of Douglas. As we drove over the high table-land of Lesmahago, he repeated I know not how many verses from Winton, Barbour, and Blind Harry, with, I believe, almost every stanza of Dunbar's elegy on the Deaths of the Makers (poets). It was now that I saw him, such as he paints himself in one or two passages of his Diary, but such as his companions in the meridian vigour of his life never saw him—"the rushing of a brook, or the sighing of the summer breeze bringing the tears into his eyes not unpleasantly." Bodily weakness laid the delicacy of the organization bare, over which he had prided himself in wearing a sort of half stoical mask. High and exalted feelings, indeed, he had never been able to keep concealed, but he had shrunk from exhibiting to human eye the softer and gentler emotions which now trembled to the surface. He strove

* "But who shall stand his rage and force,
If first he rides, then eats his horse?"
Alma.

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against it even now, and presently came back from the Lament of the Makers to his Douglasses, and chanted, rather than repeated, in a sort of deep and glowing, though not distinct recitative, his first favourite among all the ballads,—

"It was about the Lammas tide,
When husbandmen do win their hay,
That the Doughty Douglas bownde him to ride
To England to drive a prey."

—down to the closing stanzas, which again left him in tears.

"My wound is deep—I fain would sleep—
Take thou the vanguard of the three,
And hide me beneath the bracken bush,
That grows on yonder lily lee. . . .
This deed was done at the Otterburne,
About the dawning of the day.
Earl Douglas was buried by the bracken-bush,
And the Percy led captive away."

We reached Milton-Lockhart some time before the dinner-hour, and Sir Walter appeared among the friends who received him there with much of his old graceful composure of courtesy. He walked about a little—was pleased with the progress made in the new house, and especially commended my brother for having given his bridge "ribs like Bothwell." Greenshields was at hand, and he talked to him cheerfully, while the sculptor devoured his features, as under a solemn sense that they were before his eyes for the last time. My brother had taken care to have no company at dinner except two or three near neighbours with whom Sir Walter had been familiar through life, and whose entreaties it had been impossible to resist. One of these was the late Mr. Elliott Lockhart of Cleghorn and Borthwickbrae—long member of Parliament for Selkirkshire—the same whose anti-reform address had been preferred to the Sheriff's by the freeholders of that county in the preceding March. But, alas! very soon after that address was accepted, Borthwickbrae (so Scott always called him from his estate in the Forest) had a shock of paralysis as severe as any his old friend had as yet sustained. He, too, had rallied beyond expectation, and his family were more hopeful, perhaps, than the other's dared to be. Sir Walter and he had not met for a few years—not since they rode side by side, as I well remember, on a merry day's sport at Bowhill; and I need not tell any one who knew Borthwickbrae, that a finer or more gallant specimen of the Border gentleman than he was in his prime, never cheered a hunting-field. When they now met (*heu quantum mutati*) each saw his own case glassed in the other, and neither of their manly hearts could well contain itself as they embraced. Each exerted himself to the utmost—indeed far too much, and they were both tempted to transgress the laws of their physicians.

At night Scott promised to visit Cleghorn on his way home, but next morning, at breakfast, came a messenger to inform us that Borthwickbrae, on returning to his own house, fell down in another fit, and was now despaired of. Immediately, although he had intended to remain two days, Sir Walter drew my brother aside, and besought him to lend him horses as far as Lanark, for that he must set off with the least possible delay. He would listen to no persuasions. "No, William," he said, "this is a sad warning. I must home to work while it is called day; for the night cometh when no man can work. I put that text, many a year ago, on my dial-stone; but it often preached in vain."*

We started accordingly, and making rather a forced march, reached Abbotsford the same night. During the journey, he was more silent than I ever before found him;—he seemed to be wrapped in thought, and was but seldom roused to take notice of any object we passed. The little he said was mostly about Castle Dangerous, which he now seemed to feel sure he could finish in a fortnight, though his observation of the locality must needs cost the re-writing of several passages in the chapters already put into type.

For two or three weeks he bent himself sedulously to his task—and concluded Castle Dangerous, and the long-suspended Count Robert. By this time he had submitted to the recommendation of all his medical friends, and agreed to spend the coming winter away from Abbotsford, among new scenes, in a more genial climate, and above all (so he promised,) in complete abstinence from all literary labour. When Captain Basil Hall understood that he had resolved on wintering at Naples (where, as has been mentioned, his son Charles was attached to the British Legation,) it occurred to the zealous sailor that on such an occasion as this all thoughts of political difference ought to be dismissed, and he, unknown to Scott, addressed a letter to Sir James Graham, then First Lord of the Admiralty, stating the condition of his friend's health, and his proposed plan, and suggesting that it would be a fit and graceful thing for the King's Government to place a frigate at his disposal for his voyage to the Mediterranean. Sir James replied, honourably for all concerned, that it afforded himself, and his Royal Master, the sincerest satisfaction to comply with this hint; and that whenever Sir Walter found it convenient to come southwards, a vessel should be prepared for his reception. Nothing could be handsomer than the way in which all this matter was arranged, and Scott, deeply gratified, exclaimed that things were yet in the hands of gentlemen; but that he feared they had been undermining the state of society which required such persons as themselves to be at the head.

He had no wish, however, to leave Abbotsford until the approach of winter; and having dismissed his Tales, seemed to say to himself that he would enjoy his dear valley for the intervening weeks, draw friends about him, revisit all the familiar scenes in his neighbourhood once more; and if he were never to come back, store himself with the most agreeable recollections in his power, and so conduct himself as to bequeath to us who surrounded him a last stock of gentle impressions. He continued to work a little at his notes and prefaces, the *Reliquiæ* of Oldbuck, and the *Sylva Abbotsfordiensis*; but did not fatigue himself; and when once all plans were settled, and all cares in so far as possible set aside, his health and spirits certainly rallied most wonderfully. He had settled that my wife and I should dine at Abbotsford, and he and Anne at Chiefswood, day about; and this rule was seldom departed from. Both at home and in the cottage he was willing to have a few guests, so they were not strangers. Mr. James (the author of Richelieu) and his lady, who this season lived at Maxpoffle, and Mr. Archdeacon Williams, who was spending his vacation at Melrose, were welcome additions, and frequently so, to his accustomed circle of the Scotts of Harden, the Pringles of Whytbank and Clifton, the Russells of Ashestiel, the Brewsters, and the Fergusons. Sir Walter observed the prescribed diet, on the whole, pretty accurately, and seemed, when in the midst of his family and friends, always tranquil, sometimes cheerful. On one or two occasions he was even gay: particularly, I think, when the weather was so fine as to tempt us to dine in the marble-hall at Abbotsford, or at an early hour under the trees at Chiefswood, in the old fashion of Rose's *Fête de Village*. I rather think Mr. Adolphus was present at one of these, for the time, mirthful doings; but if so, he has not recorded it in his elegant paper of reminiscences—from which I now take my last extract:—

"In the autumn of 1831" (says Mr. Adolphus) "the new shock which had fallen upon Sir Walter's constitution had left traces, not indeed very conspicuous, but painfully observable; and he was subject to a constant, though apparently not a very severe regimen as an invalid. At table, if many persons were present, he spoke but little, I believe from a difficulty in making himself heard, not so much because his articulation was slightly impaired, as that his voice was weakened. After dinner, though he still sat with his guests, he forbore drinking, in compliance with the discipline prescribed to him,

* This dial-stone, which used to stand in front of the old cottage, and is now in the centre of the garden, is inscribed, ΝΥΞ ΓΑΡ ΕΡΧΕΤΑΙ.

though he might be seen, once or twice in the course of a sitting, to steal a glass, as if inadvertently. I could not perceive that his faculties of mind were in any respect obscured, except that occasionally (but not very often) he was at a loss for some obvious word. This failure of recollection had begun I think the year before. The remains of his old cheerfulness were still living within him, but they required opportunity and the presence of few persons to disclose themselves. He spoke of his approaching voyage with resignation more than with hope, and I could not find that he looked forward with much interest or curiosity to the new scenes in which he was about to travel.

"The menacing state of affairs in the country he was leaving oppressed him with melancholy anticipations. In the little conversation we had formerly had on subjects of this kind, I had never found him a querulous politician; he could look manfully and philosophically at those changes in the aspect of society which time, and the progress, well or ill directed, of the human mind were uncontrollably working out, though the innovations might not in some of their results accord with his own taste and opinions. But the revolutions now beginning, and the violence of word and deed with which they were urged on, bore heavily upon his thoughts, and gave them, when turned in this direction, a gloomy and ominous cast. When I left him to go to London, he gave me, as a kind of parting token, a stick, or rather club, of formidable size and figure, and, as he put it into my hand, he could not help saying, between joke and earnest, that it might prove useful if I were called out to assist the police in a riot. But his prevailing humour, even at this period, was kindly, genial, and pleasurable.

"On the last day which I had the happiness to pass with him among his own hills and streams, he appointed an excursion to *Oakwood** and the Linns of Ettrick. Miss Scott, and two other ladies, one of whom had not been in Scotland before, were of the party. He did the honours of the country with as much zeal and gallantry, in spirit at least, as he could have shown twenty years earlier. I recollect, that, in setting out, he attempted to plead his hardy habits as an old mail-coach traveller for keeping the least convenient place in the carriage. When we came to the Linns, we walked some way up the stream, and viewed the bold and romantic little torrent from the top of the high bank. He stood contemplating it in an attitude of rest; the day was past when a minute's active exertion would have carried him to the water's brink. Perhaps he was now for the last time literally fulfilling the wish of his own Minstrel, that in the decay of life he might

'Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break.'

So much was his great strength reduced, that, as he gazed upon the water, one of his stag-hounds leaping forward to caress him had almost thrown him down; but for such accidents as this he cared very little. We travelled merrily homeward. As we went up some hill, a couple of children hung on the back of the carriage. He suspended his cudgel over them with a grotesque face of awfulness. The brats understood the countenance, and only clung the faster. 'They do not much mind the Sheriff,' said he to us, with a serio-comic smile, and affecting to speak low. We came home late, and an order was issued that no one should dress. Though I believe he himself caused the edict to be made, he transgressed it more than any of the party."

I am not sure whether the Royal Academician, Turner, was at Abbotsford at the time of Mr. Adolphus's last visit; but several little excursions, such as the one here described, were made in the company of this great artist, who had come to Scotland for the purpose of making drawings to illustrate the scenery of Sir Walter's poems. On several such occasions I was of the party—and one day deserves to be specially remembered. Sir Walter took Mr. Turner that morning, with his friend Skene and myself, to Smailholm Crags; and it was while lounging about them, while the painter did his sketch, that he told Mr. Skene how the habit of lying on the turf there among the sheep and lambs, when a lame infant, had given his mind a peculiar tenderness for those animals which it had ever since retained.† He seemed to enjoy the scene of his childhood—yet there was many a touch of sadness both in his eye and his voice. He then carried us to Dryburgh, but excused himself from attending Mr. Turner into the enclosure. Mr. Skene and I perceived that it would be better for us to leave him alone, and we both accompanied Turner. Lastly, we must not omit to call at Bemerside—for of that ancient residence of the most ancient family now subsisting on Tweedside, he was resolved there must be a fit memorial by this graceful hand. The good laird and lady were of course flattered with this fondness of respect, and after walking about a little while among the huge old trees that surround the tower, we ascended to, I think, the third tier of its vaulted apartments, and had luncheon in a stately hall, arched also in stone, but with well-sized windows (as being out of harm's way) duly blazoned with shields and crests, and the time-honoured motto, BETIDE, BETIDE—being the first words of a prophetic couplet ascribed to Thomas the Rhymer:—

"Betide, betide, whate'er betide,
There shall be Haigs in Bemerside."

Mr. Turner's sketch of this picturesque Peel, and its "brotherhood of venerable trees," is probably familiar to most of my readers.*

Mr. Cadell brought the artist to Abbotsford, and was also I think of this Bemerside party. I must not omit to record how gratefully all Sir Walter's family felt at the time, and still remember, the delicate and watchful tenderness of Mr. Cadell's conduct on this occasion. He so managed that the Novels just finished should remain in types, but not thrown off, until the author should have departed; so as to give opportunity for revising and abridging them. He might well be the bearer of cheering news as to their greater concerns, for the sale of the *Magnum* had, in spite of political turbulences and distractions, gone on successfully. But he probably strained a point to make things appear still better than they really were. He certainly spoke so as to satisfy his friend that he need give himself no sort of uneasiness about the pecuniary results of idleness and travel. It was about this time that we observed Sir Walter beginning to entertain the notion that his debts were paid off. By degrees, dwelling on this fancy, he believed in it fully and implicitly. It was a gross delusion—but neither Cadell nor any one else had the heart to disturb it by any formal statement of figures. It contributed greatly more than any circumstance besides to sooth Sir Walter's feelings, when it became at last necessary that he should tear himself from his land and his house, and the trees which he had nursed. And with all that was done and forborne, the hour when it came was a most heavy one.

Very near the end there came some unexpected things to cast a sunset brilliancy over Abbotsford. His son, the Major, arrived with tidings that he had obtained leave of absence from his regiment, and should be in readiness to sail with his father. This was a mighty relief to us all, on Miss Scott's account as well as his, for my occupations did not permit me to think of going with him, and there was no other near connexion at hand. But Sir Walter was delighted—indeed, dearly as he loved all his children, he had a pride in the Major that stood quite by itself, and the hearty approbation which looked through his eyes whenever turned on him, sparkled brighter than ever as his own physical strength decayed. Young Walter had on this occasion sent down a horse or two to winter at Abbotsford. One was a remarkably tall and handsome animal, jet black all over, and when the Major appeared on it one morning, equipped for a little sport with the greyhounds, Sir Walter insisted upon being put upon Douce Davie, and conducted as far as the Cauldshiels loch to see the day's work begun. He halted on the high bank to the north of the lake, and I remained to hold his bridle, in case of any frisk on the part of the Covenanter at the "tumult great of dogs and men." We witnessed a very pretty chase or two on the opposite side of the water—but his eye followed always the tall black steed and his rider. The father might well assure Lady Davy, that "a handsomer fellow never put foot into stirrup." But when he took a very high wall off loose stones, at

* Oakwood is a ruined castle on the Harden estate in the vale of Ettrick.

† See *Ante*, p. 21.

* See Scott's Poetical Works, vol. i.

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which every body else *crossed*, as easily and elegantly as if it had been a puddle in his stride, the old man's rapture was extreme. "Look at him," said he, "only look at him.—Now, isn't he a fine fellow?"—This was the last time, I believe, that Sir Walter mounted on horseback.

He does not seem to have written many farewell letters; but here is one to a very old friend, Mr. Kirkpatrick Sharpe. He had, apparently, subscribed for Lodge's splendid book of British Portraits, and then, receiving a copy *ex dono auctoris*,* sent his own numbers, as they arrived, to this gentleman—a payment in kind for many courteous gifts and communications of antiquarian and genealogical interest.

To Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq., Prince's Street, Edinburgh.

"Abbotsford, September, 1831.

"My Dear Charles,

"I pray you to honour me with your acceptance of the last number of Mr. Lodge's Illustrious Persons. My best thanks to you for the genealogy, which completes a curious subject. I am just setting off for the Mediterranean, a singular instance of a change of luck, for I have no sooner put my damaged fortune into as good a condition as I could desire, than my health, which till now has been excellent, has failed so utterly in point of strength, that while it will not allow me to amuse myself by travelling, neither will it permit me to stay at home.

"I should like to have shaken hands with you, as there are few I regret so much to part with. But it may not be. I will keep my eyes dry, if possible, and therefore content myself with bidding you a long (perhaps an eternal) farewell. But I may find my way home again, improved as a Dutch skipper from a whaling. I am very happy that I am like to see Ma[illegible]ways yours, well or ill— WALTER SCOTT."

The same deceptive notion of his pecuniary affairs comes out in another little note, the last I ever received from him at Chiefswood. I had meant to make a run into Lanarkshire for a day or two to see my own relations, and spoken of carrying my second boy, his namesake, then between five and six years of age, with me in the stage-coach. When I mentioned this over-night at Abbotsford, he said nothing—indeed he was at the moment a little cross with me for having spoken against some slip he had made on the score of his regimen. Shortly after I got home came this billet.

To J. G. Lockhart, Esq., Chiefswood.

"Dear Don or Doctor Giovanni,

"Can you really be thinking of taking Wa-Wa by the coach, and I think you said outside? Think of Johnny, and be careful of this little man. Are you, *par hazard*, something in the state of the poor Capitaine des Dragons that comes in singing,—

'Comment? Parbleu! Qu'en pensez vous?
Bon Gentilhomme, et pas un sous.'

"If so, remember Richard's himself again, and make free use of the enclosed cheque on Cadell for £50. He will give you the ready as you pass through, and you can pay when I ask. Put horses to your carriage, and go hidalgo fashion. We shall all have good days yet.

'And those sad days you deign to spend
With me, I shall requite them all;
Sir Eustace for his friends shall send,
And thank their love in Grayling Hall.'

W. S."†

On the 17th of September, the old splendour of Abbotsford was, after a long interval, and for the last time, revived. Captain James Glencairn Burns, son of the poet, had come home on furlough from India, and Sir Walter invited him (with his wife, and their Cicerone, Mr. M'Diarmid of Dumfries) to spend a day under his roof. The neighbouring gentry were assembled, and having his son to help him, Sir Walter did most gracefully the honours of the table. As, according to him, "a medal struck at the time, however poor, is in one respect better than any done afterwards," I insert some verses with which he was pleased, and which, I believe express the sincere feelings with which every guest witnessed this his parting feast.

LINES WRITTEN ON TWEEDSIDE.

September the 18th, 1831.

A day I've seen whose brightness pierced the cloud
Of pain and sorrow, both for great and small—
A night of flowing cups, and pibrochs loud,
Once more within the Minstrel's blazon'd hall.

"Upon this frozen hearth pile crackling trees;
Let every silent clarshach find its strings;
Unfurl once more the banner to the breeze;
No warmer welcome for the blood of kings!"

From ear to ear, from eye to glistening eye,
Leap the glad tidings, and the glance of glee;
Perish the hopeless breast that beats not high
At thought beneath His roof that guest to see!

What princely stranger comes?—What exiled lord
From the far East to Scotia's strand returns—
To stir with joy the towers of Abbotsford,
And "wake the Minstrel's soul?"—The boy of Burns.

O, Sacred Genius! blessing on the chains,
Wherein thy sympathy can minds entwine!
Beyond the conscious glow of kindred veins,
A power, a spirit, and a charm are thine.

Thine offspring share them. Thou hast trod the land—
It breathes of thee—and men, through rising tears,
Behold the image of thy manhood stand,
More noble than a galaxy of Peers.

And He——his father's bones had quaked, I ween,
But that with holier pride his heart-strings bound,
Than if his host had King or Kaiser been,
And star and cross on every bosom round.

High strains were pour'd of many a Border spear,
While gentle fingers swept a throbbing shell;
A manly voice, in manly notes and clear,
Of lowly love's deep bliss responded well.

The children sang the ballads of their sires:—
Serene among them sat the hoary Knight;
And, if dead Bards have ears for earthly lyres,
The Peasant's shade was near, and drank delight.

As through the woods we took our homeward way,
Fair shone the moon last night on Eildon Hill;
Soft rippled Tweed's broad wave beneath her ray,
And in sweet murmurs gushed the Huntly rill.

Heaven send the guardian genius of the vale
Health yet, and strength, and length of honour'd days,
To cheer the world with many a gallant tale,
And hear his children's children chant his lays.

Through seas unruffled may the vessel glide,
That bears her Poet far from Melrose glen;
And may his pulse be steadfast as our pride,
When happy breezes waft him back again.

On the 20th Mrs. Lockhart set out for London to prepare for her father's reception there, and for the outfit of his voyage; and on the following day Mr. Wordsworth and his daughter arrived from Westmoreland to take farewell of him. This was a very fortunate circumstance—nothing could have gratified Sir Walter more, or sustained him better, if he needed any support from without. On the 22d, all his arrangements being completed, and Laidlaw having received a paper of instructions, the last article of which repeats the caution to be "very careful of the dogs"—these two great poets, who had through life loved each other well, and in spite of very different theories as to art, appreciated each other's genius more justly than inferior spirits ever did either of them, spent the morning together in a visit to Newark. Hence the last of the three poems by which Wordsworth has connected his name to all time with the most romantic of Scottish streams. But I need not transcribe a piece so well known as the "Yarrow Revisited."

Sitting that evening in the library, Sir Walter said a good deal about the singularity that Fielding and Smollett had both been driven abroad by declining health, and never returned—which circumstance, though his language was rather cheerful at this time, he had often before alluded to in a darker fashion; and Mr. Wordsworth expressed his regret that neither of those great masters of romance ap

* Sir Walter's letter to Mr. Lodge's publisher is now prefixed to that magnificent book; the circulation of which has been, to the honour of the public, so great, that I need not introduce the beautiful eulogium here.

† See Crabbe's *Sir Eustace Grey*.

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peared to have been surrounded with any due marks of respect in the close of life. I happened to observe that Cervantes, on his last journey to Madrid, met with an incident which seemed to have given him no common satisfaction. Sir Walter did not remember the passage, and desired me to find it out in the life by Pellicer which was at hand, and translate it. I did so, and he listened with lively though pensive interest. Our friend Allan, the historical painter, had also come out that day from Edinburgh, and he lately told me that he remembers nothing he ever saw with so much sad pleasure as the attitudes and aspect of Scott and Wordsworth as the story went on. Mr. Wordsworth was at that time, I should notice—though indeed his noble stanzas tell it—in but a feeble state of general health. He was moreover suffering so much from some malady in his eyes that he wore a deep green shade over them. Thus he sat between Sir Walter and his daughter: *absit omen*—but it is no wonder that Allan thought as much of Milton as of Cervantes. The anecdote of the young student's raptures on discovering that he had been riding all day with the author of Don Quixote, is introduced in the preface for Count Robert and Castle Dangerous, which—(for I need not return to the subject) came out at the close of November in four volumes, as the Fourth Series of Tales of My Landlord.

The following Sonnet was, no doubt, composed by Mr. Wordsworth that same evening of the 22d September.

"A trouble, not of clouds or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height:
Spirits of power assembled there complain
For kindred power departing from their sight;
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,
Saddens his voice again, and yet again.
Lift up your hearts, ye mourners! for the might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes,
Blessings and prayers in nobler retinue
Than sceptred King or laurelled Conqueror knows,
Follow this wondrous potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
Wafting your charge to soft Parthenope."

CHAPTER LXXXI.

ROKEBY—LONDON—EPITAPH ON HELEN WALKER—PORTSMOUTH—VOYAGE IN THE BARHAM—GRAHAM'S ISLAND—LETTER TO MR. SKENE—MALTA—NOTES BY MRS. JOHN DAVY—SEPTEMBER—DECEMBER, 1831.

EARLY on the 23d of September, Sir Walter left Abbotsford, attended by his daughter Anne, and myself, and we reached London by easy stages on the 28th, having spent one day at Rokeby. I have nothing to mention of this journey except that, notwithstanding all his infirmities, he would not pass any object to which he had ever attached special interest, without getting out of the carriage to revisit it. His anxiety (for example) about the gigantic British or Danish effigy in the churchyard at Penrith, which we had all seen dozens of times before, seemed as great as if not a year had fled since 1797. It may be supposed that his parting with Mr. Morritt was a grave one. Finding that he had left the ring he then usually wore behind him at one of the inns on the road, he wrote to his friend to make inquiries after it, as it had been dug out of the ruins of Hermitage Castle, and probably belonged of yore to one of the "Dark Knights of Liddesdale," and if recovered, to keep it until he should come back to reclaim it, but, in the mean time, to wear it for his sake. The ring, which is a broad belt of silver, with an angel holding the Heart of Douglas, was found, and is now worn by Mr. Morritt.

Sir Walter arrived in London in the midst of the Lords' debates on the second Reform bill, and the ferocious demonstrations of the populace on its rejection were in part witnessed by him. He saw the houses of several of the chief Tories, and above all, that of the Duke of Wellington, shattered and almost sacked. He heard of violence offered to the persons of some of his own noble friends; and having been invited to attend the christening of the infant heir of Buccleuch, whose god-father the King had proposed to be, on a day appointed by his Majesty, he had the pain to understand that the ceremony must be adjourned, because it was not considered safe for his Majesty to visit, for such a purpose, the palace of one of his most amiable, as well as illustrious peers.

The following is part of a letter which I lately received from Sir Walter's dear friend and kinsman, Mr. Scott of Gala:—

"The last time I saw Sir W. Scott was in Sussex Place, the day after he arrived from Scotland, on his way to Italy. I was prepared for a change in his appearance, but was not struck with so great a one as I had expected He evidently had lost strength since I saw him at Abbotsford the previous autumn, but his eye was good. In his articulation, however, there was too manifest an imperfection. We conversed shortly, as may be supposed, on his health. 'Weakness,' he observed, 'was his principal complaint.' I said that I supposed he had been rather too fatigued with his journey to leave the house since his arrival. 'Oh no,' he replied, 'I felt quite able for a drive to-day, and have just come from the city. I paid a visit to my friend Whittaker to ask him for some book of travels likely to be of use to me on my expedition to the Mediterranean. Here's old Brydone accordingly, still as good a companion as any he could recommend.' 'A very agreeable one, certainly,' I replied.—'Brydone' (said he) 'was sadly failed during his latter years. Did you ever hear of his remark on his own works?'—'Never.'—'Why, his family usually read a little for his amusement of an evening, and on one occasion he was asked if he would like to hear some of his travels to Sicily. He assented, and seemed to listen with much pleasure for some time, but he was too far gone to continue his attention long, and starting up from a doze exclaimed, "that's really a very amusing book, and contains many curious anecdotes.—I wonder if they are all true."' Sir Walter then spoke of as strange a tale as any traveller could imagine, a new volcanic island, viz., which had appeared very lately, and seemed anxious to see it, 'if it would *wait* for him,' he said. The offer of a King's ship had gratified him, and he ascribed this very much to the exertions of Basil Hall—'that curious fellow' (said he,) 'who takes charge of every one's business without neglecting his own, has done a great deal for me in this matter.' I observed that Malta would interest him much. The history of the knights, their library, &c., he immediately entered on keenly. 'I fear I shall not be able to appreciate Italy as it deserves,' continued he, 'as I understand little of painting, and nothing of music.' 'But there are many other subjects of interest.' I replied, 'and to you particularly—Naples, St. Elmo, Pæstum, La Montagna, Pompeii—in fact, I am only afraid you may have *too* much excitement, the bad effects of which, I as an invalid, am too well aware of.'—I had before this, from my own experience, ventured several hints on the necessity of caution with regard to over-exertion, but to these he always lent an unwilling ear.

"Sir Walter often digressed during our conversation to the state of the country, about which he seemed to have much anxiety. I said we had no Napoleon to frighten us into good fellowship, and from want of something to do, began fighting with each other—'Aye' (said he,) 'after conquering that Jupiter Scapin, and being at the height of glory, one would think the people might be content to sit down and eat the pudding; but no such thing.' 'When we've paid more of the cash it has cost, they will be more content.' 'I doubt it—They are so flattered and courted by Government that their appetite for power (pampered as it is) won't be easily satisfied now.' When talking of Italy, by the way, I mentioned that at Naples he would probably find a sister of Mat. Lewis's, Lady Lushington, wife of the English consul, a pleasant family, to whom Lewis introduced me when there in 1817 *very kindly*:—'Ah, poor Mat.!'—said he—'he never wrote any thing so good as the Monk—he had certainly talents, but they would not stand much *creaming*.'

"The Forest and our *new road* (which had cost both so much consultation) were of course touched on. The foundation of one of the new bridges had been laid by him—and *this* should be *commemorated* by an inscription on it. 'Well,' said he, 'how I should like to have a ride with you along our new road, just opposite Abbotsford—I will hope to be able for it some day.' Most heartily did I join in the wish, and could not help flattering myself it might *yet* be possible. When we parted, he shook hands with me for some time. He did so once more—but added firmly—'Well, we'll have a ride yet, some day.' I pleased myself with the hope that he augured rightly. But on leaving him many misgivings presented themselves; and the accounts from the continent

served but too surely to confirm these apprehensions—never more did I meet with my illustrious friend. There is reason I believe to be thankful that it was so—nothing could have been more painful than to witness the wreck of a *mind* like his."

During his stay, which was till the 23d of October, Sir Walter called on many of his old friends; but he accepted of no hospitalities except breakfasting once with Sir Robert Inglis, on Clapham Common, and once or twice with Lady Gifford at Roehampton. Usually he worked a little in the morning at notes for the *Magnum*, and he drew up, as already mentioned, the preface for the forthcoming tales of Count Robert and Castle Dangerous.

Dr. Robert Ferguson, one of the family with which Sir Walter had lived all his days in such brother-like affection, saw him constantly while he remained in the Regent's Park; and though neither the invalid nor his children could fancy any other medical advice necessary, it was only due to Ferguson that some of his seniors should be called in occasionally with him. Sir Henry Halford (whom Scott reverenced as the friend of Baillie) and Dr. Holland (an esteemed friend of his own,) came accordingly; and all the three concurred in recognising certain evidence that there was incipient disease in the brain. There were still, however, such symptoms of remaining vigour, that they flattered themselves, if their patient would submit to a total intermission of all literary labour during some considerable space of time, the malady might yet be arrested. When they left him after the first inspection, they withdrew into an adjoining room, and on soon rejoining him found, that in the interim he had wheeled his chair into a dark corner, so that he might see their faces, without their being able to read his. When he was informed of the comparatively favourable views they entertained, he expressed great thankfulness; promised to obey all their directions as to diet and repose most scrupulously; and he did not conceal from them, that "he had feared insanity and feared *them*."

The following are extracts from his Diary.—"*London, October* 2, 1830.—I have been very ill, and if not quite unable to write, I have been unfit to do it. I have wrought, however, at two Waverley things, but not well. A total prostration of bodily strength is my chief complaint. I cannot walk half a mile. There is, besides, some mental confusion, with the extent of which I am not, perhaps, fully acquainted. I am perhaps setting. I am myself inclined to think so, and like a day that has been admired as a fine one, the light of it sets down amid mists and storms. I neither regret nor fear the approach of death, if it is coming. I would compound for a little pain instead of this heartless muddiness of mind. The expense of this journey, &c. will be considerable, yet these heavy burdens could be easily borne if I were to be the Walter Scott I once was—but the change is great. And the ruin which I fear involves that of my country. Well says Colin Mackenzie—

> 'Shall this Desolation strike thy towers alone?
> No, fair Ellandonan! such ruin 'twill bring,
> That the whirl shall have power to unsettle the throne,
> And thy fate shall be link'd with the fate of thy king.'*

We arrived in London after a long journey—the weakness of my limbs palpably increasing, and the medicine prescribed making me weaker every day. Lockhart, poor fellow, is as attentive as possible, and I have, thank God, no pain whatever; could the decay but be so easy at last it would be too happy. But I fancy the instances of Euthanasia are not in very serious cases very common. Instances there certainly are among the learned and the unlearned—Dr. Black, Tom Purdie. I should like, if it pleased God, to slip off in such a quiet way, but we must take what fate sends. I have not warm hopes of being myself again.

"*Oct.* 12.—Lord Mahon, a very amiable as well as clever young man, comes to dinner with Mr. Croker, Lady Louisa Stuart, and Sir John Malcolm. Sir John told us a story about Garrick and his wife. The lady admired her husband greatly, but blamed him for a taste for low life, and insisted that he loved better to play Scrub to a low-lifed audience than one of his superior characters before an audience of taste. On one particular occasion she was at her box in the theatre. Richard III. was the performance, and Garrick's acting, particularly in the night-scene, drew down universal applause. After the play was over, Mrs. G. proposed going home, which Garrick declined, alleging he had some business in the green-room which must detain him. In short, the lady was obliged to acquiesce, and wait the beginning of a new entertainment, in which was introduced a farmer giving his neighbours an account of the wonders seen in a visit to London. This character was received with such peals of applause that Mrs. Garrick began to think it exceeded those which had been so lately lavished on Richard the Third. At last she observed her little spaniel dog was making efforts to get towards the balcony which separated him from the facetious farmer—and then she became aware of the truth. 'How strange,' he said, 'that a dog should know his master, and a woman, in the same circumstances, should not recognise her husband?'

"*Oct.* 16.—A pleasant breakfast at Roe-hampton, where I met my good friend Lord Sidmouth. On my way back, I called to see the repairs at Lambeth, which are proceeding under the able direction of Blore, who met me there. They are in the best Gothic taste, and executed at the expense of a large sum, to be secured by way of mortgage payable in fifty years, each incumbent within the time paying a proportion of about £4,000 a-year. I was pleased to see this splendour of church architecture returning again.

"*Oct.* 18.—Sophia had a small but lively party last night, as indeed she has had every night since we were here—Lady Stafford, Lady Louisa Stuart, Lady Montagu, Miss Montagu, Lady Davy, Mrs. M'Leod, and her girls—Lord Montagu, Macleod, Lord Dudley, Rogers, Mackintosh. A good deal of singing."

Sir Walter seemed to enjoy having one or two friends to meet him at dinner—and a few more in the evenings. Those named in the last entries came all of them frequently—and so did Lord Melville, the Bishop of Exeter, Lord Ashley, Sir David Wilkie, Mr. Thomas Moore, Mr. Milman, and Mr. Washington Irving. At this time the Reform Bill for Scotland was in discussion in the House of Commons. Mr. Croker made a very brilliant speech in opposition to it, and was not sorry to have it said, that he had owed his inspiration, in no small degree, to having risen from the table at which Scott sat by his side. But the most regular of the evening visiters was, I think, Sir James Mackintosh. He was himself in very feeble health, and whatever might have been the auguries of others, it struck me that there was uppermost with him at every parting the anticipation that they might never meet again. Sir James's kind assiduity was the more welcome, that his appearance banished the politics of the hour, on which his old friend's thoughts were too apt to brood. Their conversation, wherever it might begin, was sure to fasten ere long on Lochaber.

When last in Edinburgh Scott had given his friend William Burn, architect, directions to prepare at his expense a modest monument, for the grave of Helen Walker, the original of Jeanie Deans, in the churchyard of Dongrey. Mr. Burn now informed him that the little pillar was in readiness, and on the 18th October Sir Walter sent him this beautiful inscription for it;—

THIS STONE WAS ERECTED
BY THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY
TO THE MEMORY
OF

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* See Ballad of Ellandonan Castle in the Minstrelsy. *Poetical Works*, Vol. I.

HELEN WALKER,
WHO DIED IN THE YEAR OF GOD, 1791.
THIS HUMBLE INDIVIDUAL
PRACTISED IN REAL LIFE
THE VIRTUES
WITH WHICH FICTION HAS INVESTED
THE IMAGINARY CHARACTER OF
JEANIE DEANS;
REFUSING THE SLIGHTEST DEPARTURE
FROM VERACITY,
EVEN TO SAVE THE LIFE OF A SISTER,
SHE NEVERTHELESS SHOWED HER
KINDNESS AND FORTITUDE,
IN RESCUING HER FROM THE SEVERITY OF THE LAW,
AT THE EXPENSE OF PERSONAL EXERTIONS
WHICH THE TIME RENDERED AS DIFFICULT
AS THE MOTIVE WAS LAUDABLE.
RESPECT THE GRAVE OF POVERTY
WHEN COMBINED WITH LOVE OF TRUTH
AND DEAR AFFECTION.

Next morning the Honourable Captain Henry Duncan, R. N., who was at this time store-keeper of the Ordnance, and who had taken a great deal of trouble in arranging matters for the voyage, called on Sir Walter to introduce to him Captain, now Sir Hugh Pigot, the commanding-officer of the Barham. The Diary says:—"*October* 19.—Captain H. Duncan called with Captain Pigot, a smart-looking gentlemanlike man, who announces his purpose of sailing on Monday. I have made my preparations for being on board on Sunday, which is the day appointed.

"Captain Duncan told me jocularly never to take a naval captain's word on shore, and quoted Sir William Scott, who used to say waggishly, that there was nothing so accommodating on shore, but when on board, he became a peremptory lion. Henry Duncan has behaved very kindly, and says he only discharges the wishes of his service in making me as easy as possible, which is very handsome—too high a compliment for me. No danger of feud, except about politics, which would be impolitic on my part, and though it bars out one great subject of discussion, it leaves enough besides. Walter arrives ready to sail. So what little remains must be done without loss of time.

"I leave this country uncertain if it has got a total pardon or only a reprieve. I won't think of it, as I can do no good. It seems to be in one of those crises by which Providence reduces nations to their original elements. If I had my health, I should take no worldly fee, not to be in the bustle; but I am as weak as water, and I shall be glad when I have put the Mediterranean between the island and me.

"*October* 23.—Misty morning—looks like a yellow fog, which is the curse of London. I would hardly take my share of it for a share of its wealth and its curiosity—a vile double-distilled fog, of the most intolerable kind. Children scarce stirring yet, but Baby and Macao beginning their Macao notes—"

Dr. Ferguson found Sir Walter with this page of his Diary before him, when he called to pay his farewell visit. "As he was still working at his MSS.," says the Doctor, "I offered to retire, but was not permitted. On my saying I had come to take leave of him before he quitted England, he exclaimed, with much excitement—'England is no longer a place for an honest man. I shall not live to find it so; you may.' He then broke out into the details of a very favourite superstition of his, that the middle of every century had always been marked by some great convulsion or calamity in this island. Already the state of politics preyed much on his mind—and indeed that continued to form a part of the delirious dreams of his last illness. On the whole, the alterations which had taken place in his mind and person since I had seen him, three years before, were very apparent. The expression of the countenance and the play of features were changed by slight palsy of one cheek. His utterance was so thick and indistinct as to make it very difficult for any but those accustomed to hear it, to gather his meaning. His gait was less firm and assured than ever; but his power of self-command, his social tact, and his benevolent courtesy, the habits of a life, remained untouched by a malady which had obscured the higher powers of his intellect."

After breakfast, Sir Walter, accompanied by his son and both his daughters, set off for Portsmouth; and Captain Basil Hall had the kindness to precede them by an early coach, and prepare every thing for their reception at the hotel. They expected that the embarkation would take place next day, and the Captain had considered that his professional tact and experience might be serviceable, which they were eminently. In changing horses at Guilford, Sir Walter got out of his carriage, and very narrowly escaped being run over by a stage-coach. Of all "the habits of a life," none clung longer to him than his extreme repugnance to being helped in any thing. It was late before he came to lean, as a matter of course, when walking, upon any one but Tom Purdie; and the reader will see, in the sequel, that this proud feeling, coupled with increasing tendency to abstraction of mind, often exposed him to imminent hazard.

The Barham could not sail for a week. During this interval Sir Walter scarcely stirred from his hotel, being unwilling to display his infirmities to the crowd of gazers who besieged him whenever he appeared. He received, however, deputations of the literary and scientific societies of the town, and all other visiters, with his usual ease and courtesy: and he might well be gratified with the extraordinary marks of deference paid him by the official persons who could in any way contribute to his ease and comfort. The First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir James Graham, and the Secretary, Sir John Barrow, both appeared in person, to ascertain that nothing had been neglected for his accommodation on board the frigate. The Admiral, Sir Thomas Foley, placed his barge at his disposal; the Governor, Sir Colin Campbell, and all the chief officers, naval and military, seemed to compete with each other in attention to him and his companions. In Captain Hall's Third Series of Fragments of Voyages and Travels (vol. iii. p. 280,) some interesting details have long since been made public. But it may be sufficient to say here, that had Captain Pigot and his gallant shipmates been appointed to convey a Prince of the Blood and his suite, more generous, anxious, and delicate exertions could not have been made, either in altering the interior of the vessel, so as to meet the wants of the passengers, or afterwards, throughout the voyage, in rendering it easy, comfortable, and, as far as might be, interesting and amusing.

I subjoin an extract or two from the Diary at Portsmouth, which show how justly Dr. Ferguson has been describing Sir Walter as in complete possession of all the qualities that endeared him to society:—

"*October* 24.—The girls break loose—mad with the craze of seeing sights—and run the risk of deranging the naval officers, who offer their services with their natural gallantry. I wish they would be moderate in their demands on people's complaisance. They little know how inconvenient are such seizures. A sailor in particular is a bad refuser, and before he can turn three times round, he is bound by a triple knot to all sorts of nonsense.

"*October* 27.—The girls, I regret to see, have got a senseless custom of talking politics in all weathers, and in all sorts of company. This can do no good, and may give much offence. Silence can offend no one, and there are pleasanter or less irritating subjects to talk of. I gave them both a hint of this, and bid them remember they were among ordinary strangers. How little young people reflect

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what they may win or lose by a smart reflection imprudently fired off at a venture!"

On the morning of the 29th the wind at last changed, and the Barham got under weigh.

After a few days, when they had passed the Bay of Biscay, Sir Walter ceased to be annoyed with sea-sickness, and sat most of his time on deck, enjoying apparently the air, the scenery, and above all the ship itself, the beautiful discipline practised in all things, and the martial exercises of the men. In Captain Pigot, Lieutenant Walker, the physician Dr. Liddell, and I believe in many others of the officers, he had highly intelligent as well as polished companions. The course was often altered, for the express purpose of giving him a glimpse of some famous place; and it was only the temptation of a singularly propitious breeze that prevented a halt at Algiers.

On the 30th November they came upon that remarkable phenomenon, the sudden creation of a sub-marine volcano, which bore, during its very brief date, the name of Graham's Island. Four months had elapsed since it "arose from out the azure main"—and in a few days more it disappeared. "Already," as Dr. Davy says, "its crumbling masses were falling to pieces from the pressure of the hand or foot."* Yet nothing could prevent Sir Walter from landing on it—and in a letter of the following week he thus describes his adventure;—the Barham had reached Malta on the 22d.

To James Skene, Esq. of Rubislaw, Edinburgh.

Malta, Nov. 25, 1831.

"My dear Skene,

"Our habits of non-correspondence are so firmly established, that it must be a matter of some importance that sets either of us a writing to the other. As it has been my lot to see the new volcano, called Graham's Island, either employed in establishing itself, or more likely in decomposing itself—and as it must be an object of much curiosity to many of our brethren of the Royal Society, I have taken it into my head that even the very imperfect account which I can give of a matter of this extraordinary kind may be in some degree valued. Not being able to borrow your fingers, those of the Captain's clerk have been put in requisition for the enclosed sketch, and the notes adjoined are as accurate as can be expected from a hurried visit. You have a view of the island, very much as it shows at present, but nothing is more certain than that it is on the eve of a very important change, though in what respect is doubtful. I saw a portion of about five or six feet in height give way under the feet of one of our companions on the very ridge of the southern corner, and become completely annihilated, giving us some anxiety for the fate of our friend, till the dust and confusion of the dispersed pinnacle had subsided. You know my old talents for horsemanship. Finding the earth, or what seemed a substitute for it, sink at every step up to the knee, so as to make walking for an infirm and heavy man nearly impossible, I mounted the shoulders of an able and willing seaman, and by dint of his exertions rode nearly to the top of the island. I would have given a great deal for you, my friend, the frequent and willing supplier of my defects; but on this journey, though undertaken late in life, I have found, from the benevolence of my companions, that when one man's strength was insufficient to supply my deficiencies, I had the willing aid of twenty if it could be useful. I have sent you one of the largest blocks of lava which I could find on the islet, though small pieces are innumerable. We found two dolphins, killed apparently by the hot temperature, and the body of a robin redbreast, which seemingly had come off from the nearest land, and starved to death on the islet, where it had neither found food nor water. Such had been the fate of the first attempt to stock the island with fish and fowl. On the south side the volcanic principle was still apparently active. The perpetual bubbling up from the bottom produces a quantity of steam, which rises all around the base of the island, and surrounds it as with a cloak when seen from a distance. Most of these appearances struck the other gentlemen, I believe, as well as myself; but a gentleman who has visited the rock repeatedly, is of opinion that it is certainly increasing in magnitude. Its decrease in height may be consistent with the increase of its more level parts, and even its general appearance above water; for the ruins which crumble down from the top, are like to remain at the bottom of the ridge of the rock, add to the general size of the islet, and tend to give the ground firmness.

"The gales of this new-born island are any thing but odoriferous. Brimstone, and such like, are the prevailing savours, to a degree almost suffocating. Every hole dug in the sand is filled with boiling water, or what was nearly such. I cannot help thinking that the great ebullition in the bay is the remains of the original crater, now almost filled up, yet still showing that some extraordinary operations are going on in the subterranean regions.

"If you think, my dear Skene, that any of these trifling particulars concerning this islet can interest our friends, you are free to communicate them either to the Society or to the Club, as you judge most proper. I have just seen James* in full health, but he vanished like a guilty thing, when, forgetting that I was a contraband commodity, I went to shake him by the hand, which would have cost him ten days' imprisonment, I being at present in quarantine.

"We saw an instance of the strictness with which this law is observed. In entering the harbour, a seaman was pushed from our yard-arm. He swam strongly, notwithstanding the fall, but the Maltese boats, of whom there were several, tacked from him, to avoid picking him up, and an English boat, which did take the poor man in, was condemned to ten days' imprisonment, to reward the benevolence of the action. It is in the capacity of quarantine prisoners that we now inhabit the decayed chambers of a magnificent old Spanish palace, which resembles the pantaloons of the Don in his youth, a world too wide for his shrunk shanks. But you know Malta, where there is more magnificence than comfort, though we have met already many friends, and much kindness.

"My best compliments to Mrs. Skene, to whom I am bringing a fairy cup made out of a Nautilus shell—the only one which I found entire on Graham's Island; the original owner had suffered shipwreck. I beg to be respectfully remembered to all friends of the Club. Yours ever, with love to your fireside,

WALTER SCOTT."

At Malta Sir Walter found several friends of former days, besides young Skene. Mr. John Hookham Frere had been resident there for several years, as he still continues, the captive of the enchanting climate, and the romantic monuments of the old chivalry.† Sir John Stoddart, the Chief Judge of the island, had known the Poet ever since the early days of Lasswade and Glenfinlas; and the Lieutenant-governor, Colonel Seymour Bathurst, had often met him under the roof of his father, the late Earl Bathurst. Mrs. Bathurst's distinguished uncle, Sir William Alexander, some time Lord Chief-Baron of England, happened also to be then visiting her. Captain Dawson, husband to Lord Kinneder's eldest daughter, was of the garrison, and Sir Walter felt as if he were about to meet a daughter of his own in the Euphemia Erskine who had so often sat upon his knee. She immediately joined him, and insisted on being allowed to partake his quarantine. Lastly, Dr. John Davy, the brother of his illustrious friend, was at the head of the medical staff; and this gentleman's presence was welcome indeed to the Major and Miss Scott, as well as to their father, for he had already begun to be more negligent as to his diet, and they dreaded his removal from the skilful watch of Dr. Liddell. Various letters, and Sir Walter's Diary, (though hardly legible,) show that he inspected with curiosity the knightly antiquities of La Valetta, the church and monuments of St. John, the deserted palaces and libraries of the heroic brotherhood; and the reader will find that, when he imprudently resumed the pen of romance, the subject he selected was from their annals. He enjoyed also the society of the accomplished persons I have been naming, and the marks of honour lavished on him by the inhabitants, both native and English.

Here he saw much of a Scotch lady, with many of whose friends and connexions he had been intimate—Mrs. John Davy, the daughter of a brother advocate, the late Mr. Archibald Fletcher, whose residence in Edinburgh used to be in North Castle Street, within a few doors of "poor 39." This lady

* Philosophical Transactions, May, 1834, p. 862.

* James Henry Skene, Esq., a son of Sir W.'s correspondent, was then a young officer on duty at Malta.

† See the charming "Epistle in Rhyme, from William Stewart Rose at Brighton, to John Hookham Frere at Malta," published with some other pieces in 1835.

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has been so good as to intrust me with a few pages of her "Family Journal;" and I am sure the reader will value a copy of them more than any thing else I could produce with respect to Sir Walter's brief residence at Malta:—

"Before the end of November," says Mrs. Davy, "a great sensation was produced in Malta, as well it might, by the arrival of Sir Walter Scott. He came here in the Barham, a frigate considered the very beauty of the fleet, 'a perfect ship,' as Sir Pulteney Malcolm used to say, and in the highest discipline. In her annals it may now be told that she carried the most gifted, certainly the most popular author of Europe into the Mediterranean; but it was amusing to see that the officers of the ship thought the great minstrel and romancer must gain more addition to his fame from having been a passenger on board the Barham, than they or *she* could possibly receive even from having taken on board such a guest. Our Governor, Sir F. Ponsonby, had not returned from a visit to England when this arrival took place, but orders had been received that all manner of attention should be paid; that a house, carriage, horses, &c., should be placed at Sir Walter's disposal; and all who thought they had the smallest right to come forward on the occasion, or even a decent pretence for doing so, were eager to do him honour according to their notions and means.

"On account of cholera then prevailing in England, a quarantine was at this time enforced here on all who came from thence; but instead of driving Sir Walter to the ordinary lazaretto, some good apartments were prepared at Fort Manuel for him and his family to occupy for the appointed time, I believe nine days. He there held a daily levee to receive the numerous visiters who waited on him; and I well remember, on accompanying Colonel and Mrs. Bathurst and Sir William Alexander to pay their first visit, how the sombre landing-place of the Marsa Muscet (the quarantine harbour,) under the heavy bastion that shelters it on the Valetta side, gave even then tokens of an illustrious arrival, in the unusual number of boats and bustle of parties setting forth to or returning from Fort Manuel, on the great business of the day. But even in the case of one whom all 'delighted to honour,' a quarantine visit is a notably uncomfortable thing; and when our little procession had marched up several broad flights of steps, and we found ourself on a landing-place having a wide doorway opposite to us, in which sat Sir Walter—his daughter, Major Scott, and Mrs. Dawson standing behind—and a stout bar placed across some feet in front of them, to keep us at the legal distance—I could not but repent having gone to take part in a ceremony so formal and wearisome to all concerned. Sir Walter rose, but seemed to do it with difficulty, and the paralytic fixed look of his face was most distressing. We all walked up to the bar, but there stood very like culprits, and no one seemed to know who was to speak first. Sir W. Alexander, however, accustomed of old to discourse from the bar, or charge from the bench, was beyond question the proper person,—so, after a very little hesitation, he began and made a neat speech, expressing our hopes that Sir Walter would sojourn at Malta as long as possible. Sir Walter replied very simply and courteously in his natural manner, but his articulation was manifestly affected, though not, I think, quite so much so as his expression of face. He wore trousers of the Lowland small-checked plaid, and sitting with his hands crossed over the top of a shepherd's-looking staff, he was very like the picture painted by Leslie, and engraved for one of the Annuals,—but when he spoke, the varied expression, that used quite to redeem all heaviness of features, was no longer to be seen. Our visit was short, and we left Mr. Frere with him at the bar on our departure. He came daily to see his friend, and passed more of his quarantine time with him than any one else. We were told that between Mr. Frere's habitual absence of mind, and Sir Walter's natural Scotch desire to shake hands with him at every meeting, it required all the vigilance of the attendant genii of the place, to prevent Mr. F. from being put into quarantine along with him.

"Sir Walter did not accept the house provided for him by the Governor's order, nor any of the various private houses which, to Miss Scott's great amusement, were urgently proffered for his use by their owners—but established himself, during his stay, at Beverley's Hotel, in Strada Ponente. Our house was immediately opposite to this one, divided by a very narrow street; and I well remember, when watching his arrival on the day he took Pratique, hearing the sound of his voice as he chatted sociably to Mr. Greig (the inspector of quarantine,) on whose arm he leaned while walking from the carriage to the door of his hotel—it seemed to me that I had hardly heard so home-like a sound in this strange land, or one that so took me back to Edinburgh and our own North Castle Street, where, in passing him as he walked up or down with a friend, I had heard it before so often. Nobody was at hand at the moment for me to show him to but an English maid, who not having my Scotch interest in the matter, only said, when I tried to enlighten her as to the event of his arrival—'Poor old gentleman, how ill he looks.' It showed how sadly a little while must have changed him, for when I had seen him last in Edinburgh, perhaps five or six years before, no one would have thought of calling him 'an old gentleman.' At one or two dinner-parties, at which we saw him within the week of his arrival, he did not seem at all animated in conversation, and retired soon; for he seemed resolutely prudent as to keeping early hours; though he was unfortunately careless as to what he ate or drank, especially the latter—and, I fear, obstinate when his daughter attempted to regulate his diet.

"A few days after his arrival in Malta he accepted an invitation from the garrison to a *ball*—an odd kind of honour to bestow on a man of letters suffering from paralytic illness, but extremely characteristic of the taste of this place. It was, I believe, well got up, under the direction of the usual master of Malta ceremonies, Mr. Walker, an officer of artillery; and every thing was done that the said officer and his colleagues could do to give it a sentimental, if not a literary cast. The decorations were laboriously appropriate. Sir Walter entered (having been received at the door by a deputation of the dignitaries of the island) to the sound of Scotch music; and as it was held in the great room of the Auburge de Provence, formerly one of the festal halls of the Knights of Malta, it was not a bad scene—if such a gayety was to be inflicted at all.

"A day or two afterwards, we gladly accepted an invitation brought to us by Miss Scott, to dine quietly with him and two or three officers of the Barham at his hotel; and I thought the day of this dining so *sekite* a one as to mark it especially in a little note-book the same evening. I see it stands dated December the 4th, and the little book says:—'Dined and spent the evening of this day with Sir Walter Scott. We had only met him before at large dinner-parties. At home he was very much more happy, and more inclined to talk. Even now his conversation has many characteristics of his writings. There is the same rich felicitous quotation from favourite writers—the same happy introduction of old traditionary stories,—Scotch ones especially,—in a manner as easy, and evidently quite unprepared. The coming in of a young midshipman, cousin of his (Scott by name,) to join the party, gave occasion to his telling the story of 'Muckle Mouthed Meg,'* and to his describing the tragicomical picture drawn from that story by Mr. C. K. Sharpe, which I remembered to have seen at Abbotsford. At dinner he spoke a good deal of Tom Sheridan, after telling a *bon mot* of his in illustration of something that was said; and seemed amused at a saying of Mr. Smyth (of Cambridge,) respecting that witty and volatile pupil of his, 'that it was impossible to put knowledge into him, try it as you might.' 'Just,' said Sir Walter, 'like a trunk that you are trying to over-pack, but it won't do, the things start out in your face.' On joining us in the drawing-room after dinner Sir Walter was very animated, spoke much of Mr. Frere, and of his remarkable success, when quite a boy, in the translation of a Saxon ballad.† This led him to ballads in general, and he gravely lamented his friend Mr. Frere's heresy in not esteeming highly enough that of 'Harvyknute.' He admitted that it was not a veritable old ballad, but 'just old enough,' and a noble imitation of the best style. In speaking of Mr. Frere's translations, he repeated a pretty long passage from his version of one of the Romances of the Cid (published in the Appendix to Southey's quarto,) and seemed to enjoy a spirited charge of the knights therein described as much as he could have done in his best days, placing his walking-stick in rest like a lance, to 'suit the action to the word.' Miss Scott says, she has not seen him so animated, so like himself, since he came to Malta, as on this evening.

"'*Sunday Morning, December* 5, (as my said little note book proceeds to record)—Sir Walter spent chiefly in St. John's Church, the beautiful temple and burying-place of the knights, and there he was much pleased and interested. On Monday the 6th he dined at the Chief-Justice. Sir John Stoddart's, when I believe he partook too freely of porter and champagne for one in his invalid state. On Tuesday morning (the 7th,) on looking from one of our windows across the street, I observed him sitting in an easy chair in the parlour of his hotel, a book in his hand, and apparently reading attentively:—his window was wide open, and I remember wishing much for the power of making a picture of him just as he sat. But about 11 o'clock Miss Scott came over to me, looking much frighted

* See *ante*, p. 78.

† See *ante*, p. 98.

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ened, and saying that she feared he was about to have another paralytic attack. He had, she said, been rather confused in mind the day before, and the dinner-party had been too much for him. She had observed that on trying to answer a note from the Admiral that morning, he had not been able to form a letter on the paper, and she thought he was now sitting in a sort of stupor. She begged that Dr. Davy would visit him as soon as possible, and that I would accompany him, so that he might not suppose it a *medical* visit, for to all such he had an utter objection. I sent for Dr. D. instantly, and the moment he returned we went together to the hotel. We found Sir Walter sitting near a fire, dressed, as I had seen him just before, in a large silk dressing-gown, his face a good deal flushed, and his eyes heavy. He rose, however, as I went up to him, and, addressing me by my mother's name, "Mrs. Fletcher," asked kindly whether I was quite recovered from a little illness I had complained of the day before, and then walked to a table on the other side of the room, to look at some views of the new Volcano in the Mediterranean, which, by way of apology for our early visit, we had carried with us. With these he seemed pleased; but there was great indistinctness in his manner of speaking. He soon after sat down, and began, of his own accord, to converse with Dr. Davy on the work he was then engaged in—the Life of Sir Humphry—saying that he was truly glad he was thus engaged, as he did not think justice had been done to the character of his friend by Dr. Paris. In speaking of the scientific distinction attained by Sir Humphry, he said, 'I hope, Dr. Davy, your mother lived to see it. There must have been such great pleasure in that to her.' We both remember with much interest this kindly little observation; and it was but one of many that dropt from him as naturally at the different times we met, showing that, 'fallen' as 'the mighty' was, and 'his weapons of war perished,' the springs of fancy dried up, and memory on most subjects much impaired, his sense of the value of home-bred worth and affection was in full force. His way of mentioning 'my son Charles, poor fellow,' whom he was longing to meet at Naples—or 'my own Tweedside,' which in truth he seemed to lament over having quitted, was often really affecting. Our visit together on this morning was of course short, but Dr. Davy saw him repeatedly in the course of the same day. Leeches were applied to his head, and though they did not give immediate relief to his uncomfortable sensations, he was evidently much better next morning, and disposed to try a drive into the country. Some lameness having befallen one of the horses provided for his use, I, at his request, ordered a little open carriage of ours to the door about 12 o'clock, and prepared to accompany him to St. Antonio, a garden residence of the Governor's, about two miles from Valetta, then occupied by Mr. Frere, whose own house at the Pietà was under repair. It was not without fear and trembling I undertook this little drive—not on account of the greatness of my companion, for assuredly he was the most humane of lions, but I feared he might have some new seizure of illness, and that I should be very helpless to him in such a case. I proposed that Dr. D. should go instead; but, like most men when they are ill or unhappy, he preferred having *womankind* about him,—said he would 'like *Mrs.* Davy better;' so I went. The notices of his 'carriage talk,' I give exactly as I find them noted down the day after—omitting only the story of Sir H. Davy and the Tyrolese rifle, which I put on record separately for my husband, for insertion in his book.*

"My little note-book of December 9 says—The day was very beautiful—(like a good English day about the end of May)—and the whole way in going to St. Antonio he was cheerful and inclined to talk on any matter that was suggested. He admired the streets of Valetta much as we passed through them, noticing particularly the rich effect of the carved stone balconies, and the images of saints at every corner, saying several times 'this town is really quite like a dream.' Something (suggested I believe by the appearances of Romish superstition on all sides of us) brought him to speak of the Irish—of whose native character he expressed a high opinion; and spoke most feelingly of the evil fate that seemed constantly to attend them. Some link from this subject—(I do not exactly know what, for the rattling progress of our little vehicle over ill-paved ways, and his imperfect utterance together, made it difficult to catch all his words)—brought to his recollection a few fine lines from 'O'Connor's child,' in the passage

> 'And ranged, as to the judgment seat,
> My guilty, trembling brothers round'—

which he repeated with his accustomed energy, and then went on to speak of Campbell, whom, as a poet, he honours. On my saying something of Campbell's youth at the publication of his first poem, he said, 'Ay, he was very young—but he came out at once, ye may say, like the Irish rebels, a hundred thousand strong.'

"There was no possibility of admiring the face of the country as we drove along after getting clear of the city gates; but I was pleased to see how refreshing the air seemed to Sir Walter—and perhaps this made him go back, as he did, to his days of long walks, over moss and moor, which he told me he had often traversed at the rate of five-and-twenty miles a-day, with a gun on his shoulder. He snuffed with great delight the perfume of the new oranges, which hung thickly on each side as we drove up the long avenue to the court-yard, or stable-yard rather, of St. Antonio—and was amused at the Maltese untidiness of two or three pigs running at large under the trees. 'That's just like my friend Frere,' he said, 'quite content to let pigs run about in his orange groves.' We did not find Mr. Frere at home, and therefore drove back without waiting. Among some other talk, in returning, he spoke with praise of Miss Ferrier as a novelist, and then with still higher praise of Miss Austen. Of the latter he said, 'I find myself every now and then with one of her books in my hand. There's a finishing off in some of her scenes that is really quite above every body else. And there's that Irish lady too—but I forget every body's name now'——'Miss Edgeworth,' I said—'Ay, Miss Edgeworth, she's *very* clever, and best in the little touches, too. I'm sure, in that children's story'—(he meant 'Simple Susan,')—'where the little girl parts with her lamb, and the little boy brings it back to her again, there's nothing for it but just to put down the book, and cry.' A little afterwards, he said, 'Do you know Moore?—he's a charming fellow—a perfect gentleman in society; to use a sporting phrase, there's no kick in his gallop.'

"As we drew near home, I thought him somewhat fatigued—he was more confused than at first in his recollection of names—and we drove on without saying any thing. But I shall not forget the kindly good humour with which he said, in getting out at his hotel door—'Thank ye, for your kindness—your charity, I may say, to an old lame man—farewell!' He did not seem the worse of his little exertion this day; but thenceforward, was prudent in refusing all dinner invitations.

"On Friday (December 10th,) he went, in company with Mr. Frere, to see Citta Vecchia. I drove over with a lady friend to meet them at the church there. Sir Walter seemed pleased with what was shown him, but was not animated. On Saturday the 11th he drove out twice to see various things in Valetta. On Monday morning the 13th, I saw him for the last time, when I called to take leave of Miss Scott. Dr. Davy accompanied him, in the course of the following morning, to see Strada Stretta—the part of the city in which he had been told the young Knights of Malta used to fight their duels, when such affairs occurred. In quitting the street, Sir Walter looked round him earnestly, and said, 'It will be hard if I cannot make something of this.' On that day, Tuesday morning, December 14th, he and his party went again on board the Barham, and sailed for Naples."

* See Dr. Davy's Memoirs of his brother, Vol. I. p. 508,—for the account of Speckbacker's rifle now in the Armoury at Abbotsford.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

RESIDENCE AT NAPLES — EXCURSIONS TO PÆSTUM, POMPEII, ETC.—LAST ATTEMPTS AT ROMANCE—SIR WILLIAM GELL'S MEMORANDA.—DECEMBER, 1831—APRIL, 1832.

On the 17th of December the Barham reached Naples, and Sir Walter found his son Charles ready to receive him. The quarantine was cut short by the courtesy of the King of Naples, and the travellers established themselves in an apartment of the Palazzo Caramanico.

Here again the British Minister, Mr. Hill (now Lord Berwick,) and the English nobility and gentry then residing in Naples, did whatever kindness and respect could suggest for Sir Walter; nor were the natives and their visitants from foreign countries less attentive. The Marquis of Hertford, the Hon. Keppel Craven, the Hon. William Ashley and his lady, Sir George Talbot, the venerable Matthias, (author of "The Pursuits of Literature,") Mr. Auldjo (celebrated for his ascent of Mount Blanc,) and Dr. Hogg, a medical gentleman who has since published an account of his travels in the East—appear to have, in their various ways, contributed whatever they could to his comfort and amusement. But the person of whom he saw most was the late Sir William Gell, who had

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long been condemned to live in Italy by ailments and infirmities not dissimilar to his own. Sir William, shortly after Sir Walter's death, drew up a memoir of their intercourse, which will, I believe, be considered as sufficient for this period.

Before I introduce it, however, I may notice that Sir Walter, whenever he appeared at the Neapolitan Court, which he did several times, wore the uniform of a brigadier-general in the ancient Body Guard of Scotland; a dress of light green, with gold embroidery, assigned to those *Archers* by George IV. at the termination of his northern progress in 1822. I have observed this circumstance alluded to with a sort of sneer. The truth is, Sir Walter had ordered the dress for the christening of the young Buccleuch; but at any rate, the machinery now attached to his lame limb, would have made it impossible for him to appear in breeches and stockings, as was then imperative on civilians.

Further, it was on the 16th of January that Sir Walter received the intelligence of his grandson's death. His Diary of that date has simply these words:—"Poor Johnny Lockhart! This boy is gone whom we have made so much of. I could not have borne it better than I now do, and I might have borne it much worse. I went to the Opera in the evening to see this amusement in its birth-place, which is now so widely received over Europe."

At first Sir Walter busied himself chiefly about forming a collection of Neapolitan and Sicilian ballads and broadsides; and Mr. Matthias seems to have been at much pains in helping this. But alas, ere he had been long in Naples, he began, in spite of all remonstrances, to give several hours every morning to the composition of a new novel, "The Siege of Malta;" and during his stay he nearly finished both this and a shorter tale, entitled "Bizarro." He also relaxed more and more in his obedience to the regimen of his physicians, and thus applied a two-fold stimulus to his malady.

Neither of these novels will ever, I hope, see the light; but I venture to give the foundation of the shorter one, as nearly as I can decipher it from the author's Diary, of which it occupies some of the last pages.

"DEATH OF IL BIZARRO.

"This man was called, from his wily but inexorable temper, Il Bizarro. He was captain of a gang of banditti, whom he governed by his own authority, till he increased them to 1000 men, both on foot and horseback, whom he maintained in the mountains of Calabria, between the French and Neapolitans, both of which he defied, and pillaged the country. High rewards were set upon his head, to very little purpose, as he took care to guard himself against being betrayed by his own gang, the common fate of those banditti who become great in their vocation. At length a French colonel, whose name I have forgot, occupied the country of Bizarro, with such success, that he formed a cordon around him and his party, and included him between the folds of a military column. Well-nigh driven to submit himself, the robber, with his wife, a very handsome woman, and a child of a few months old, took post one day beneath an old bridge, and by an escape almost miraculous, were not perceived by a strong party whom the French maintained on the top of the arch. Night at length came without a discovery, which every moment might have made. When it bec
quite dark, the brigand, enjoining the strictest silence on the female and child, resolved to start from his place of shelter, and as he issued forth, kept his hand on the child's throat. But as, when they began to move, the child naturally cried, its father in a rage tightened his gripe so relentlessly, that the poor infant never offended more in the same manner.

"His wife had never been very fond of him, though he trusted her more than any who approached him. She had been originally the wife of another man murdered by her second husband, which second marriage she was compelled to undergo, and to affect at least the conduct of an affectionate wife. In their wanderings she alone knew where he slept. He left his men in a body upon the top of a hill, round which they set watches. He then went apart into the woods, with his wife, and having chosen a lair in an obscure and deep thicket, there took up his residence for the night. A large Calabrian dog, his constant attendant, was then tied to a tree at some distance to secure his slumbers, and having placed his carabine within reach of his arm, he consigned himself to such sleep as belongs to his calling. By such precautions he had secured his rest for many years.

"But after the death of the child, the measure of his offence towards the unhappy mother was full to the brim, and her thoughts became determined on revenge. One evening he took up his quarters with the usual precautions, but without the usual success. He had laid his carabine near him, and betaken himself to rest, when his partner arose from his side, and ere he became sensible that she had done so, she seized his carabine, and discharging it in his bosom, ended at once his life and his crimes. She finished her work by cutting off the brigand's head, and carrying it to the principal town of the province, where she delivered it to the police, and claimed the reward attached to his head, which was paid accordingly. This female still lives, a stately, dangerous looking woman, yet scarce ill thought of considering the provocation.

"The dog struggled extremely to get loose on hearing the shot. Some say the female shot it; others that, in its rage, it very nearly gnawed through the stout young tree to which it was tied. He was worthy of a better master.

"The distant encampment of the band was disturbed by the firing of the Bizarro's carabine at midnight. They ran through the woods to seek the captain, but finding him lifeless and headless, they became so much surprised, that many of them surrendered to the government and relinquished their trade. Thus the band of the Bizarro, as it lived by his spirit, was broken up by his death.

"Among other stories respecting the cruelty of this bandit, I heard this. A French officer, who had been active in the pursuit of him, fell into his hands, and was made to die the death of St. Polycarp—that is, the period being the middle of summer, he was flayed alive, and being smeared with honey, was exposed to all the intolerable insects of a southern sky. The corps were also informed where they might find their officer, if they thought proper to send for him. As more than two days elapsed before the wretched man was found, nothing save miserable relics were discovered. I do not warrant these stories, but such are told currently."

Here is another—taken, I believe, from one of the rude pamphlets in his collection.

"There was a farmer of an easy fortune, and who might be supposed to leave to his daughter, a very pretty girl, and an only child, a fortune thought in the village to be very considerable. She was, under the hope of sharing such a prize, made up to by a young man in the neighbourhood, handsome, active, and of good character. He was of that sort of persons who are generally successful among women, and this girl was supposed to have encouraged his addresses; but her father, on being applied to, gave him a direct and positive refusal. The gallant resolved to continue his addresses in hopes of overcoming the obstacle by his perseverance, but the father's opposition seemed only to increase by the lover's pertinacity. At length, as the farmer walked one evening, smoking his pipe, upon the terrace before his door, the lover unhappily passed by, and, struck with the instant thought that the obstacle to the happiness of his life was now entirely in his own power, he rushed upon the father, pierced him with three mortal stabs of his knife, and made his escape to the mountains.

"What was most remarkable was, that he was protected against the police, who went, as was their duty, in quest of him, by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who afforded him both shelter and such food as he required, looking on him less as a

wilful criminal than an unfortunate man, who had been surprised by a strong and almost irresistible temptation; so congenial at this moment is the love of vengeance to an Italian bosom, and, though chastised in general by severe punishment, so much are criminals sympathized with by the community."

I now insert the Neapolitan part of Sir William Gell's Memoranda.

"Every record of the latter days of those who, by their actions or their talents, have excited the admiration and occupied the attention of their contemporaries, has been thought worthy of preservation, and I feel, on that account, a melancholy pleasure in complying with the request that I would furnish such anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott as my short intimacy with that illustrious personage may have afforded. The reason assigned in the letter, which I received from one of the family on the subject, was, that I was his 'latest friend,' and this appeared to me as strong a motive as if I could have been called his earliest acquaintance.

"I had met Sir Walter at Stanmore Priory many years ago, when on a visit to the late Marquis of Abercorn, where he read one of the earliest of his poetical productions; but I had no farther personal communication with him until his arrival at Naples. I was induced to call on him at the Palazzo Caramanico, at the desire of a mutual friend, on the 5th of January, 1832, and it is probable that our mutual infirmities, which made us suitable companions in excursions, contributed in a great degree to the intimacy which immediately took place between us. On the following evening I presented to him Mr. Keppel Craven, whose Tour in the South of Italy he had just read with pleasure. From this time I was constantly in the habit of receiving, or calling for Sir Walter in the morning, and usually accompanied him to see any of the remarkable objects in the neighbourhood of Naples. The Lago d'Agnano was among the first places visited, and he was evidently quite delighted with the tranquil beauty of the spot, and struck particularly with the sight of the leaves yet lingering on the trees at so advanced a period of the winter, and the appearance of summer yet maintained by the meadows and copses surrounding the lake. It quickly recalled to his mind a lake in Scotland, which he immediately began to describe. I afterwards found that his only pleasure in seeing new places arose from the poetical ideas they inspired, as applicable to other scenes with which his mind was more familiar.

"Mr. Craven accompanied us on horseback in this excursion, and Sir Walter, learning that he was writing a second volume, giving an account of a journey in the Abbruzzi, kindly observed, that he thought he could be of use to him in the publication of it, adding, 'I think I may, perhaps, be able to give his pancake a toss.'

"On the 10th of January, I accompanied him to Pozzuoli, and the late Mr. Laing Meason was of the party. Here we succeeded in getting Sir Walter placed upon a heap of ruins, whence he might see the remains of the Thermæ, commonly called the Temple of Serapis. His observation was, that we might tell him any thing, and he would believe it all, for many of his friends, and particularly Mr. Morritt, had frequently tried to drive classical antiquities, as they were called, into his head, but they had always found his 'skull too thick.'

"It was with great risk that he could be brought to any point of difficult access, for though he was so lame and saw how easily I arrived by submitting to be assisted or carried, it was generally impossible to persuade him to commit himself to the care of the attendants.

"When Sir Walter was presented at Court, the King received him with marked attention, and insisted on his being seated, on account of his infirmity. They both spoke, and the by-standers observed, that His Majesty mentioned the pleasure he had received from reading the works of his visiter. Sir Walter answered in French, but not in a clear tone of voice; and he afterwards observed, that he and the King parted mutually pleased with the interview, considering that neither had heard one word of what was uttered by the other.

"On the 17th of January I took Sir Walter to dine with the venerable Archbishop of Tarentum, a prelate in his 90th year, but yet retaining his faculties unimpaired, and the warmer feelings of youth, with well-known hospitality. The two elders seemed mutually pleased with the interview, but the difficulties of language were opposed to any very agreeable conversation.

"On the 20th of January I attended Sir Walter in a boat, with several friends, to the ruins of a Roman villa, supposed by Mr. Hamilton and others, to have been that of Pollio, and situated upon a rock in the sea at the extremity of the promontory of Posilipo. It was by no means the recollection of Pollio that induced Sir Walter to make this excursion. A story existed that out of an opening in the floor of one of the rooms in this villa, a spectre robed in white occasionally appeared, whence the place had acquired the name of La Casa degli Spiriti, and none had presumed to inhabit it. The fact was, that a third story had been built upon the Roman ruins, and this being only inhabited by paupers, had fallen into decay, so as to endanger one angle of the fabric, and the police, for fear of accident, had ordered that it should remain untenanted. The house is situated upon a rock projecting into the sea, but attached on one side to the mainland. An entrance for a boat has been left in the basement story, and it is probable that a sort of open court, into which the sea enters at the back of the house, and in which is the staircase, was constructed for the purpose of cooling the apartments in the heat of summer, by means of the perpetual heaving and sinking of the ocean, which takes place even in the calmest weather. The staircase was too much ruined for Sir Walter to ascend with safety, but he appeared satisfied with what he saw, and took some interest in the proofs which the appearance of the opus reticulatum, high up in the external walls, afforded of the antiquity of the place.*

"On the 9th of February Sir Walter went to Pompeii, where, with several ladies and gentlemen at that time resident in Naples, I accompanied him. I did not go in the same carriage, but arriving at the street of the Tombs, found him already almost tired before he had advanced 100 yards. With great difficulty I forced him to accept the chair in which I was carried, supplying its place with another for myself, tied together with cords and handkerchiefs. He thus was enabled to pass through the city without more fatigue, and I was sometimes enabled to call his attention to such objects as were the most worthy of remark. To these observations, however, he seemed generally nearly insensible, viewing the whole, and not the parts, with the eye, not of an antiquary, but a poet, and exclaiming frequently, 'The city of the Dead,' without any other remark. An excavation had been ordered for him, but it produced nothing more than a few bells, hinges, and other objects of brass, which are found every day. Sir Walter seemed to view, however, the splendid mosaic, representing a combat of the Greeks and Persians, with more interest, and, seated upon a table whence he could look down upon it, he remained some time to examine it. We dined at a large table spread in the Forum, and Sir Walter was cheerful and pleased. In the evening he was a little tired, but felt no bad effects from the excursion to the City of the Dead.

"In our morning drives, Sir Walter always noticed a favourite dog of mine, which was usually in the carriage, and generally patted the animal's head for some time, saying, 'poor boy—poor boy.' 'I have got at home,' said he, 'two very fine favourite dogs, so large that I am always afraid they look too handsome and too feudal for my diminished income. I am very fond of them, but they are so large it was impossible to take them with me.' My dog was in the habit of howling when loud music was performing, and Sir Walter laughed till his eyes were full of tears, at the idea of the dog singing 'My Mother bids me bind my hair,' by the tune of which the animal seemed most excited, and which the kind-hearted baronet sometimes asked to have repeated.

"I do not remember on what day, during his residence at Naples, he came one morning rather early to my house, to tell me he was sure I should be pleased at some good luck which had befallen him, and of which he had just received notice. This was, as he said, an account from his friends in England, that his last works, Robert of Paris and Castle Dangerous, had gone on to a second edition. He told me in the carriage that he felt quite relieved by his letters, 'for,' said he, 'I could never have slept straight in my coffin till I had satisfied every claim against me.' 'And now,' added he to the dog, 'my poor boy, I shall have my house, and my estate round it, free, and I may keep my dogs as big and as many as I choose, without fear of reproach.'

"I do not recollect the date of a certain morning's drive, on which he first communicated to me that he had already written, or at least advanced far in a romance, on the subject of Malta, a part of which, he said, laughingly, he had put into the fire by mistake for other papers, but which he thought he had rewritten better than before. He asked me about the island of Rhodes, and told me, that, being relieved from debt, and no longer forced to write for money, he longed to turn to poetry again, and to see whether in his old age he was not capable of equalling the rhymes of his youthful days. I encouraged him in this project, and asked why he had ever relinquished poetry. 'Because Byron *bet* me,' said he,

* There is an interesting Essay on this Roman Villa, by Mr. Hamilton, in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature for 1837.

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pronouncing the word, *beat*, short.* I rejoined, that I thought I could remember by heart about as many passages of his poetry as of Lord Byron's; and to this he replied, 'that may be, but he *bet* me out of the field in the description of the strong passions, and in deep-seated knowledge of the human heart; so I gave up poetry for the time.' He became from that moment extremely curious about Rhodes, and having chosen for his poetical subject the chivalrous story of the slaying of the dragon by De Gozon, and the stratagems and valour with which he conceived and executed his purpose, he was quite delighted to hear that I had seen the skeleton of this real or reported dragon, which yet remains secured by large iron staples to the vaulted roof of one of the gates of the city.

"Rhodes became at this time an object of great importance and curiosity to him, and as he had indulged in the idea of visiting it, he was somewhat displeased to learn how very far distant it lay from Corfu, where he proposed to pass some time with Sir Frederick Adam, then Lord High Commissioner in the Ionian Islands.

"I must not omit stating that at an early period of his visit to Naples, an old English manuscript of the Romance of Sir Bevis of Hampton, existing in the Royal library, had attracted his attention, and he had resolved on procuring a copy of it, not, I think, for himself, but for a friend in Scotland, who was already possessed of another edition. When Sir Walter visited the library at the Museum, the literati of Naples crowded round him to catch a sight of so celebrated a person, and they showed him every mark of attention in their power, by creating him Honorary Member of their learned societies. Complimentary speeches were addressed to him in Latin, of which, unfortunately, he did not comprehend one word, on account of the difference of pronunciation, but from the confession of which he was saved by the intervention of Mr. Keppel Craven, who attended him. The King of Naples, learning his wish to copy the book, ordered it to be sent to his house, and he employed a person of the name of Sticchini, who, without understanding a word of English, copied the whole in a character as nearly as possible the fac-simile of the original. Sticchini was surprised and charmed with Sir Walter's kindness and urbanity, for he generally called him to breakfast, and sometimes to dinner, and treated him on all occasions in the most condescending manner. The Secretary was not less surprised than alarmed on seeing his patron not unfrequently trip his foot against a chair and fall down upon the floor, for he was extremely incautious as to where or how he walked. On these occasions, while the frightened Sticchini ran to assist him, Sir Walter laughed very good-humouredly, refused all help, and only expressed his anxiety lest his spectacles should have been broken by the accident.† Sir Walter wished, during his stay at Naples, to procure several Italian books in his particular department of study. Among other curiosities, he thought he had traced Mother Goose, if not to her origin at Naples, at least to a remote period of antiquity in Italy. He succeeded in purchasing a considerable number of books in addition to his library, and took the fancy to have them all bound in vellum.

"Sir Walter had heard too much of Pæstum to quit Naples without seeing it, and we accordingly formed a party in two carriages to go there, intending to sleep at La Cava, at the villa of my much respected friend Miss Whyte, a lady not less esteemed for every good quality, than celebrated for the extraordinary exertions of benevolence on the occasion of the murder of the Hunt family at Pæstum. Hearing of this fatal affair, and being nearer than any other of her compatriots to the scene, this lady immediately endeavoured to engage a surgeon at La Cava to accompany her to the spot. No one, however, could be found to venture into the den of the murderers, so that she resolved to go alone, well provided with lint, medicines, and all that could be useful to the wounded persons. She arrived, however, too late to be of use; but Sir Walter expressed the greatest desire to make the acquaintance of so admirable a person, and it was settled that her hospitable villa should receive and lodge us on our way to Pæstum. La Cava is 25 miles from Naples, and as it was necessary to feed the horses, I was in hopes of showing Sir Walter the amphitheatre of Pompeii while they ate their corn. The day, however, being rainy, we gave up the amphitheatre, and halted at the little tavern immediately below Pompeii. Here being obliged to remain, it was thought advisable to eat, and I had an opportunity of witnessing the hospitality which I had always heard distinguished Sir Walter, for, after we had finished, not only the servants were fed with the provisions he had brought, but the whole remainder was distributed to the poor people who had been driven into the tavern by the rain. This liberality unfortunately occasioned a deficit on the following day, when the party started without provision for the solitudes of Pæstum.

"Near Nocera I pointed out a tower situated upon a high mountain, and guarding a pass by which a very steep and zig-zag road leads towards Amalfi. I observed that it was possible that if the Saracens were ever really seated at Nocera dai Pagani, this tower might have been at the confines of the Amalfitan Republic, and have been their frontier against the Mahometans. It was surprising how quickly he caught at any romantic circumstance, and I found, in a very short time, he had converted the Torre di Ciunse, or Chiunse, into a feudal residence, and already peopled it with a Christian host. He called it the Knight's Castle, as long as it remained in sight, and soon after transferred its interest to the curious little towers, used for pigeon-shooting, which abound in the neighbourhood, though they were on the other side of the road.

"From La Cava, the party proceeded the next day to Pæstum, setting out early in the morning; but I did not accompany Sir Walter on that journey, and consequently only know that, by good luck, he found eggs and other rustic fare near the Temples, and returned, after a drive of fifty-four miles, very much fatigued, to a late dinner. He was, however, completely restored by the night's rest, and we visited on the following day the splendid Benedictine Monastery of La Trinità della Cava, situated about three miles from the great road, and approached through a beautiful forest of chestnuts, spreading over most picturesque mountains. The day was fine, and Sir Walter really enjoyed the drive; and the scenery recalled to his mind something of the kind which he had seen in Scotland, on which he repeated the whole of the ballad of Jock of Hazledean with great emphasis, and in a clear voice. At the Convent we had taken care to request, that what is termed a Pontifical Mass should be sung in his presence, after which he was taken with much difficulty, and twice falling, through the long and slippery labyrinths of that vast edifice, and up several very tedious staircases to the apartments containing the archives. Here the curious MSS. of the Convent were placed before him, and he seemed delighted with an ancient document in which the names of Saracens as well as Christians appear either as witnesses or principals; but he was chiefly struck with a book containing pictures of the Lombard Kings, of which, through the kindness of Doctor Hogg, he afterwards possessed copies by a young Neapolitan painter who had chanced to be on the spot. On the whole, Sir Walter was more pleased with the Monastery of La Cava than with any place to which I had the honour to accompany him in Italy; the site, the woods, the organ, the size of the Convent, and, above all, the Lombard Kings, produced a poetical feeling; and the fine weather so raised his spirits, that in the forest he again recited Jock of Hazledean by my desire, after a long repetition from his favourite poem of Hardyknute.

"On the following day we returned to Naples, but Sir Walter went in his own carriage, and complained to me afterwards that he had never been able to discover the 'Knight's Tower,' it being, in fact, only visible by turning back to a person travelling in that direction. He expressed himself at all times much delighted with our amiable hostess, Miss Whyte, remarking very justly that she had nothing cold about her but her house, which being in the mountains, is, in fact, by no means eligible at that season of the year.

"In one of our drives, the subject of Sir Walter's, perhaps, most popular romance, in which Lady Margaret Bellenden defends the Castle of Tillietudlem, was mentioned as having been translated into Italian under the title of 'The Scottish Puritans,' of which he highly approved. I told him how strange the names of the places and the personages appeared in their Italian garb, and remarked that the Castle was so well described, and seemed so true a picture, that I had always imagined he must have had some real fortress in view. He said it was very true; for the Castle he had visited, and had fallen so much in love with it, that he wanted to live there. He added a joke with regard to his having taken his hat off when he visited this favourite spot, remarking, that as the Castle had been uncovered for many centuries, he himself might be uncovered for an hour. It had, said Sir Walter, 'no roof, no windows, and not much wall. I should have had to make three miles of road, so before the affair was settled I got wiser.'*

"On the third of April I accompanied Sir Walter to

* The common Scotch pronunciation is not unlike what Sir W. G. gives.

† The spectacles were valued as the gift of a friend and brother poet. See *ante*, p. 531.

* See the account of Scott's early visit to Craignethan Castle *ante* p. 70. By the way, the name *Tillietudlem* is evidently taken from that of the ravine under the old castle of Lanark, which town is near Craignethan. This ravine is called *Gi..ytudlem*.

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Pozzuoli and to Cumæ. We had a party of nine or ten ladies and gentlemen, and agreed to dine at the inn at Pozzuoli, on our way back. I explained to Sir Walter the common history of all the objects which occurred on the road; and the account of Monte Nuovo, which rose in one night to its present elevation, destroying the village of Tre Pergole, and part of the Lucrine Lake, seemed particularly to strike his poetical imagination. There is a point in going toward the Arco Felice, whence, at a turn of the road, a very extensive and comprehensive view is obtained of the Lake of Avernus. The Temple of Apollo, the Lucrine Lake, the Monte Nuovo, Baiæ, Misenum, and the sea, are all seen at once; and here I considered it my duty, in quality of Cicerone, to enforce the knowledge of the localities. He attended to the names I repeated; and when I asked whether he thought himself sure of remembering the spot, he replied that he had it perfectly in his mind. I found, however, that something in the place had inspired him with other recollections of his own beloved country, and the Stuarts, for on proceeding, he immediately repeated in a grave tone, and with great emphasis—

'Up the craggy mountain, and down the mossy glen,
We canna gang a milking, for Charlie and his men.'

"I could not help smiling at this strange commentary on my dissertation upon the Lake of Avernus."

While at Naples, Sir Walter wrote frequently to his daughter Sophia, Mr. Cadell, Mr. Laidlaw, and myself. Some of these letters were of a very melancholy cast; for the dream about his debts being all settled was occasionally broken; and probably it was when that left him that he worked hardest at his Novels—though the habit of working had become so fixed that I may be wrong in this conjecture. In general, however, these last letters tell the same story of delusive hopes, both as to health and wealth, of satisfaction in the resumption of his pen, of eagerness to be once more at Abbotsford, and of affectionate anxiety about the friends he was there to rejoin. Every one of those to Laidlaw has something about the poor people and the dogs. One to myself conveyed his desire that he might be set down for "something as handsome as I liked" in a subscription then thought of for the Ettrick Shepherd—who that spring visited London, and was in no respect improved by his visit. Another to my wife bade her purchase a grand pianoforte which he wished to present to Miss Cadell, his bookseller's daughter. The same generous spirit was shown in many other communications.

I must transcribe one of Sir Walter's letters from Naples. It was addressed to Mrs. Scott of Harden, on the marriage of her daughter Anne to Charles Baillie, Esq., a son of her neighbour in the country, Mr. Baillie of Jerviswoode.

To Mrs. Scott of Harden.

"Naples, Palazzo Caramanico, 6th March, 1832.

"My dearest Mrs. Scott,—Your kind letter of 8th October, addressed to Malta, reached me only yesterday, with a number of others which had been tarrying at Jericho till their beards grew. This was in one respect inconvenient, as I did not gain the benefit of your advice with regard to my travels, which would have had a great influence with me. Moreover, I did not learn the happy event in your own family till a newspaper told it me by accident long ago. But as my good wishes are most sincere, it is of less consequence when they reach the parties concerned, and I flatter myself I possess so much interest with my young friends as to give me credit for most warmly wishing them all the happiness which this auspicious event promises. The connexion must be in every respect agreeable to the feelings of both families, and not less so to those of a former generation, provided they are permitted, as I flatter myself, to take interest in the affairs of this life.

"I envied your management of the pencil when at Malta, as frequently elsewhere; it is quite a place made to be illustrated: by the way, I have got an esquisse of Old Smailholm Tower from the pencil of Mr. Turner. Besides the other advantages of Malta, it possesses John Hookham Frere, who is one of the most entertaining men I know, and with whom I spent much of my time.

"Although I rather prefer Malta, I have no reason to complain of Naples. The society is very numerous and gay, and somewhat too frivolous for my time of life and infirmities; however, there are exceptions; especially poor Sir William Gell, a very accomplished scholar, who is lamer than I am, and never out of humour, though worried perpetually by the gout, which he bears with the greatest complaisance. He is engaged in vindicating, from the remains of the various public works in Italy, the truth, which Bryant and others have disputed, concerning the Roman History, as given by Livy and other authors, whom it has been of late fashionable to discredit. The Dilletante Society have, greatly to their credit, resolved to bring out this interesting book.

"It has been Carnival time, and the balls are without number, besides being pelted to death with sugar-plums, which is quite the rage. But now Lent is approaching to sober us after all our gayety, and every one seems ashamed of being happy, and preparing to look grave with all his might.

"I should have said something of my health, but have nothing to say, except that I am pretty well, and take exercise regularly, though, as Parson Adams says, it must be of the vehicular kind. I think I shall never ride or walk again. But I must not complain, for my plan of paying my debts, which you know gave me so much trouble some years since, has been, thank God, completely successful; and, what I think worth telling, I have paid very near £120,000, without owing any one a halfpenny—at least I am sure this will be the case by midsummer. I know the laird will give me much joy on this occasion, which, considering the scale upon which I have accomplished it, is a great feat. I wish I were better worthy the kindness of the public; but I am at least entitled to say—

'Twas meant for merit, though it fell on me.'

Also some industry and some steadiness were necessary, I believe, indeed, I made too great an exertion, but if I get better, as seems likely, it is little enough for so happy a result. The young people have been very happy—which makes me think that about next spring I will give your young couple a neighbourly dance. It will be about this time that I take the management of my affairs again. You must patronise me.

"My love to Henry, as well as to the young couple. He should go and do likewise.—Your somewhat ancient, but very sincere friend, WALTER SCOTT."

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

DEATH OF GOETHE—ROME—MEMORANDA BY SIR W. GELL AND MR. EDWARD CHENEY—JOURNEY TO FRANKFORT—THE RHINE STEAM-BOAT—FATAL SEIZURE AT NIMEGUEN—ARRIVAL IN LONDON—JERMYN STREET—EDINBURGH—ABBOTSFORD—DEATH AND BURIAL.—APRIL—SEPTEMBER, 1832.

His friend Sir Frederick Adam had urgently invited Sir Walter to visit the Ionian Islands, and he had consented to do so. But Sir Frederick was suddenly recalled from that government, and appointed to one in India, and the Greek scheme dropped. From that time his companions ceased to contend against his wishes for returning home. Since he would again work, what good end could it serve to keep him from working at his own desk? And as their entreaties, and the warnings of foreign doctors, proved alike unavailing as to the regulation of his diet, what remaining chance could there be on that score, unless from replacing him under the eye of the friendly physicians whose authority had formerly seemed to have due influence on his mind? He had wished to return by the route of the Tyrol and Germany, partly for the sake of the remarkable chapel and monuments of the old Austrian princes at Inspruck, and the feudal ruins upon the Rhine, but chiefly that he might have an interview with Goethe at Weimar. That poet died on the 22d of March, and the news seemed to act upon Scott exactly as the illness of Borthwickbrae had done in the August before. His impatience redoubled: all his fine dreams of recovery seemed to vanish at once—"Alas for Goethe!" he exclaimed, "but he at least died at home—Let us to Abbotsford." And he quotes more than once in his letters the first hemistich of the line from Politian with which he had closed his early memoir of Leyden—"*Grata quies Patriæ.*"

When the season was sufficiently advanced, then, the party set out, Mr. Charles Scott having obtained leave to accompany his father; which was quite necessary, as his elder brother had already been obliged to rejoin his regiment. They quitted Naples on the 16th of April, in an open barouche, which could at pleasure be converted into a bed.

It will be seen from some memoranda about to be quoted, that Sir Walter was somewhat interested by a few of the objects presented to him in the earlier stages of his route. The certainty that he was on his way home for a time soothed and composed him; and amidst the agreeable society which again surrounded him on his arrival in Rome, he seemed perhaps as much of himself as he had ever been in Malta or in Naples. For a moment even his literary hope and ardour appear to have revived. But still his daughter entertained no doubt, that his consenting to pause for even a few days in Rome, was dictated mainly by consideration of her natural curiosity. Sir William Gell went to Rome about the same time; and Sir Walter was introduced there to another accomplished countryman, who exerted himself no less than did Sir William, to render his stay agreeable to him. This was Mr. Edward Cheney—whose family had long been on terms of very strict intimacy with the Maclean Clephanes of Torloisk, so that Sir Walter was ready to regard him at first sight as a friend. I proceed to give some extracts from these gentlemen's memoranda.

"At Rome" (says Gell) "Sir Walter found an apartment provided for him in the Casa Bernini. On his arrival, he seemed to have suffered but little from the journey; though I believe the length of time he was obliged to sit in a carriage had been occasionally the cause of troublesome symptoms. I found him, however, in very good spirits, and as he was always eager to see any spot remarkable as the scene of particular events recorded in history, so he was keenly bent on visiting the house where Benvenuto Cellini writes that he slew the Constable of Bourbon with a bullet fired from the Castle of St. Angelo. The Chevalier Luigi Chiaveri took him to the place, of which, though he quickly forgot the position, he yet retained the history firmly fixed in his mind, and to which he very frequently recurred.

"The introduction of Mr. Cheney was productive of great pleasure to Sir Walter, as he possessed at that moment the Villa Muti, at Frescati, which had been for many years the favourite residence of the Cardinal of York, who was bishop of Tusculum.

"Soon after his arrival I took Sir Walter to St. Peter's, which he had resolved to visit, that he might see the tomb of the last of the Stuarts. I took him to one of the side doors, in order to shorten the walk, and by great good fortune met with Colonel Blair and Mr. Phillips, under whose protection he accomplished his purpose. We contrived to tie a glove round the point of his stick, to prevent his slipping in some degree, but to conduct him was really a service of danger and alarm, owing to his infirmity and total want of caution. He has been censured for not having frequently visited the treasures of the Vatican—but by those only who were unacquainted with the difficulty with which he moved. Days and weeks must have been passed in this immense museum, in order to have given him any idea of its value; nor do I know that it would have been possible for him to have ascended the rugged stairs, or to have traced its corridors and interminable galleries, in the state of reduced strength and dislike to being assisted under which he then laboured.

"On the 8th of May we all dined at the Palace of the Duchess Torlonia, with a very large company. The dinner was very late and very splendid, and from the known hospitality of the family it was probable that Sir Walter, in the heat of conversation, and with servants on all sides pressing him to eat and drink, as is their custom at Rome, might be induced to eat more than was safe for his malady. Colonel Blair, who sat next him, was requested to take care that this should not happen. Whenever I observed him, however, Sir Walter appeared always to be eating; while the Duchess, who had discovered the nature of the office imposed on the Colonel, was by no means satisfied, and after dinner observed that it was an odd sort of friendship which consisted in starving one's neighbour to death when he had a good appetite, and there was dinner enough.

"It was at this entertainment that Sir Walter met with the Duke and Duchess of Corchiano, who were both well read in his works, and delighted to have been in company with him. This acquaintance might have led to some agreeable consequences had Sir Walter's life been spared, for the Duke told him he was possessed of a vast collection of papers, giving true accounts of all the murders, poisonings, intrigues, and curious adventures of all the great Roman families during many centuries, all which were at his service to copy and publish in his own way as historical romances, only disguising the names, so as not to compromise the credit of the existing descendants of the families in question. Sir Walter listened to the Duke for the remainder of the evening, and was so captivated with all he heard from that amiable and accomplished personage, that at one moment he thought of remaining for a time at Rome, and at another he vowed he would return there in the ensuing winter. Whoever has read any of these memoirs of Italian families, of which many are published and very many exist in manuscript, will acknowledge how they abound in strange events and romantic stories, and may form some idea of the delight with which Sir Walter imagined himself on the point of pouncing upon a treasure after his own heart.

"The eldest son of the Torlonia family is the possessor of the castle of Bracciano, of which he is duke. Sir Walter was anxious to see it, and cited some story, I think of the Orsini, who once were lords of the place. We had permission to visit the castle, and the steward had orders to furnish us with whatever was requisite. We set off on the 9th of May, Sir Walter as usual coming with me, and two ladies and two gentlemen occupying his carriage. One of these last was the son of the Duke of Sermoneta, Don Michelangelo Gaetani, a person of the most amiable disposition, gentlemanly manners, and most remarkable talents. Sir Walter, to whom he had paid every attention during his stay at Rome, had conceived a high opinion of him, and, added to his agreeable qualities, he had a wonderful and accurate knowledge of the history of his own country during the darker ages. The Gaetani figured also among the most ancient and most turbulent of the Roman families during the middle ages, and these historical qualities, added to the amenity of his manners, rendered him naturally a favourite with Sir Walter.

"We arrived at Bracciano, twenty-five miles from Rome, rather fatigued with the roughness of an old Roman road, the pavement of which had generally been half destroyed, and the stones left in disorder on the spot. He was pleased with the general appearance of that stately pile, which is finely seated upon a rock, commanding on one side the view of the beautiful lake with its wooded shores, and on the other overlooking the town of Bracciano. A carriage could not easily ascend to the court, so that Sir Walter fatigued himself still more, as he was not content to be assisted, by walking up the steep and somewhat long ascent to the gateway. He was struck with the sombre appearance of the Gothic towers, built with the black lava which had once formed the pavement of the Roman road, and which adds much to its frowning magnificence. In the interior he could not but be pleased with the grand suite of state apartments, all yet habitable, and even retaining in some rooms the old furniture and the rich silk hangings of the Orsini and Odescalchi. These chambers overlook the lake, and Sir Walter sat in a window for a long time, during a delightful evening, to enjoy the prospect. A very large dog, of the breed called Danish, coming to fawn upon him, he told it he was glad to see it, for it was a proper accompaniment to such a castle, but that he had a larger dog at home, though may be not so good-natured to strangers. This notice of the dog seemed to gain the heart of the steward, and he accompanied Sir Walter in a second tour through the grand suite of rooms, each, as Sir Walter observed, highly pleased with the other's conversation, though as one spoke French and the other Italian, little of it could be understood. Toward the town, a range of smaller apartments are more convenient, except during the heats of summer, than the great rooms for a small party, and in these we dined and found chambers for sleeping. At night we had tea and a large fire, and Sir Walter conversed cheerfully. Some of the party went out to walk round the battlements of the castle by moonlight, and a ghost was talked of among the usual accompaniments of such situations. He told me that the best way of making a ghost was to paint it with white on tin, for that in the dusk, after it had been seen, it could be instantly made to vanish, by turning the edge almost without thickness towards the spectator.

"On coming down next morning I found that Sir Walter, who rose early, had already made another tour over part of the Castle with the steward and the dog. After breakfast we set out on our return to Rome; and all the way his conversation was more delightful, and more replete with anecdotes than I had ever known it. He talked a great deal to young Gaetani, who sat on the box, and he invited him to Scotland. He asked me when I thought of revisiting England, and I replied, that if my health permitted at a moment when I could afford it, I might perhaps be tempted in the course of the following summer. 'If the money be the difficulty,' said the kind-hearted baronet, 'don't let that hinder you; I've L.300 at your service, and I have a perfect right to give it you, and nobody can complain of me, for I made it myself.'

"He continued to press my acceptance of this sum, till I requested him to drop the subject, thanking him

most gratefully for his goodness, and much flattered by so convincing a proof of his desire to see me at Abbotsford.

"I remember particularly a remark, which proved the kindness of his heart. A lady requested him to do something which was very disagreeable to him. He was asked whether he had consented. He replied, 'Yes.' He was then questioned why he had agreed to do what was so inconvenient to him. 'Why,' said he, 'as I am now good for nothing else, I think it as well to be good-natured.'

"I took my leave of my respected friend on the 10th May, 1832. I knew this great genius and estimable man but for a short period; but it was at an interesting moment, and being both invalids, and impressed equally with the same conviction that we had no time to lose, we seemed to become intimate without passing through the usual gradations of friendship. I remembered just enough of Scottish topography and northern antiquities in general to be able to ask questions on subjects on which his knowledge was supereminent, and to be delighted and edified by his inexhaustible stock of anecdotes, and his curious and recondite erudition; and this was perhaps a reason for the preference he seemed to give me in his morning drives, during which I saw most of him alone. It is a great satisfaction to have been intimate with so celebrated and so benevolent a personage; and I hope, that these recollections of his latter days may not be without their value, in enabling those who were acquainted with Sir Walter in his most brilliant period, to compare it with his declining moments during his residence in Italy."

Though some of the same things recur in the notes with which I am favoured by Mr. Cheney, yet the reader will pardon this—and even be glad to compare the impressions of two such observers. Mr. Cheney says:—

"Delighted as I was to see Sir Walter Scott, I remarked with pain the ravages disease had made upon him. He was often abstracted, and it was only when warmed with his subject that the light blue eye shot from under the pent-house brow with the fire and spirit that recalled the Author of Waverley.

"The first of May was appointed for a visit to Frescati; and it gave me great pleasure to have an opportunity of showing attention to Sir Walter without the appearance of obtrusiveness.

"The Villa Muti, which belonged to the late Cardinal of York, has, since his death, fallen into the hands of several proprietors; it yet retains, however, some relics of its former owner. There is a portrait of Charles I., a bust of the Cardinal, and another of the Chevalier de St. George. But above all, a picture of the *fête* given on the promotion of the Cardinal in the Piazza de S. S. Apostoli (where the palace in which the Stuarts resided still bears the name of the Palazzo del Pretendente) occupied Sir Walter's attention. In this picture he discovered, or fancied he did so, the portraits of several of the distinguished followers of the exiled family. One he pointed out as resembling a picture he had seen of Cameron of Lochiel, whom he described as a dark, hard-featured man. He spoke with admiration of his devoted loyalty to the Stuarts. I also showed him an ivory head of Charles I., which had served as the top of Cardinal York's walking stick. He did not fail to look at it with a lively interest.

"He admired the house, the position of which is of surpassing beauty, commanding an extensive view over the Campagna of Rome; but he deplored the fate of his favourite princes, observing that this was a poor substitute for all the splendid palaces to which they were heirs in England and Scotland. The place where we were suggested the topic of conversation. He was walking, he told me, over the field of Preston, and musing on the unlooked-for event of that day, when he was suddenly startled by the sound of the minute-guns proclaiming the death of George IV. Lost in the thoughts of ephemeral glory suggested by the scene, he had forgotten, in the momentary success of his favourite hero, his subsequent misfortunes and defeat. The solemn sound, he added, admonished him of the futility of all earthly triumphs; and reminded him that the whole race of the Stuarts had passed away, and was now followed to the grave by the first of the rival house of Brunswick who had reigned in the line of legitimate succession.

"During this visit Sir Walter was in excellent spirits; at dinner he talked and laughed, and Miss Scott assured me she had not seen him so gay since he left England. He put salt into his soup before tasting it, smiling as he did so. One of the company said, that a friend of his used to declare that he should eat salt with a limb of Lot's wife. Sir Walter laughed, observing that he was of Mrs. Siddons' mind, who, when dining with the Provost of Edinburgh, and being asked by her host if the beef were too salt, replied, in her emphatic tones of deep tragedy, which Sir Walter mimicked very comically,

'Beef cannot be too salt for me, my lord.'

"Sir Walter, though he spoke no foreign language with facility, read Spanish as well as Italian. He expressed the most unbounded admiration for Cervantes, and said that the 'novelas' of that author had first inspired him with the ambition of excelling in fiction, and that, until disabled by illness, he had been a constant reader of them. He added, that he had formerly made it a practice to read through the 'Orlando' of Boiardo, and the 'Orlando' of Ariosto, once every year.

"Of Dante he knew little, confessing he found him too obscure and difficult. I was sitting next him at dinner, at Lady Coventry's, when this conversation took place. He added, with a smile, 'it is mortifying that Dante seemed to think nobody worth being sent to hell but his own Italians, whereas other people had every bit as great rogues in their families, whose misdeeds were suffered to pass with impunity.' I said that *he*, of all men, had least right to make this complaint, as his own ancestor, Michael Scott, was consigned to a very tremendous punishment in the twentieth canto of the Inferno. His attention was roused, and I quoted the passage—

'Quell' altro, che nei fianchi è così poco,
Michele Scotto fu, che veramente
Delle magiche frode seppe il gioco.'

He seemed pleased, and alluded to the subject more than once in the course of the evening.

"One evening when I was with him, a person called to petition him in favour of the sufferers from the recent earthquake at Foligno. He instantly gave his name to the list with a very handsome subscription. This was by no means the only occasion on which I observed him ready and eager to answer the calls of charity.

"I accompanied Sir Walter and Miss Scott one morning to the Protestant burial-ground. The road to this spot runs by the side of the Tyber, at the foot of Mount Aventine, and in our drive we passed several of the most interesting monuments of ancient Rome. The house of the Tribune Rienzi, and the temple of Vesta, arrested his attention. This little circular temple, he said, struck him more than many of the finer ruins. Infirmity had checked his curiosity. 'I walk with pain,' he said, 'and what we see whilst suffering makes little impression on us; it is for this reason that much of what I saw at Naples, and which I should have enjoyed ten years ago, I have already forgotten.' The Protestant burying-ground lies near the Porta S. Paolo, at the foot of the noble pyramid of Caius Cestius. Miss Scott was anxious to see the grave of her friend, Lady Charlotte Stopford. Sir Walter was unable to walk, and while my brother attended Miss Scott to the spot, I remained in the carriage with him. 'I regret,' he said, 'that I cannot go. It would have been a satisfaction to me to have seen the place where they have laid her. She is the child of a Buccleuch; he, you know, is my chief, and all that comes from that house is dear to me.' He looked on the ground and sighed, and for a moment there was a silence between us.

"We spoke of politics, and of the reform in Parliament, which at that time was pending. I asked his opinion of it; he said he was no enemy to reform—'If the machine does not work well, it must be mended—but it should be by the best workmen ye have.'

"He regretted not having been at Holland House as he passed through London. 'Lord Holland,' he said, 'is the most agreeable man I ever knew; in criticism, in poetry, he beats those whose whole study they have been. No man in England has a more thorough knowledge of English authors, and he expresses himself so well, that his language illustrates and adorns his thoughts, as light streaming through coloured glass heightens the brilliancy of the objects it falls upon.'

"On the 4th of May he accepted a dinner at our house, and it gave my brother and myself unfeigned satisfaction to have again the pleasure of entertaining him. We collected a party to meet him, and amongst others I invited Don Luigi Santa Croce, one of his most ardent admirers, who had long desired an introduction. He is a man of much ability, and has played his part in the political changes of his country. When I presented him to Sir Walter, he bade me tell him, for he speaks no English, how long and how earnestly he had desired to see him, though he had hardly dared to hope it. 'Tell him,' he added with warmth, 'that in disappointment, in sorrow, and in sickness, his works have been my chief comfort; and while living amongst his imaginary personages, I have succeeded for a moment in forgetting the vexations of blighted hopes, and have found relief in public and private distress.' The Marchesa Loughi, the beautiful sister of Don Michele Gaetani, whom I also presented to him this evening, begged me to thank him, in her name, for some of the most agreeable moments of her life. 'She had had,' she said, 'though young, her share of sorrows, and in his works she had found not only amusement, but

lessons of patience and resignation, which she hoped had not been lost upon her.' To all those flattering compliments, as well as to the thousand others that were daily showered upon him, Sir Walter replied with unfeigned humility, expressing himself pleased and obliged by the good opinion entertained of him, and delighting his admirers with the good-humour and urbanity with which he received them. Don Luigi talked of the plots of some of the novels, and earnestly remonstrated against the fate of Clara Mowbray, in St. Ronan's Well. 'I am much obliged to the gentleman for the interest he takes in her,' said Sir Walter, 'but I could not save her, poor thing—it is against the rules—she had the bee in her bonnet.' Don Luigi still insisted. Sir Walter replied, 'No; but of all the murders that I have committed in that way, and few men have been guilty of more, there is none that went so much to my heart as the poor Bride of Lammermoor; but it could not be helped—it is all true.'

"Sir Walter always showed much curiosity about the Constable Bourbon. I said that a suit of armour belonging to him was preserved in the Vatican. He eagerly asked after the form and construction, and inquired if he wore it on the day of the capture of Rome. That event had greatly struck his imagination. He told me he had always had an idea of weaving it into the story of a romance, and of introducing the traitor Constable as an actor. Cæsar Borgia was also a character whose vices and whole career appeared to him singularly romantic. Having heard him say this, I begged Don Michele Gaetani, whose ancestors had been dispossessed of their rich fiefs by that ambitious upstart, to show Sir Walter a sword, now in the possession of his family, which had once belonged to Borgia. The blade, which is very long and broad, is richly ornamented, and the arms of the Borgias are inlaid upon it, bearing the favourite motto of that tremendous personage. 'Aut Cæsar, aut nihil.' Sir Walter examined it with attention, commenting on the character of Borgia, and congratulating Don Michele on the possession of a relic doubly interesting in his hands.

"I continued a constant visiter at his house whilst he remained in Rome, and I also occasionally dined in his company, and took every opportunity of conversing with him. I observed with extreme pleasure, that he accepted willingly from me those trifling attentions which his infirmities required, and which all would have been delighted to offer. I found him always willing to converse on any topic. He spoke of his own works and of himself without reserve; never, however, introducing the subject nor dwelling upon it. His conversation had neither affectation nor restraint, and he was totally free from the morbid egotism of some men of genius. What surprised me most, and in one too who had so long been the object of universal admiration, was the unaffected humility with which he spoke of his own merits, and the sort of surprise with which he surveyed his own success. That this was a real feeling none could doubt. The natural simplicity of his manner must have convinced the most incredulous. He was courteous and obliging to all, and towards women there was a dignified simplicity in his manner that was singularly pleasing. He would not allow even his infirmities to exempt him from the little courtesies of society. He always endeavoured to rise to address those who approached him, and once when my brother and myself accompanied him in his drive, it was not without difficulty that we could prevail on him not to seat himself with his back to the horses.

"I asked him if he meant to be presented at the Vatican, as I knew that his arrival had been spoken of, and that the Pope had expressed an interest about him. He said he respected the Pope as the most ancient sovereign in Europe, and should have great pleasure in paying his respects to him, did his state of health permit it. We talked of the ceremonies of the Church. He had been much struck with the benediction from the balcony of St. Peter's. I advised him to wait to see the procession of the Corpus Domini, and to hear the Pope

> 'Saying the high, high mass,
> All on St. Peter's day.'

He smiled, and said those things were more poetical in description than in reality, and that it was all the better for him not to have seen it before he wrote about it—that any attempt to make such scenes more exact injured the effect without conveying a clearer image to the mind of the reader—as the Utopian scenes and manners of Mrs. Radcliffe's Novels captivated the imagination more than the most laboured descriptions, or the greatest historical accuracy.

"The morning after our arrival at Bracciano, when I left my room, I found Sir Walter already dressed, and seated in the deep recess of a window which commands an extensive view over the lake and surrounding country. He speculated on the lives of the turbulent lords of this ancient fortress, and listened with interest to such details as I could give him of their history. He drew a striking picture of the contrast between the calm and placid scene before us, and the hurry, din, and tumult of other days.

"Insensibly we strayed into more modern times. I never saw him more animated and agreeable. He was exactly what I could imagine him to have been in his best moments. Indeed I have several times heard him complain that his disease sometimes confused and bewildered his senses, while at others he was left with little remains of illness except a consciousness of his state of infirmity. He talked of his Northern journey, of Manzoni, for whom he expressed a great admiration, of Lord Byron, and lastly of himself. Of Lord Byron he spoke with admiration and regard, calling him always 'poor Byron.' He considered him, he said, the only poet we have had since Dryden, of transcendent talents, and possessing more amiable qualities than the world in general gave him credit for.

"In reply to my question if he had never seriously thought of complying with the advice so often given him to write a tragedy, he answered 'Often, but the difficulty deterred me—my turn was not dramatic.' Some of the mottoes, I urged, prefixed to the chapters of his novels, and subscribed 'old play,' were eminently in the taste of the old dramatists, and seemed to ensure success. 'Nothing so easy,' he replied, 'when you are full of an author, as to write a few lines in his taste and style; the difficulty is to keep it up—besides,' he added, 'the greatest success would be but a spiritless imitation, or, at best, what the Italians call a *centone* from Shakspeare. No author has ever had so much cause to be grateful to the public as I have. All I have written has been received with indulgence.'

"He said he was the more grateful for the flattering reception he had met with in Italy, as he had not always treated the Catholic religion with respect. I observed, that though he had exposed the hypocrites of all sects, no religion had any cause to complain of him, as he had rendered them all interesting by turns. Jews, Catholics, and Puritans had all their saints and martyrs in his works. He was much pleased with this.

"He spoke of Goethe with regret; he had been in correspondence with him before his death, and had purposed visiting him at Weimar in returning to England. I told him I had been to see Goethe the year before, and that I had found him well, and though very old, in the perfect possession of all his faculties. 'Of all his faculties!' he replied; 'it is much better to die than to survive them, and better still to die than live in the apprehension of it; but the worst of all,' he added thoughtfully, 'would have been to have survived their partial loss, and yet to be conscious of his state.'—He did not seem to be, however, a great admirer of some of Goethe's works. Much of his popularity, he observed, was owing to pieces which, in his latter moments, he might have wished recalled. He spoke with much feeling. I answered that *he* must derive great consolation in the reflection that his own popularity was owing to no such cause. He remained silent for a moment, with his eyes fixed on the ground; when he raised them, as he shook me by the hand, I perceived the light blue eye sparkled with unusual moisture. He added, 'I am drawing near to the close of my career; I am fast shuffling off the stage. I have been perhaps the most voluminous author of the day; and it *is* a comfort to me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man's faith, to corrupt no man's principle, and that I have written nothing which, on my death-bed, I should wish blotted.' I made no reply; and while we were yet silent, Don Michele Gaetani joined us, and we walked through the vast hall into the court of the castle, where our friends were expecting us.

"After breakfast, Sir Walter returned to Rome. The following day he purposed setting out on his northern journey. It was Friday. I was anxious that he should prolong his stay in Rome; and reminding him of his superstition, I told him he ought not to set out on the unlucky day. He answered, laughing, 'Superstition is very picturesque, and I make it at times stand me in great stead; but I never allow it to interfere with interest or convenience.'

"As I helped him down the steep court to his carriage, he said, as he stepped with pain and difficulty, 'This is a sore change with me. Time was when I would hunt and shoot with the best of them, and thought it but a poor day's sport when I was not on foot from ten to twelve hours; but we must be patient.'

"I handed him into his carriage; and in taking leave of me, he pressed me, with eager hospitality, to visit him at Abbotsford. The door closed upon him, and I stood for some moments watching the carriage till it was out of sight, as it wound through the portal of the Castle of Bracciano.

"Next day, Friday, May 11, Sir Walter left Rome.

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"During his stay there he had received every mark of attention and respect from the Italians, who in not crowding to visit him were deterred only by their delicacy and their dread of intruding on an invalid. The use of villas, libraries, and museums was pressed upon him. This enthusiasm was by no means confined to the higher orders. His fame, and even his works, are familiar to all classes—the stalls are filled with translations of his novels, in the cheapest forms; and some of the most popular plays and operas have been founded upon them. Some time after he left Italy, when I was travelling in the mountains of Tuscany, it has more than once occurred to me to be stopped in little villages, hardly accessible to carriages, by an eager admirer of Sir Walter, to inquire after the health of my illustrious countryman."

The last jotting of Sir Walter's Diary—perhaps the last specimen of his handwriting—records his starting from Naples on the 16th of April. After the 11th of May the story can hardly be told too briefly.

The irritation of impatience, which had for a moment been suspended by the aspect and society of Rome, returned the moment he found himself on the road, and seemed to increase hourly. His companions could with difficulty prevail on him to see even the Falls of Terni, or the Church of Santa Croce at Florence. On the 17th, a cold and dreary day, they passed the Apennines, and dined on the top of the mountains. The snow and the pines recalled Scotland, and he expressed pleasure at the sight of them. That night they reached Bologna, but he would see none of the interesting objects there—and next day, hurrying in like manner through Ferrara, he proceeded as far as Monselice. On the 19th he arrived at Venice; and he remained there till the 23d: but showed no curiosity about any thing except the Bridge of Sighs and the adjoining dungeons—down into which he would scramble, though the exertion was exceedingly painful to him. On the other historical features of that place—one so sure in other days to have inexhaustible attractions for him—he would not even look; and it was the same with all that he came within reach of—even with the fondly anticipated chapel at Inspruck—as they proceeded through the Tyrol, and so onwards, by Munich, Ulm, and Heidelberg, to Frankfort. Here (June 5) he entered a bookseller's shop; and the people seeing an English party, brought out among the first things a lithographed print of Abbotsford. He said, "I know that already, sir," and hastened back to the inn without being recognised. Though in some parts of the journey they had very severe weather, he repeatedly wished to travel all the night as well as all the day; and the symptoms of an approaching fit were so obvious, that he was more than once bled, ere they reached Mayence, by the hand of his affectionate domestic.

At this town they embarked on the 8th June in the Rhine steam-boat; and while they descended the famous river through its most picturesque region, he seemed to enjoy, though he said nothing, the perhaps unrivalled scenery it presented to him. His eye was fixed on the successive crags and castles, and ruined monasteries, each of which had been celebrated in some German ballad familiar to his ear, and all of them blended in the immortal panorama of Childe Harold. But so soon as he resumed his carriage at Cologne, and nothing but flat shores, and here and there a grove of poplars and a village spire were offered to the vision, the weight of misery sunk down again upon him. It was near Nimeguen, on the evening of the 9th, that he sustained another serious attack of apoplexy, combined with paralysis. Nicolson's lancet restored, after the lapse of some minutes, the signs of animation; but this was the crowning blow. Next day he insisted on resuming his journey, and on the 11th was lifted from the carriage into a steam-boat at Rotterdam.

He reached London about six o'clock on the evening of Wednesday the 13th of June. Owing to the unexpected rapidity of the journey, his eldest daughter had had no notice when to expect him; and fearful of finding her either out of town, or unprepared to receive him and his attendants under her roof, Charles Scott drove to the St. James's hotel in Jermyn Street, and established his quarters there before he set out in quest of his sister and myself. When we reached the hotel, he recognised us with many marks of tenderness, but signified that he was totally exhausted; so no attempt was made to remove him further, and he was put to bed immediately. Dr. Ferguson saw him the same night, and next day Sir Henry Halford and Dr. Holland saw him also; and during the next three weeks the two former visited him daily, while Ferguson was scarcely absent from his pillow. The Major was soon on the spot. To his children, all assembled once more about him, he repeatedly gave his blessing in a very solemn manner, as if expecting immediate death, but he was never in a condition for conversation, and sunk either into sleep or delirious stupor upon the slightest effort.

Mrs. Thomas Scott came to town as soon as she heard of his arrival, and remained to help us. She was more than once recognised and thanked. Mr. Cadell too arrived from Edinburgh, to render any assistance in his power. I think Sir Walter saw no other of his friends except Mr. John Richardson, and him only once. As usual, he woke up at the sound of a familiar voice, and made an attempt to put forth his hand, but it dropped powerless, and he said, with a smile, "Excuse my hand." Richardson made a struggle to suppress his emotion, and, after a moment, got out something about Abbotsford and the woods, which he had happened to see shortly before. The eye brightened, and he said, "How does Kirklands get on?" Mr. Richardson had lately purchased the estate so called on the Teviot, and Sir Walter had left him busied with plans of building. His friend told him that his new house was begun, and that the Marquis of Lothian had very kindly lent him one of his own, meantime, in its vicinity. "Ay, Lord Lothian is a good man," said Sir Walter; "he is a man from whom one may receive a favour, and that's saying a good deal for any man in these days." The stupor then sank back upon him, and Richardson never heard his voice again. This state of things continued till the beginning of July.

During these melancholy weeks great interest and sympathy were manifested. Allan Cunningham mentions that, walking home late one night, he found several working-men standing together at the corner of Jermyn Street, and one of them asked him, as if there was but one deathbed in London, "Do you know, sir, if this is the street where he is lying?" The inquiries both at the hotel and at my house were incessant; and I think there was hardly a member of the royal family who did not send every day. The newspapers teemed with paragraphs about Sir Walter; and one of these, it appears, threw out a suggestion that his travels had exhausted his pecuniary resources, and that if he were capable of reflection at all, cares of that sort might probably harass his pillow. This paragraph came from a very ill-informed, but, I daresay, a well-meaning quarter. It caught the attention of some members of the then Government; and, in consequence, I received a private communication, to the effect that, if the case were as stated, Sir Walter's family had only to say what sum would relieve him from embarrassment, and it would be immediately advanced by the Treasury. The then paymaster of the Forces, Lord John Russell, had the delicacy to convey this message through a lady with whose friendship he knew us to be honoured. We expressed our grateful sense of his politeness, and of the liberality of the Government, and I now beg leave to do so once more; but his Lordship was of course informed that Sir Walter Scott was not situated as the journalist had represented.

Dr. Ferguson's memorandum on Jermyn Street will be acceptable to the reader. He says:—

"When I saw Sir Walter he was lying in the second floor back room of the St. James's Hotel, in Jermyn Street, in a state of stupor, from which, however, he could be roused for a moment by being addressed, and then he recognised those about him, but immediately relapsed. I think I never saw any thing more magnificent than the symmetry of his colossal bust, as he lay on the pillow with his

chest and neck exposed. During the time he was in Jermyn Street he was calm but never collected, and in general either in absolute stupor or in a waking dream. He never seemed to know where he was, but imagined himself to be still in the steam-boat. The rattling of carriages and the noises of the street sometimes disturbed this illusion, and then he fancied himself at the polling booth of Jedburgh, where he had been insulted and stoned.

"During the whole of this period of apparent helplessness, the great features of his character could not be mistaken. He always exhibited great self-possession, and acted his part with wonderful power whenever visited, though he relapsed the next moment into the stupor from which strange voices had roused him. A gentleman stumbled over a chair in his dark room;—he immediately started up, and though unconscious that it was a friend, expressed as much concern and feeling as if he had never been labouring under the irritability of disease. It was impossible even for those who most constantly saw and waited on him in his then deplorable condition, to relax from the habitual deference which he had always inspired. He expressed his will as determinedly as ever, and enforced it with the same apt and good-natured irony as he was wont to use.

"At length his constant yearning to return to Abbotsford induced his physicians to consent to his removal, and the moment this was notified to him it seemed to infuse new vigour into his frame. It was on a calm, clear afternoon of the 7th July, that every preparation was made for his embarkation on board the steam-boat. He was placed on a chair by his faithful servant Nicolson, half-dressed, and loosely wrapt in a quilted dressing-gown. He requested Lockhart and myself to wheel him towards the light of the open window, and we both remarked the vigorous lustre of his eye. He sat there silently gazing on space for more than half an hour, apparently wholly occupied with his own thoughts, and having no distinct perception of where he was or how he came there. He suffered himself to be lifted into his carriage, which was surrounded by a crowd, among whom were many gentlemen on horseback, who had loitered about to gaze on the scene.

"His children were deeply affected, and Mrs. Lockhart trembled from head to foot and wept bitterly. Thus surrounded by those nearest to him, he alone was unconscious of the cause or the depth of their grief, and while yet alive seemed to be carried to his grave."

On this his last journey Sir Walter was attended by his two daughters, Mr. Cadell, and myself—and also by Dr. James Watson, who (it being impossible for Dr. Ferguson to leave town at that moment) kindly undertook to see him safe at Abbotsford. We embarked in the James Watt steam-boat, the master of which, (Captain John Jamieson,) as well as the agent of the proprietors, made every arrangement in their power for the convenience of the invalid. The Captain gave up for Sir Walter's use his own private cabin, which was a separate erection, a sort of cottage, on the deck; and he seemed unconscious, after laid in bed there, that any new removal had occurred. On arriving at Newhaven, late on the 9th, we found careful preparations made for his landing by the manager of the Shipping Company (Mr. Hamilton); and Sir Walter, prostrate in his carriage, was slung on shore, and conveyed from thence to Douglas's hotel, in St. Andrew's Square, in the same complete apparent unconsciousness. Mrs. Douglas had in former days been the Duke of Buccleuch's housekeeper at Bowhill, and she and her husband had also made the most suitable provision. At a very early hour on the morning of Wednesday the 11th, we again placed him in his carriage, and he lay in the same torpid state during the first two stages on the road to Tweedside. But as we descended the vale of the Gala he began to gaze about him, and by degrees it was obvious that he was recognising the features of that familiar landscape. Presently he murmured a name or two—"Gala Water, surely—Buckholm—Torwoodlee." As we rounded the hill at Ladhope, and the outline of the Eildons burst on him, he became greatly excited, and when turning himself on the couch his eye caught at length his own towers, at the distance of a mile, he sprang up with a cry of delight. The river being in flood we had to go round a few miles by Melrose bridge, and during the time this occupied, his woods and house being within prospect, it required occasionally both Dr. Watson's strength and mine, in addition to Nicolson's, to keep him in the carriage. After passing the bridge the road for a couple of miles loses sight of Abbotsford, and he relapsed into his stupor; but on gaining the bank immediately above it, his excitement became again ungovernable.

Mr. Laidlaw was waiting at the porch, and assisted us in lifting him into the dining-room, where his bed had been prepared. He sat bewildered for a few moments, and then resting his eye on Laidlaw, said, "Ha! Willie Laidlaw! O man, how often have I thought of you!" By this time his dogs had assembled about his chair—they began to fawn upon him and lick his hands, and he alternately sobbed and smiled over them, until sleep oppressed him.

Dr. Watson having consulted on all things with Mr. Clarkson and his father, resigned the patient to them, and returned to London. None of them could have any hope, but that of soothing irritation. Recovery was no longer to be thought of; but there might be *Euthanasia*.

And yet something like a ray of hope did break in upon us next morning. Sir Walter awoke perfectly conscious where he was, and expressed an ardent wish to be carried out into his garden. We procured a Bath chair from Huntly-Burn, and Laidlaw and I wheeled him out before his door, and up and down for some time on the turf, and among the rose-beds then in full bloom. The grand-children admired the new vehicle, and would be helping in their way to push it about. He sat in silence, smiling placidly on them and the dogs their companions, and now and then admiring the house, the screen of the garden, and the flowers and trees. By and by he conversed a little, very composedly, with us—said he was happy to be at home—that he felt better than he had ever done since he left it, and would perhaps disappoint the doctors after all.

He then desired to be wheeled through his rooms, and we moved him leisurely for an hour or more up and down the hall and the great library: "I have seen much," he kept saying, "but nothing like my ain house—give me one turn more!" He was gentle as an infant, and allowed himself to be put to bed again, the moment we told him that we thought he had had enough for one day.

Next morning he was still better; after again enjoying the Bath chair for perhaps a couple of hours out of doors, he desired to be drawn into the library, and placed by the central window, that he might look down upon the Tweed. Here he expressed a wish that I should read to him, and when I asked from what book, he said—"Need you ask? There is but one." I chose the 14th chapter of St. John's Gospel; he listened with mild devotion, and said when I had done, "Well, this is a great comfort—I have followed you distinctly, and I feel as if I were yet to be myself again." In this placid frame he was again put to bed, and had many hours of soft slumber.

On the third day Mr. Laidlaw and I again wheeled him about the small piece of lawn and shrubbery in front of the house for some time, and the weather being delightful, and all the richness of summer around him, he seemed to taste fully the balmy influences of nature. The sun getting very strong, we halted the chair in a shady corner, just within the verge of his verdant arcade around the court-wall; and breathing the coolness of the spot, he said, "read me some amusing thing—read me a bit of Crabbe." I brought out the first volume of his old favourite that I could lay hand on, and turned to what I remembered as one of his most favourite passages in it—the description of the arrival of the Players in the Borough. He listened with great interest, and also, as I soon perceived, with great curiosity. Every now and then he exclaimed, "Capital—excellent—very good—Crabbe has lost nothing"—and we were too well satisfied that he considered himself as hearing a new production when, chuckling over one couplet, he said, "Better and better—but how will poor Terry endure these cuts?" I went on with the poet's terrible sarcasms upon the theatrical life, and he listened eagerly, muttering,

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"Honest Dan!"—"Dan won't like this." At length I reached those lines,

"Sad happy race! soon raised and soon depressed,
Your days all passed in jeopardy and jest:
Poor without prudence, with afflictions vain,
Not warned by misery nor enriched by gain."

"Shut the book," said Sir Walter,—"I can't stand more of this—it will touch Terry to the very quick."

On the morning of Sunday the 15th he was again taken out into the little *pleasaunce*, and got as far as his favourite terrace-walk between the garden and the river, from which he seemed to survey the valley and the hills with much satisfaction. On re-entering the house, he desired me to read to him from the New Testament, and after that he again called for a little of Crabbe; but whatever I selected from that poet seemed to be listened to as if it made part of some new volume published while he was in Italy. He attended with this sense of novelty even to the tale of Phœbe Dawson, which not many months before he could have repeated every line of, and which I chose for one of these readings, because, as is known to every one, it had formed the last solace of Mr. Fox's deathbed. On the contrary, his recollection of whatever I read from the Bible appeared to be lively; and in the afternoon when we made his grandson, a child of six years, repeat some of Dr. Watts' hymns by his chair, he seemed also to remember them perfectly. That evening he heard the Church service, and when I was about to close the book, said, "why do you omit the visitation for the sick?"—which I added accordingly.

On Monday he remained in bed and seemed extremely feeble; but after breakfast on Tuesday the 17th he appeared revived somewhat, and was again wheeled about on the turf. Presently he fell asleep in his chair, and after dozing for perhaps half an hour, started awake, and shaking the plaids we had put about him from off his shoulders, said, "This is sad idleness. I shall forget what I have been thinking of, if I don't set it down now. Take me into my own room, and fetch the keys of my desk." He repeated this so earnestly that we could not refuse; his daughters went into his study, opened his writing-desk, and laid paper and pens in the usual order, and I then moved him through the hall and into the spot where he had always been accustomed to work. When the chair was placed at the desk, and he found himself in the old position, he smiled and thanked us, and said, "Now give me my pen and leave me for a little to myself." Sophia put the pen into his hand, and he endeavoured to close his fingers upon it, but they refused their office—it dropped on the paper. He sank back among his pillows, silent tears rolling down his cheeks; but composing himself by and by, motioned to me to wheel him out of doors again. Laidlaw met us at the porch, and took his turn of the chair. Sir Walter, after a little while, again dropt into slumber. When he was awaking, Laidlaw said to me, "Sir Walter has had a little repose." "No, Willie," said he—"no repose for Sir Walter but in the grave." The tears again rushed from his eyes. "Friends," said he, "don't let me expose myself—get me to bed—that's the only place."*

With this scene ended our glimpse of daylight. Sir Walter never, I think, left his room afterwards, and hardly his bed, except for an hour or two in the middle of the day; and after another week he was unable even for this. During a few days he was in a state of painful irritation—and I saw realized all that he had himself prefigured in his description of the meeting between Crystal Croftangry and his paralytic friend. Dr. Ross came out from Edinburgh, bringing with him his wife, one of the dearest *nieces* of the Clerk's Table. Sir Walter with some difficulty recognised the Doctor—but, on hearing Mrs. Ross's voice, exclaimed at once, "Isn't that Kate Hume?" These kind friends remained for two or three days with us. Clarkson's lancet was pronounced necessary, and the relief it afforded was, I am happy to say, very effectual.

After this he declined daily, but still there was great strength to be wasted, and the process was long. He seemed, however, to suffer no bodily pain, and his mind, though hopelessly obscured, appeared, when there was any symptom of consciousness, to be dwelling, with rare exceptions, on serious and solemn things; the accent of the voice grave, sometimes awful, but never querulous, and very seldom indicative of any angry or resentful thoughts. Now and then he imagined himself to be administering justice as Sheriff; and once or twice he seemed to be ordering Tom Purdie about trees. A few times also, I am sorry to say, we could perceive that his fancy was at Jedburgh—and *Burk Sir Walter* escaped him in a melancholy tone. But commonly whatever we could follow him in was a fragment of the Bible (especially the Prophecies of Isaiah, and the Book of Job)—or some petition in the litany—or a verse of some psalm (in the old Scotch metrical version)—or of some of the magnificent hymns of the Romish ritual, in which he had always delighted, but which probably hung on his memory now in connexion with the church services he had attended while in Italy. We very often heard distinctly the cadence of the *Dies Iræ*; and I think the very last *stanza* that we could make out, was the first of a still greater favourite:—

"Stabat Mater dolorosa,
Juxta crucem lachrymosa,
Dum pendebat Filius."

All this time he continued to recognise his daughters, Laidlaw, and myself, whenever we spoke to him—and received every attention with a most touching thankfulness. Mr. Clarkson, too, was always saluted with the old courtesy, though the cloud opened but a moment for him to do so. Most truly might it be said that the gentleman survived the genius.

After two or three weeks had passed in this way, I was obliged to leave Sir Walter for a single day, and go into Edinburgh to transact business, on his account, with Mr. Henry Cockburn, (now Lord Cockburn,) then Solicitor-General for Scotland. The Scotch Reform Bill threw a great burden of new duties and responsibilities upon the Sheriffs; and Scott's Sheriff-substitute, the Laird of Raeburn, not having been regularly educated for the law, found himself incompetent to encounter these novelties, especially as regarded the registration of voters, and other details connected with the recent enlargement of the electoral franchise. Under such circumstances, as no one but the Sheriff could appoint another substitute, it became necessary for Sir Walter's family to communicate the state he was in in a formal manner to the Law Officers of the Crown; and the Lord Advocate, (Mr. Jeffrey,) in consequence, introduced and carried through Parliament a short bill, (2 and 3 William IV. cap. 101,) authorizing the Government to appoint a new Sheriff of Selkirkshire, "during the incapacity or non-resignation of Sir Walter Scott." It was on this bill that the Solicitor-General had expressed a wish to converse with me; but there was little to be said, as the temporary nature of the new appointment gave no occasion for any pecuniary question; and, if that had been otherwise, the circumstances of the case would have rendered Sir Walter's family entirely indifferent upon such a subject. There can be no doubt, that if he had recovered in so far as to be capable of executing a resignation, the Government would have considered it just to reward thirty-two years' faithful services by a retired allowance equivalent to his salary—and as little that the Government would have had sincere satisfaction in settling that matter in the shape most acceptable to himself. And perhaps (though I feel that it is scarcely worth while) I may as well here express my regret that a statement highly unjust and injurious should have found its way into the pages of some of Sir Walter's preceding biographers. These

* As this is the last time I name Mr. Laidlaw, I may as well mention, that this most excellent and amiable man is now factor on the estate of Sir Charles Lockhart Ross, Bart. of Balnagowan, in Ross-shire.

writers have thought fit to insinuate that there was a want of courtesy and respect on the part of the Lord Advocate, and the other official persons connected with this arrangement. On the contrary, nothing could be more handsome and delicate than the whole of their conduct in it: Mr. Cockburn could not have entered into the case with greater feeling and tenderness, had it concerned a brother of his own; and when Mr. Jeffrey introduced his bill in the House of Commons, he used language so graceful and touching, that both Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Croker went across the House to thank him cordially for it.

Perceiving, towards the close of August, that the end was near, and thinking it very likely that Abbotsford might soon undergo many changes, and myself, at all events, never see it again, I felt a desire to have some image preserved of the interior apartments as occupied by their founder and invited from Edinburgh for that purpose Sir Walter's dear friend, William Allan—whose presence, I well knew, would, even under the circumstances of that time, be nowise troublesome to any of the family, but the contrary in all respects. Mr. Allan willingly complied, and executed a series of beautiful drawings, which may probably be engraved hereafter. He also shared our watchings and witnessed all but the last moments. Sir Walter's cousins, the ladies of Ashestiel, came down frequently, for a day or two at a time; and did whatever sisterly affections could prompt, both for the sufferer and his daughters. Miss Barbara Scott (daughter of his uncle Thomas) and Mrs. Scott of Harden did the like.

As I was dressing on the morning of Monday, the 17th of September, Nicolson came into my room, and told me that his master had awoke in a state of composure and consciousness, and wished to see me immediately. I found him entirely himself, though in the last extreme of feebleness. His eye was clear and calm—every trace of the wild fire of delirium extinguished. "Lockhart," he said, "I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man—be virtuous—be religious—be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here."—He paused, and I said, "Shall I send for Sophia and Anne?"—"No," said he, "don't disturb them. Poor souls! I know they were up all night—God bless you all."—With this he sunk into a very tranquil sleep, and, indeed, he scarcely afterwards gave any sign of consciousness, except for an instant on the arrival of his sons. They, on learning that the scene was about to close, obtained anew leave of absence from their posts, and both reached Abbotsford on the 19th. About half past one P. M., on the 21st of September, Sir Walter breathed his last, in the presence of all his children. It was a beautiful day—so warm that every window was wide open—and so perfectly still, that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes.

No sculptor ever modelled a more majestic image of repose:—

Κεῖτο μέγας μεγαλωστὶ, λελασμένος ἱππασυνάων·

Almost every newspaper that announced this event in Scotland, and many in England, had the signs of mourning usual on the demise of a king. With hardly an exception, the voice was that of universal, unmixed grief and veneration.

It was considered due to Sir Walter's physicians, and to the public, that the nature of his malady should be distinctly ascertained. The result was, that there appeared the traces of a very slight mollification in one part of the substance of the brain.*

His funeral was conducted in an unostentatious manner, but the attendance was very great. Few of his old friends then in Scotland were absent, and many, both friends and strangers, came from a great distance. His old domestics and foresters made it their petition that no hireling hand might assist in carrying his remains. They themselves bore the coffin to the hearse, and from the hearse to the grave. The pall-bearers were his sons, his son-in-law, and his little grandson; his cousins, Charles Scott of Nesbitt, James Scott of Jedburgh, (sons to his uncle Thomas,) William Scott of Raeburn, Robert Rutherford, Clerk to the Signet, Colonel (now Sir James) Russell of Ashestiel, William Keith, (brother to Sir Alexander Keith of Ravelstone,) and the chief of his family, Hugh Scott of Harden, now Lord Polwarth.

When the company were assembled, according to the usual Scotch fashion, prayers were offered up by the very Reverend Dr. Baird, Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and by the Reverend Dr. David Dickson, minister of St. Cuthberts, who both expatiated in a very striking manner on the virtuous example of the deceased.

The court-yard and all the precincts of Abbotsford were crowded with uncovered spectators as the procession was arranged; and as it advanced through Darnick and Melrose, and the adjacent villages, the whole population appeared at their doors in like manner, almost all in black. The train of carriages extended, I understand, over more than a mile—the Yeomanry followed in great numbers on horseback—and it was late in the day ere we reached Dryburgh. Some accident, it was observed, had caused the hearse to halt for several minutes on the summit of the hill at Bemerside—exactly where a prospect of remarkable richness opens, and where Sir Walter had always been accustomed to rein up his horse. The day was dark and lowering, and the wind high.

The wide enclosure at the abbey of Dryburgh was thronged with old and young; and when the coffin was taken from the hearse, and again laid on the shoulders of the afflicted serving-men, one deep sob burst from a thousand lips. Mr. Archdeacon Williams read the Burial Service of the Church of England; and thus, about half past five o'clock in the evening of Wednesday, the 26th September, 1832, the remains of Sir Walter Scott were laid by the side of his wife in the sepulchre of his ancestors —"*in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.*"

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

CONCLUSION.

We read in Solomon, "The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy;" and a wise poet of our own time thus beautifully expands the saying:

"Why should we faint and fear to live alone,
Since all alone, so Heaven has willed, we die,
Nor even the tenderest heart, and next our own,
Knows half the reasons why we smile and sigh?"

Such considerations have always induced me to regard with small respect, any attempt to delineate fully and exactly any human being's character. I distrust, even in very humble cases, our capacity for judging our neighbour fairly; and I cannot but pity the presumption that must swell in the heart and brain of any ordinary brother of the race, when he dares to pronounce, *ex cathedra*, on the whole structure and complexion of a great mind, from the comparatively narrow and scanty materials which can

* "*Abbotsford, Sept.* 23, 1832.—This forenoon, in presence of Dr. Adolphus Ross, from Edinburgh, and my father, I proceeded to examine the head of Sir Walter Scott.

"On removing the upper part of the cranium, the vessels on the surface of the brain appeared slightly turgid, and on cutting into the brain the cineritious substance was found of a darker hue than natural, and a greater than usual quantity of serum in the ventricles. Excepting these appearances, the right hemisphere seemed in a healthy state, but in the left, in the choroid plexus, three distinct, though small hydatids were found; and on reaching the corpus striatum it was discovered diseased—a considerable portion of it being in a state of ramollissement. The blood-vessels were in a healthy state. The brain was not large—and the cranium thinner than it is usually found to be.

J. R. Clarkson."

* See Keble's Christian Year, p. 251.

by possibility have been placed before him. Nor is the difficulty to my view lessened,—perhaps it is rather increased, when the great man is a great artist. It is true that many of the feelings common to our nature can only be expressed adequately, and that some of the finest of them can only be expressed at all, in the language of art; and more especially in the language of poetry. But it is equally true, that high and sane art never attempts to express that for which the artist does not claim and expect general sympathy; and however much of what we had thought to be our own secrets he ventures to give shape to, it becomes, I can never help believing, modest understandings to rest convinced that there remained a world of deeper mysteries, to which the dignity of genius would refuse any utterance.

I have therefore endeavoured to lay before the reader those parts of Sir Walter's character to which we have access, as they were indicated in his sayings and doings through the long series of his years —making use, whenever it was possible, of his own letters and diaries rather than of any other materials;—but refrained from obtruding almost any thing of comment. It was my wish to let the character develop itself: and conscious that I have wilfully withheld nothing that might assist the mature reader to arrive at just conclusions, I am by no means desirous of drawing out a detailed statement of my own. I am not going to "peep and botanize" upon his grave. But a few general observations will be forgiven, perhaps expected.

I believe that if the history of any one family in upper or middle life could be faithfully written, it might be as generally interesting, and as permanently useful, as that of any nation, however great and renowned. But literature has never produced any worthy book of this class, and probably it never will. The only lineages in which we can pretend to read personal character far back, with any distinctness, are those of kings and princes, and a few noble houses of the first eminence; and it hardly needed Swift's biting satire to satisfy the student of the past, that the very highest pedigrees are as uncertain as the very lowest. We flatter the reigning monarch, or his haughtier satellite, by tracing in their lineaments the mighty conqueror or profound legislator of a former century. But call up the dead, according to the Dean's incantation, and we might have the real ancestor in some chamberlain, confessor, or musician.

Scott himself delighted, perhaps above all other books, in such as approximate to the character of good family histories,—as, for example, Godscroft's House of Douglas and Angus, and the Memorie of the Somervilles,—which last is, as far as I know, the best of its class in any language; and his reprint of the trivial "Memorials of the Haliburtons," to whose dust he is now gathered, was but one of a thousand indications of his anxiety to realize his own ancestry to his imagination. No testamentary deed, instrument of contract, or entry in a parish register, seemed valueless to him, if it bore in any manner, however obscure or distant, on the personal history of any of his ascertainable predecessors. The chronicles of the race furnished the fire-side talk to which he listened in infancy at Smailholm, and his first rhymes were those of Satchels. His physical infirmity was reconciled to him, even dignified perhaps, by tracing it back to forefathers who acquired famousness in their own way, in spite of such disadvantages. These studies led by easy and inevitable links to those of the history of his province generally, and then of his native kingdom. The lamp of his zeal burnt on brighter and brighter amidst the dust of parchments; his love and pride vivified whatever he hung over in these dim records, and patient antiquarianism, long brooding and meditating, became gloriously transmuted into the winged spirit of national poetry.

Whatever he had in himself he would fain have made out an hereditary claim for. He often spoke both seriously and sportively on the subject. He had assembled about him in his "own great parlour," as he called it—the room in which he died—all the pictures of his ancestors that he could come by; and in his most genial evening mood he seemed never to weary of perusing them. The Cavalier of Killiecrankie, brave, faithful, learned, and romantic old "Beardie," a determined but melancholy countenance, was never surveyed without a repetition of the solitary Latin rhyme of his Vow. He had, of course, no portraits of the elder heroes of Harden to lecture upon; but a skilful hand had supplied the same wall with a fanciful delineation of the rough wooing of "Meikle-mouthed Meg;" and the only historical picture, properly so called, that he ever bespoke, was to be taken (for it was never executed) from the Raid o' the Redswire, when

> ——"The Laird's Wat, that worthy man,
> Brought in that surname weel beseen;
>
> The Rutherfords with great renown,
> Convoyed the town o' Jedburgh out."

The ardent but sagacious "goodman of Sandyknowe" hangs by the side of his father, "Bearded Wat;" and often, when moralizing in his latter day over the doubtful condition of his ultimate fortunes, Sir Walter would point to "Honest Robin," and say, "Blood will out:—my building and planting was but his buying the hunter before he stocked his sheep-walk over again." "And yet," I once heard him say, glancing to the likeness of his own staid calculating father, "It was a wonder, too—for I have a thread of the attorney in me." And so, no doubt, he had; for the "elements" were mingled in him curiously, as well as "gently."

An imagination such as his, concentrating its day-dreams on things of this order, soon shaped out a world of its own—to which it would fain accommodate the real one. The love of his country became indeed a passion; no knight ever tilted for his mistress more willingly than he would have bled and died, to preserve even the airiest surviving nothing of her antique pretensions for Scotland. But the Scotland of his affections had the clan Scott for her kernel. Next and almost equal to the throne was Buccleuch. Fancy rebuilt and most prodigally embellished the whole system of the social existence of the middle ages, in which the clansman (wherever there were clans) acknowledged practically no sovereign but his chief. The author of "the Lay" would rather have seen his heir carry the Banner of Bellenden gallantly at a foot-ball match on Carterhaugh, than he would have heard that the boy had attained the highest honours of the first university in Europe. His original pride was to be an acknowledged member of one of the "honourable families" whose progenitors had been celebrated by Satchels for following this banner in blind obedience to the patriarchal leader; his first and last worldly ambition was to be himself the founder of a distinct branch; he desired to plant a lasting root, and dreamt not of personal fame, but of long distant generations rejoicing in the name of "Scott of Abbotsford." By this idea all his reveries—all his aspirations—all his plans and efforts, were overshadowed and controlled. The great object and end only rose into clearer daylight, and swelled into more substantial dimensions, as public applause strengthened his confidence in his own powers and faculties; and when he had reached the summit of universal and unrivalled honour, he clung to his first love with the faith of a Paladin. It is easy enough to smile at all this; many will not understand it, and some who do may pity it. But it was at least a different thing from the modern vulgar ambition of amassing a fortune and investing it in land. The lordliest vision of acres would have had little charm for him, unless they were situated on Ettrick or Yarrow, or in

> ——"Pleasant Tiviedale
> Fast by the river Tweed"——

somewhere within the primeval territory of "the Rough Clan."

His worldly ambition was thus grafted on that ardent feeling for blood and kindred, which was the great redeeming element in the social life of what

we call the middle ages; and—though no man estimated the solid advantages of modern existence more justly than he did when, restraining his fancy, he exercised his graver faculties on the comparison—it was the natural effect of the studies he devoted himself to and rose by, to indispose him for dwelling on the sober results of judgment and reason in all such matters. What a striking passage that is in one of his letters now printed, where he declines to write a biography of Queen Mary, "because his opinion was contrary to his feeling!" But he confesses the same of his Jacobitism; and yet how eagerly does he seem to have grasped at the shadow, however false and futile, under which he chose to see the means of reconciling his Jacobitism with loyalty to the reigning monarch who befriended him? We find him, over and over again, alluding to George IV. as acquiring a title, *de jure*, on the death of the poor cardinal of York! Yet who could have known better, that whatever rights the exiled males of the Stuart line ever possessed, must have remained entire with their female descendants?

The same resolution to give imagination her scope, and always in favour of antiquity, is the ruling principle and charm of all his best writings; and he indulged and embodied it so largely in his buildings at Abbotsford, that to have curtailed the exposition of his fond untiring enthusiasm on that score, would have been like omitting the Prince in a cast of Hamlet. So also with all the details of his hospitable existence, when he had fairly completed his "romance in stone and lime;"—every outline copied from some old baronial edifice in Scotland—every roof and window blazoned with clan bearings, or the lion rampant gules, or the heads of the ancient Stuart kings. He wished to revive the interior life of the castles he had emulated—their wide-open, joyous reception of all comers, but especially of kinsmen, allies, and neighbours—ballads and pibrochs to enliven flowing bowls and *quaighs*—jolly hunting fields in which yeoman and gentleman might ride side by side—and mirthful dances, where no Sir Piercy Shafton need blush to lead out the miller's daughter. In the brightest meridian of his genius and fame, this was his *beau ideal*. All the rest, however agreeable and flattering, was but "leather and prunella" to this. There was much kindness surely in such ambition:—in spite of the apparent contradiction in terms, was there not really much humility about it?

To this ambition we owe the gigantic monuments of Scott's genius; and to the kindly feelings out of which his ambition grew, grew also his fatal connexion with merchandise. The Ballantynes were his old school-fellows;—and the reader has had means to judge whether, when once embarked in their concerns, he ever could have got out of them again, until rude calamity, at one blow, broke the meshes of his entanglement. I need not recur to that sad and complicated chapter. Nor, perhaps, need I offer any more speculations, by way of explaining, and reconciling to his previous and subsequent history and demeanour, either the mystery in which he had chosen to wrap his commercial connexions from his most intimate friends, or the portentous carelessness with which he abandoned these matters to the direction of negligent and inefficient colleagues. And yet I ought, I rather think, to have suggested to certain classes of my readers, at a much earlier stage, that no man can be called either to the English or the Scottish Bar, who is known to have any direct interest in any commercial undertaking of any sort; and that the body of feelings or prejudices in which this regulation originated—(for though there might be sound reason for it besides, such undoubtedly was the main source)—prevailed in Scotland in Sir Walter's youth, to an extent of which the present generation may not easily form an adequate notion. In the minds of the "northern *noblesse de la robe*," as they are styled in Redgauntlet, such feelings had wide and potent authority; insomuch that I can understand perfectly how Scott, even after he ceased to practise at the bar, being still a Sheriff, and a member of the Faculty of Advocates, should have shrunk very sensitively from the idea of having his alliance with a trading firm revealed among his comrades of the gown. And, moreover, the practice of mystery is, perhaps of all practices, the one most likely to grow into a habit; secret breeds secret; and I ascribe, after all, the long silence about Waverley to the matured influence of this habit, at least as much as to any of the motives which the author has thought fit to assign in his late confessions.

But was there not, in fact, something that lay far deeper than a mere professional prejudice?

Among many things in Scott's Diaries, which cast strong light upon the previous part of his history, the reluctance which he confesses himself to have always felt towards the resumption of the proper appointed task, however willing, nay, eager, to labour sedulously on something else, can hardly have escaped the reader's notice. We know how gallantly he combated it in the general—but these precious Diaries themselves are not the least pregnant proofs of the extent to which it very often prevailed—for an hour or two at least, if not for the day.

I think this, if we were to go no farther, might help us somewhat in understanding the neglect about superintending the Messrs. Ballantynes' ledgers and bill books; and, consequently, the rashness about buying land, building, and the like.

But to what are we to ascribe the origin of this reluctance towards accurate and minute investigation and transaction of business of various sorts, so important to himself, in a man possessing such extraordinary sagacity, and exercising it every day with such admirable regularity and precision, in the various capacities of the head of a family—the friend—the magistrate—the most distinguished citizen of Edinburgh—beyond all comparison the most distinguished member of society that figured in his time in his native kingdom?

The whole system of conceptions and aspirations, of which his early active life was the exponent, resolves itself into a romantic idealization of Scottish aristocracy. He desired to secure to his descendants (for himself he had very soon acquired something infinitely more flattering to self-love and vanity) a decent and honourable middle station—in a scheme of life so constituted originally, and which his fancy pictured as capable of being so revived, as to admit of the kindliest personal contact between (almost) the peasant at the plough, and the magnate with revenues rivalling the monarch's. It was the patriarchal—the clan system that he thought of; one that never prevailed even in Scotland, within the historical period that is to say, except in the Highlands, and in his own dear Borderland. This system knew nothing of commerce—as little certainly of literature, beyond the raid-ballad of the wandering harper,—

"High placed in hall—a welcome guest."

His filial reverence of imagination shrunk from marring the antique, if barbarous, simplicity. I suspect that at the highest elevation of his literary renown—when princes bowed to his name, and nations thrilled at it—he would have considered losing all that at a change of the wind as nothing, compared to parting with his place as the Cadet of Harden and Clansman of Buccleuch, who had, no matter by what means, reached such a position, that when a notion arose of embodying "a Buccleuch legion," not a Scott in the Forest would have thought it otherwise than natural for *Abbotsford* to be one of the field-officers. I can, therefore, understand that he may have, from the very first, exerted the dispensing power of imagination very liberally, in virtually absolving himself from dwelling on the wood of which his ladder was to be constructed. Enough was said in a preceding chapter of the obvious fact, that the author of such a series of romances as his must have, to all intents and purposes, lived more than half his life in worlds purely fantastic. In one of the last obscure and

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faltering pages of his Diary, he says, that if any one asked him how much of his thought was occupied by the novel then in hand, the answer would have been, that in one sense it never occupied him except when the amanuensis sat before him, but that in another it was never five minutes out of his head. Such, I have no doubt, the case had always been. But I must be excused from doubting whether, when the substantive fiction actually in process of manufacture was absent from his mind, the space was often or voluntarily occupied (no positive external duty interposing) upon the real practical worldly position and business of the Clerk of Session, of the Sheriff,—least of all of the printer or the bookseller.

The sum is, if I read him aright, that he was always willing, in his ruminative moods, to veil, if possible, from his own optics the kind of machinery by which alone he had found the means of attaining his darling objects. Having acquired a perhaps unparalleled power over the direction of scarcely paralleled faculties, he chose to exert his power in this manner. On no other supposition can I find his history intelligible;—I mean, of course, the great obvious and marking facts of his history; for I hope I have sufficiently disclaimed all pretension to a thorough-going analysis. He appears to have studiously escaped from whatever could have interfered with his own enjoyment—to have revelled in the fair results, and waved the wand of obliterating magic over all besides; and persisted so long, that (like the sorcerer he celebrates) he became the dupe of his own delusions.

It is thus that (not forgetting the subsidiary influence of professional Edinburgh prejudices) I am inclined, on the whole, to account for his initiation in the practice of mystery—a thing, at first sight, so alien from the frank, open, generous nature of a man, than whom none ever had or deserved to have more real friends.

The indulgence cost him very dear. It ruined his fortunes—but I can have no doubt that it did worse than that. I cannot suppose that a nature like his was fettered and shut up in this way without suffering very severely from the "cold obstruction." There must have been a continual "insurrection" in his "state of man;" and, above all, I doubt not that what gave him the bitterest pain in the hour of his calamities, was the feeling of compunction with which he then found himself obliged to stand before those with whom he had, through life, cultivated brother-like friendship, convicted of having kept his heart closed to them on what they could not but suppose to have been the chief subjects of his thought and anxiety, in times when they withheld nothing from him. These, perhaps, were the "written troubles" that had been cut deepest into his brain. I think they were, and believe it the more, because it was never acknowledged.

If he had erred in the primary indulgence out of which this sprang, he at least made noble atonement.

During the most energetic years of manhood he laboured with one prize in view; and he had just grasped it, as he fancied, securely, when all at once the vision was dissipated: he found himself naked and desolate as Job. How he nerved himself against the storm—how he felt and how he resisted it—how soberly, steadily, and resolvedly he contemplated the possibility of yet, by redoubled exertions, in so far retrieving his fortunes, as that no man should lose by having trusted those for whom he had been pledged—how well he kept his vow, and what price it cost him to do so,—all this the reader, I doubt not, appreciates fully. It seems to me that strength of character was never put to a severer test than when, for labours of love, such as his had hitherto almost always been—the pleasant exertion of genius for the attainment of ends that owed all their dignity and beauty to a poetical fancy—there came to be substituted the iron pertinacity of daily and nightly toil in the discharge of a duty, which there was nothing but a sense of chivalrous honour to make stringent.

It is the fond indulgence of gay fancy in all the previous story that gives its true value and dignity to the voluntary agony of the sequel, when, indeed, he appears

——"Sapiens, sibique imperiosus;
Quem neque pauperies, neque mors, neque vincula terrent;
Responsare cupidinibus, contemnere honores,
Fortis; et in seipso totus, teres atque rotundus,
Externi ne quid valeat per læve morari;
In quem manca ruit semper Fortuna."

The attentive reader will not deny that every syllable of this proud *ideal* has been justified to the letter. But though he boasted of stoicism, his heroism was something far better than the stoic's: for it was not founded on a haughty trampling down of all delicate and tender thoughts and feelings. He lays his heart bare in his Diary; and we there read, in characters that will never die, how the sternest resolution of a philosopher will be at once quickened and adorned by the gentlest impulses of that spirit of love, which alone makes poetry the angel of life. This is the moment in which posterity will desire to fix his portraiture. It is then, truly, that

"He sits, 'mongst men, like a descended god;
He hath a kind of honour sets him off
More than a mortal seeming."

But the noble exhibition was not a fleeting one; it was not that a robust mind elevated itself by a fierce effort for the crisis of an hour. The martyrdom lasted with his days; and if it shortened them, let us remember his own immortal words,—

"Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife,
To all the sensual world proclaim—
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name."

For the rest, I presume, it will be allowed that no human character, which we have the opportunity of studying with equal minuteness, had fewer faults mixed up in its texture. The grand virtue of fortitude, the basis of all others, was never displayed in higher perfection than in him; and it was, as perhaps true courage always is, combined with an equally admirable spirit of kindness and humanity. His pride, if we must call it so, undebased by the least tincture of mere vanity, was intertwined with a most exquisite charity, and was not inconsistent with true humility. If ever the principle of kindliness was incarnated in a mere man, it was in him; and real kindliness can never be but modest. In the social relations of life, where men are most effectually tried, no spot can be detected in him. He was a patient, dutiful, reverent son; a generous, compassionate, tender husband; an honest, careful, and most affectionate father. Never was a more virtuous or a happier fireside than his. The influence of his mighty genius shadowed it imperceptibly; his calm good sense, and his angelic sweetness of heart and temper, regulated and softened a strict but paternal discipline. His children, as they grew up, understood by degrees the high privilege of their birth; but the profoundest sense of his greatness never disturbed their confidence in his goodness. The buoyant play of his spirits made him sit young among the young; parent and son seemed to live in brotherhood together; and the chivalry of his imagination threw a certain air of courteous gallantry into his relations with his daughters, which gave a very peculiar grace to the fondness of their intercourse. Though there could not be a gentler mother than Lady Scott, on those delicate occasions most interesting to young ladies, they always made their father the first confidant.

To the depth of his fraternal affection I ascribe, mainly, the only example of departure from the decorum of polished manners which a keen observer of him through life ever witnessed in him, or my own experience and information afford any trace of. Injuries done to himself no man forgave more easily—more willingly repaid by benefits. But it was not so when he first and unexpectedly saw before him the noble person who, as he considered things at the time, had availed himself of his parliamenta-

ry privilege to cast a shade of insult upon the character of his next and best-beloved brother.

But perhaps the most touching evidence of the lasting tenderness of his early domestic feelings was exhibited to his executors, when they opened his repositories in search of his testament, the evening after his burial. On lifting up his desk, we found arranged in careful order a series of little objects, which had obviously been so placed there that his eye might rest on them every morning before he began his tasks. These were the old-fashioned boxes that had garnished his mother's toilette, when he, a sickly child, slept in her dressing-room—the silver taper-stand which the young advocate had bought for her with his first five-guinea fee—a row of small packets inscribed with her hand, and containing the hair of those of her offspring that had died before her—his father's snuff-box and etui-case—and more things of the like sort, recalling

"The old familiar faces."

The same feeling was apparent in all the arrangement of his private apartment. Pictures of his father and mother were the only ones in his dressing-room. The clumsy antique cabinets that stood there, things of a very different class from the beautiful and costly productions in the public rooms below, had all belonged to the furniture of George's Square. Even his father's rickety washing-stand, with all its cramped appurtenances, though exceedingly unlike what a man of his very scrupulous habits would have selected in these days, kept its ground. The whole place seemed fitted up like a little chapel of the lares.

Such a son and parent could hardly fail in any of the other social relations. No man was a firmer or more indefatigable friend. I know not that he ever lost one; and a few, with whom, during the energetic middle stage of life, from political differences or other accidental circumstances, he lived less familiarly, had all gathered round him, and renewed the full warmth of early affection in his later days. There was enough to dignify the connexion in their eyes; but nothing to chill it on either side. The imagination that so completely mastered him when he chose to give her the rein, was kept under most determined control when any of the positive obligations of active life came into question. A high and pure sense of duty presided over whatever he had to do as a citizen and a magistrate! and as a landlord, he considered his estate as an extension of his hearth.

Of his political creed, the many who hold a different one will of course say that it was the natural fruit of his poetical devotion to the mere prejudice of antiquity; and I am quite willing to allow that this must have had a great share in the matter—and that he himself would have been as little ashamed of the word *prejudice* as of the word *antiquity*. Whenever Scotland could be considered as standing separate on any question from the rest of the empire, he was not only apt, but eager to embrace the opportunity of again rehoisting, as it were, the old signal of national independence; and I sincerely believe that no circumstance in his literary career gave him so much personal satisfaction as the success of Malachi Malagrowther's Epistles. He confesses, however, in his Diary, that he was aware how much it became him to summon calm reason to battle imaginative prepossessions on this score; and I am not aware that they ever led him into any serious practical error. He delighted in letting his fancy run wild about ghosts, and witches, and horoscopes—but I venture to say, had he sat on the judicial bench a hundred years before he was born, no man would have been more certain to give juries sound direction in estimating the pretended evidence of supernatural occurrences of any sort; and I believe, in like manner, that had any anti-English faction, civil or religious, sprung up in his own time in Scotland, he would have done more than any other living man could have hoped to do, for putting it down. He was on all practical points a steady conscientious Tory of the school of William Pitt; who, though an anti-revolutionist, was certainly any thing but an anti-reformer. He rejected the innovations, in the midst of which he died, as a revival, under alarmingly authoritative auspices, of the doctrines which had endangered Britain in his youth, and desolated Europe throughout his prime of manhood. May the gloomy anticipations which hung over his closing years be unfulfilled! But should they be so, let posterity remember that the warnings and the resistance of his and other powerful intellects, were probably in that event the appointed means for averting a catastrophe in which, had England fallen, the whole civilized world must have been involved.

Sir Walter received a strictly religious education, under the eye of parents whose virtuous conduct was in unison with the principles they desired to instil into their children. From the great doctrines thus recommended he appears never to have swerved; but he must be numbered among the many who have incurred considerable risk of doing so, in consequence of the rigidity with which Presbyterian heads of families, in Scotland, were used to enforce compliance with various relics of the puritanical observance. He took up, early in life, a repugnance to the mode in which public worship is conducted in the Scottish Establishment; and adhered to the sister Church, whose system of government and discipline he believed to be the purest copy of the primitive polity, and whose litanies and collects he reverenced as having been transmitted to us from the age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles. The few passages in his Diaries, in which he alludes to his own religious feelings and practices, show clearly the sober, serene, and elevated frame of mind in which he habitually contemplated man's relations with his Maker; the modesty with which he shrunk from indulging either the presumption of reason or the extravagance of imagination in the province of Faith; his humble reliance on the wisdom and mercy of God; and his firm belief that we are placed in this state of existence, not to speculate about another, but to prepare ourselves for it by active exertion of our intellectual faculties, and the constant cultivation of kindness and benevolence towards our fellow-men.

But his moral, political, and religious character has sufficiently impressed itself upon the great body of his writings. He is indeed one of the few great authors of modern Europe who stand acquitted of having written a line that ought to have embittered the bed of death. His works teach the practical lessons of morality and Christianity in the most captivating form—unobtrusively and unaffectedly. And I think it is not refining too far to say, that in these works, as well as his whole demeanour as a man of letters, we may trace the happy effects—(enough has already been said as to some less fortunate and agreeable ones)—of his having written throughout with a view to something beyond the acquisition of personal fame. Perhaps no great poet ever made his literature so completely ancillary to the objects and purposes of practical life. However his imagination might expatiate, it was sure to rest over his home. The sanctities of domestic love and social duty were never forgotten; and the same circumstance that most ennobles all his triumphs, affords also the best apology for his errors.

I have interwoven in these pages some record of whatever struck myself as pre-eminently acute in the critical essays bestowed on Scott's works by his contemporaries; but I have little doubt that the best of these essays will in due time be collected together, and accompany, *in extenso*, a general edition of his writings. From the first, his possession of a strong and brilliant genius was acknowledged; and the extent of it seems to have been guessed by others, before he was able to persuade himself that he had claim to a place among the masters of literature. The ease with which he did every thing deceived him; and he probably would never have

done himself any measure of justice, even as compared with those of his own time, but for the fact, which no modesty could long veil, that whatever he did became immediately "*the fashion*," the object of all but universal imitation. Even as to this, he was often ready to surmise that the priority of his own movement might have been matter of accident; and certainly nothing can mark the humility of his mind more strikingly than the style in which he discusses, in his Diary, the pretensions of the pigmies that swarmed and fretted in the deep wake of his mighty vessel. To the really original writers among his contemporaries he did full justice; no differences of theory or taste had the least power to disturb his candour. In some cases he rejoiced in feeling and expressing a cordial admiration, where he was met by, at best, a cold and grudging reciprocity: and in others, his generosity was proof against not only the private belief, but the public exposure of envious malignity. Lord Byron might well say that Scott could be jealous of no one; but the immeasurable distance did not prevent many from being jealous of him.

His propensity to think too well of other men's works sprung, of course, mainly from his modesty and good-nature; but the brilliancy of his imagination greatly sustained the delusion. It unconsciously gave precision to the trembling outline, and life and warmth to the vapid colours before him. This was especially the case as to romances and novels; the scenes and characters in them were invested with so much of the "light within," that he would close with regret volumes which, perhaps, no other person, except the diseased glutton of the circulating library, ever could get half through. Where colder critics saw only a schoolboy's hollowed turnip with its inch of tallow, he looked through the dazzling spray of his own fancy, and sometimes the clumsy toy seems to have swelled almost into "the majesty of buried Denmark."

These servile imitators are already forgotten, or will soon be so; but it is to be hoped that the spirit which breathes through his works may continue to act on our literature, and consequently on the character and manners of men. The race that grew up under the influence of that intellect can hardly be expected to appreciate fully their own obligations to it: and yet if we consider what were the tendencies of the minds and works that, but for his, must have been unrivalled in the power and opportunity to mould young ideas, we may picture to ourselves in some measure the magnitude of the debt we owe to a perpetual succession through thirty years, of publications unapproached in charm, and all instilling a high and healthy code; a bracing, invigorating spirit; a contempt of mean passions, whether vindictive or voluptuous; humane charity, as distinct from moral laxity as from unsympathizing austerity; sagacity too deep for cynicism, and tenderness never degenerating into sentimentality; animated throughout in thought, opinion, feeling, and style, by one and the same pure energetic principle—a pith and savour of manhood; appealing to whatever is good and loyal in our natures, and rebuking whatever is low and selfish.

Had Sir Walter never taken a direct part in politics, as a writer, the visible bias of his mind on such subjects must have had a great influence; nay, the mere fact that such a man belonged to a particular side would have been a very important weight in the balance. His services, direct and indirect, towards repressing the revolutionary propensities of his age were vast—far beyond the comprehension of vulgar politicians.

On the whole I have no doubt that, the more the details of his personal history are revealed and studied, the more powerfully will that be found to inculcate the same great lessons with his works. Where else shall we be taught better how prosperity may be extended by munificence, and adversity confronted by exertion? Where can we see the "follies of the wise" more strikingly rebuked, and a character more beautifully purified and exalted in the passage through affliction to death? I have lingered so long over the details that I have, perhaps, become, even from that circumstance alone, less qualified than more rapid surveyors may be to seize the effect in the mass. But who does not feel that there is something very invigorating as well as elevating in the contemplation? His character seems to belong to some elder and stronger period than ours; and, indeed, I cannot help likening it to the architectural fabrics of other ages, which he most delighted in, where there is such a congregation of imagery and tracery, such endless indulgence of whim and fancy, the sublime blending here with the beautiful, and there contrasted with the grotesque,—half, perhaps, seen in the clear daylight, and half by rays tinged with the blazoned forms of the past—that one may be apt to get bewildered among the variety of particular impressions, and not feel either the unity of the grand design, or the height and solidness of the structure, until the door has been closed upon the labyrinth of aisles and shrines, and you survey it from a distance, but still within its shadow.

And yet, as, with whatever admiration his friends could not but regard him constantly when among them, the prevailing feeling was still love and affection, so is it now, and so must ever it be, as to his memory. It is not the privilege of every reader to have partaken in the friendship of A GREAT AND GOOD MAN; but those who have not may be assured, that the sentiment, which the near homely contemplation of such a being inspires, is a thing entirely by itself,—

> ——"Not another comfort like to this
> Succeeds in unknown fate."

And now to conclude.—In the year 1832, France and Germany, as well as Britain, had to mourn over their brightest intellects. Goethe shortly preceded Scott, and Cuvier followed him: and with these mighty lights were extinguished many others of no common order—among the rest Crabbe and Mackintosh.

Many of those who had been intimately connected with Scott in various ways soon also followed him. James Ballantyne was already on his deathbed when he heard of his great friend and patron's death. The foreman of the printing-house, a decent and faithful man, who had known all their secrets, and done his best for their service, both in prosperous and adverse times, by name M'Corkindale, began to droop and pine, and died too in a few months. James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, must also be mentioned. He died on the 21st of November, 1835; but it had been better for his fame had his end been of earlier date, for he did not follow his best benefactor until he had insulted his dust. Lastly, I observe, as this sheet is passing through the press, the death of the Rev. George Thomson—the happy "Dominie Thomson" of the happy days of Abbotsford. He died at Edinburgh on the 8th of January, 1838.

Miss Anne Scott received at Christmas, 1832, a grant of £200 per annum from the privy purse of King William IV. But her name did not long burden the pension list. Her constitution had been miserably shattered in the course of her long and painful attendance, first on her mother's illness, and then on her father's; and perhaps reverse of fortune, and disappointments of various sorts connected with that, had also heavy effect. From the day of Sir Walter's death, the strong stimulus of duty being lost, she too often looked and spoke like one

> "Taking the measure of an unmade grave."

After a brief interval of disordered health, she contracted a brain fever which carried her off abruptly. She died in my house in the Regent's Park on the 25th June, 1833, and her remains are placed in the New Cemetery in the Harrow Road.

The adjoining grave holds those of her nephew John Hugh Lockhart, who died 15th Dec. 1831; and also those of my wife Sophia, who expired after a long illness, which she bore with all possible meekness and fortitude, on the 17th of May, 1837.

The clergyman who read the funeral service over her was her father's friend, and hers, and mine, the Rev. Henry Hart Milman, one of the Prebendaries of Westminster; and a little incident which he happened to observe during the prayers suggested to him some verses, which he transmitted to me the morning after, and which the reader will not, I believe, consider altogether misplaced in the last page of these memoirs of her father.

"Stanmas—*May* 22, 1837.

"Over that solemn pageant mute and dark,
Where in the grave we laid to rest
Heaven's latest, not least welcome guest,
What didst thou on the wing, thou jocund lark!
Hovering in unrebuked glee,
And carolling above that mournful company?

"O thou light-loving and melodious bird,
At every sad and solemn fall
Of mine own voice, each interval
In the soul-elevating prayer, I heard
Thy quivering descant full and clear—
Discord not inharmonious to the ear!

"We laid her there, the Minstrel's darling child.
Seem'd it then meet that, borne away
From the close city's dubious day,
Her dirge should be thy native woodnote wild;
Nursed upon nature's lap, her sleep
Should be where birds may sing and dewy flowerets weep?

"Ascendest thou, air-wandering messenger!
Above us slowly lingering yet,
To bear our deep, our mute regret;
To waft upon thy faithful wing to her
The husband's fondest last farewell,
Love's final parting pang, the unspoke, the unspeakable?

"Or didst thou rather chide with thy blithe voice
Our selfish grief that would delay
Her passage to a brighter day;
Bidding us mourn no longer, but rejoice
That it hath heavenward flown like thee,
That spirit from this cold world of sin and sorrow free?

"I watched thee, lessening, lessening to the sight,
Still faint and fainter winnowing
The sunshine with thy dwindling wing,
A speck, a movement in the ruffled light,
Till thou wert melted in the sky,
An undistinguished part of the bright infinity.

"Meet emblem of that lightsome spirit thou!
That still wherever it might come,
Shed sunshine o'er that happy home.
Her task of kindliness and gladness now
Absolved, with the element above
Hath mingled, and become pure light, pure joy, pure love."

There remain, therefore, of Sir Walter's race only his two sons,—Walter, his successor in the baronetcy, Major in the 15th Regiment of Hussars—and Charles, a clerk in the office of her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; with two children left by their sister Sophia, a boy and a girl.

Shortly after Sir Walter's death, his sons and myself, as his executors, endeavoured to make such arrangements as were within our power for completing the great object of his own wishes and fatal exertions. We found the remaining principal sum of the Ballantyne debt to be about £54,000. £22,000 had been insured upon his life; there were some moneys in the hands of the Trustees, and Mr. Cadell very handsomely offered to advance to us the balance, about £30,000, that we might without further delay settle with the body of creditors. This was effected accordingly on the 2d of February, 1833; Mr. Cadell accepting as his only security the right to the profits accruing from Sir Walter's copyright property and literary remains, until such time as this new and consolidated obligation should be discharged. I am afraid, however, notwithstanding the undiminished sale of his works, especially of his Novels, his executors can hardly hope to witness that consummation, unless, indeed, it should please the Legislature to give some extension to the period for which literary property has hitherto been protected; a bill for which purpose has recently been laid on the table of the House of Commons by Mr. Sergeant Talfourd.

Besides his commercial debt, Sir Walter left also one of £10,000, contracted by himself as an individual, when struggling to support Constable in December, 1825, and secured by mortgage on the lands of Abbotsford. And, lastly, the library and museum, presented to him in free gift by his creditors in December, 1830, were bequeathed to his eldest son, with a burden to the extent of £5,000, which sum he designed to be divided between his younger children, as already explained in an extract from his Diary. His will provided that the produce of his literary property, in case of its proving sufficient to wipe out the remaining debt of Messrs. Ballantyne, should then be applied to the extinction of these mortgages; and thereafter, should this also be accomplished, divided equally among his surviving family.

Various meetings were held soon after his death with a view to the erection of monuments to his memory, and the records of these meetings, and their results, are adorned by many of the noblest and most distinguished names both of England and of Scotland. In London, the Lord Bishop of Exeter, Sir Robert Peel, and Sir John Malcolm took a prominent part as speakers; in Edinburgh, the Duke of Buccleuch, the Marquis of Lothian, the Earl of Dalhousie, the Earl of Roseberry, Lord Jeffrey (then Lord-Advocate for Scotland,) and Professor Wilson.

In Glasgow the subscription amounted to about £1,200—and a pillar is now rising in the chief square of that city, which had been previously adorned with statues of its own most illustrious citizens, Sir John Moore, and James Watt.

The subscription for a monument at Edinburgh, reached the sum of £6,000;—but the committee have not as yet made their selection from the plans submitted to them.

The English subscription amounted to somewhere about £10,000; but a considerable part of this was embezzled by a young person rashly appointed to the post of secretary, who carried it with him to America, where he soon afterwards died.

The noblemen and gentlemen who subscribed to this English fund had adopted a suggestion—(which originated, I believe, with Lord Francis Egerton and the Honourable John Stuart Wortley)—that, in place of erecting a cenotaph in Westminster Abbey, or a statue or pillar elsewhere, the most suitable and respectful tribute that could be paid to Sir Walter's memory would be to discharge all the incumbrances upon Abbotsford, and entail the House, with its library and other articles of curiosity collected by him, together with the lands which he had planted and embellished, upon the heirs of his name for ever. The sum produced by the subscription, however, proved inadequate to the realization of such a scheme; nor has it as yet been definitely fixed in what manner the actual fund shall be applied.

I understand, however, the most probable arrangement will be, that the money in the hands of the committee (between £7,000 and £8,000) shall be employed to liquidate the debt upon the library and museum, and whatever is over, towards the mortgage on the lands: which would enable the present Sir Walter Scott to secure, in the shape originally desired, the permanent preservation at least of the house and its immediate appurtenances, as a memorial of the tastes and habits of the founder. The poet's ambition to endow a family sleeps with him. But I still hope his successors may be, as long as any of his blood remains, the honoured guardians of that monument. The result of what was at least a generous and graceful design *forsi altro cantera.*

END OF THE LIFE OF SCOTT.

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